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THEMATIC FOCUS OF THIS ISSUE:

**SELECTED DISCUSSED TOPICS IN THE SPECIFICATIONS: PALLIATIVE CARE, ISLAMIC STUDIES, CHRISTIAN RELIGION, THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE CURRENT PERIOD, AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS IN UKRAINE.
THE HEART IN A HEARTLESS WORLD. STRUGGLES FOR WHAT IS CENTRAL TO HUMAN LIFE.**

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EDITORIAL

Dear Colleagues and Readers of Acta Missiologica,

An empathic way of being with another person means to enter the other's private sentient world and to settle in it. It involves being sensitive, moment by moment, to the change in perceived meanings that take place in the other person, without any fear, confusion, or whatever he/she is and what he/she experiences. It also means living temporarily in that person's life and moving around it gently without any judgments. This requires sensitivity at both human and professional level. To achieve this, it is necessary to realize how important it is to be an authentic and congruent human being in the first place. Moment after moment. To tune into meanings or changes that take place in another person. Anything can happen, but that person's integrity must be kept under all circumstances. With the objective view of a professional and the skills that the assistants and the accompanying clergyman have, this person can achieve the desired change or just meet himself/herself. A deeper awareness of these aspects leads to a reflection on the need for sensitive accompaniment. During this period especially among people who come to us as refugees from Ukraine. They have a lot of traumatic experiences, sadness, and loss of self-determination. Some of them had higher socioeconomic status in their home country, but fleeing meant a loss of home, community, family, and status. They escaped for their safety, with no choice and often no time to prepare. This loss of self-determination continues in the host countries. They left the property or were forced to sell it to pay for coming to our countries. As a result, they are also forced to face many other problems, including physical and mental health. Among them, women, children, and the elderly are particularly vulnerable, for example due to gender-based violence, lack of job or education opportunities and lack of adequate health care. When accompanied, they need to experience that they are perceived as valuable by the majority society. They also need to experience that someone is also working to have the necessary support and access to fully meet their basic living and economic needs, even when coping with the transition to host countries.

The articles in the latest issue of Acta Missiologica also support the building of peace, dialogue in the world and the values of every human being, the protection of their precious life to the point of natural death. Each article in its own unique and valuable way.

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEATH AMONG GERIATRIC CARE WORKERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC |
Ivana Olecká, Naděžda Špatenková

Guarantors of issue

for specifications: palliative care, Islamic studies, Christian Religion, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the current period, and the Refugee crisis in Ukraine.

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Jonathan Burroughs, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland, (IE)

ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEATH AMONG GERIATRIC CARE WORKERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC*

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Ivana Olecká[1], Naděžda Špatenková [2 ✉]

[1] Palacký University Olomouc, Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Department of Christian Social Work (CZ)
[2] Silesian University in Opava, Faculty of Public Policies, The Institute of Pedagogical and Psychological Sciences (CZ)

Abstract
Background: Older or geriatric patients were among the people most at risk from COVID-19. Their mortality rate increased alarmingly during the pandemic, and this undoubtedly presented an emotionally challenging situation for their caregivers.
Methods: The aim of our research was to analyse the professional's current attitudes towards death among the professional caregivers of older people in the health and social care settings and to identify specific aspects of their coping strategies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The standardized Death Attitude Profile-Revised (DAP-R) questionnaire was used to collect data. The research respondents consisted of direct care workers in social service institutions, nursing homes, and non-medical health care workers in facilities providing health care primarily to geriatric patients (n=180). **Results and conclusion:** A statistically significant difference was found between the attitudes of health and social workers. Social workers declare more reconciliation and less fear of death. They avoid death less, perceive it less as an escape and are more neutral than health workers. This result was influenced by the factor of faith.
Keywords: Death – Attitude to death – Geriatric care – COVID-19 pandemic – Coping.

Introduction

Attitudes can be defined as a tendency to react in a fixed way to objects, people, or situations, or to oneself[2], virtually as a predisposition to act, perceive, think and feel in a certain way towards an object (object, person or situation)[3]. Attitudes always have an evaluative aspect, so we can also define an attitude, as an individual's tendency to evaluate an object, whatever it may be. Although evaluative tendencies cannot be directly observed, they do interfere with the process between attitude objects and various reactions. In our case, this object is death. Atti-

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2   Hartl a Hartlová, *Velký psychologický slovník*.
3   Nakonečný, *Sociální psychologie*.

Expert articles

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tudes integrate cognitive, emotional (affective) and conative components, with emotions playing a dominant role in evaluation[4]. The emotional component determines the strength of an attitude because it lends it subjective meaning. The cognitive component of attitude toward death consists primarily of knowledge about dying and death and one's own experience. The emotional component is most often expressed by anxiety and fear of death. The conative component in relation to death includes escape and avoidance[5]. Attitudes toward death are addressed in, e.g. Kübler-Ross, Yalom, Müller [6].

Those who take the relevant positions in our text will be professional carers in health and social care institutions. In particular, these professionals should be accustomed to death because it is they who directly influence the quality of life of their clients or patients by providing not only physical comfort but also psychological, social or spiritual support in the last moments of life.[7] Research has shown that attitudes towards death are influenced by personal experience of death[8], e.g. health professionals who spend more time in contact with terminally ill or dying patients generally have more positive attitudes towards death[9]. Greater experience with death is associated with lower levels of death anxiety and less avoidance of the topic of death[10]. However, other research suggests that confronting death is one of the most challenging stressors for professional caregivers[11] and that professional caregivers may perceive the death of their patient or client as a challenging, crisis or even traumatic experience[12]. In this respect, the topic under study is highly topical, as the experience of death has changed significantly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, 129 289 people died in the Czech Republic. Compared to 2019, the number of deaths was higher by almost 17 thousand, representing a 15% year-on-year increase. [13] It was not until the end of May 2021 that the number of excess deaths decreased significantly and the mortality level returned to the average levels of 2015-2019. Thus, the month with the highest number of deaths in the history of the independent Czech Republic remains as March 2021, when, according to the preliminary results, 16.7 thousand people died, 62% above the average.[14] This was an extremely challenging period, which was completely beyond any previous experience of health professionals.

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4   Hewstone a Stroebe, *Introduction to social psychology: A European perspective*; Nakonečný, *Lidské emoce*.
5   Kübler-Ross et al., *Odpovědi na otázky o smrti a umírání: etický manuál pro mediky, lékaře a sestry: doplněno samostatnými příspěvky a komentáři našich i zahraničních odborníků*; Over, „The origins of belonging"; Vágnerová, *Vývojová psychologie : dětství a dospívání*; Yalom, *Pohled do slunce : o překonávání strachu ze smrti*.
6   Kübler-Ross et al., *Odpovědi na otázky o smrti a umírání: etický manuál pro mediky, lékaře a sestry: doplněno samostatnými příspěvky a komentáři našich i zahraničních odborníků*; Yalom, *Pohled do slunce : o překonávání strachu ze smrti*; Yalom a Müller, *Existenciální psychoterapie*.
7   Dobríková et al., "External support factors utilized by patients in coping with cancer: a European perspective".
8   Dunn, Otten, a Stephens, „Nursing experience and the care of dying patients."
9   Tilden a Tilden, *Benner, P.(1984). From novice to expert, excellence and power in clinical nursing practice. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 307 pp., $12.95 (soft cover)*; Rooda, Clements, a Jordan, „Nurses' attitudes toward death and caring for dying patients."
10 Bluck, S., Dirk, J., Mackay, M., & Hux, A., „Life experience with death relation to death attitudes and to the use of death-related memories. Death Studies. 32: 524–549."
11 Peterson, J., Johnson, M., Halvorsen, B., Apmann, L., Chang, P., Kershek, S. & Pincon, D., „Where do nurses go for help? A qualitative study of coping with death and dying. International journal of palliative nursing"; DOBRÍKOVÁ, „Zvládanie záťažových situácií. Ako si zachovať duševné zdravie".
12 Christina, Špatenková, a Hudcová, *Náročné, krizové a mimořádné situace v kontextu rezidenčních služeb : umírání, doprovázení a smrt uživatelů se zdravotním postižením*.
13 ČSÚ, „Covid-19 byl vloni druhou nejčastější příčinou smrti".
14 ČSÚ, „V druhé polovině května se počty zemřelých vrátily na běžnou úroveň".

Most research confirms the influence of age on attitudes towards death, especially on death anxiety[15], or the influence of gender, where increased fear of death has been shown in women[16] or religion or spirituality. Dezutter et al.[17] points out that religious people are more likely to endorse an attitude of resigned acceptance of death. This is related to the fact that religion is associated with a belief in an afterlife[18]. An overview of other factors influencing attitudes toward death was provided by Kisvetrová[19].

Methods

The research population consisted of direct care workers in social service facilities, specifically in homes for the elderly, and non-medical health care workers in facilities providing health care primarily to geriatric patients. Of the 180 respondents, only 7 were men, which is not surprising given the high feminisation of the field. The sample included 5 physicians, 66 nurses, 60 junior medical staff and 49 non-medical staff. Respondents were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and then a standardized questionnaire, The Death Attitude Profile-Revised (DAP-R). The DAP-R is a revised death attitude profile. Its authors are Wong, Reker, and Gesser. Wong et al. expanded the original 1987-1988 DAP measuring attitudes toward death to include additional dimensions and items. It consists of thirty-two items measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from „strongly agree" to „strongly disagree." The questionnaire consisted of four factorially derived dimensions: a) Fear of death (negative thoughts and feelings about death), b) Approach acceptance (viewing death as a gateway to a happy afterlife), c) Escape Acceptance (death as an escape from a painful existence), and d) Neutral acceptance (death as a reality that is neither good nor bad). Each of the five subscales was calculated by summing the respondent's scores on each item in that subscale and then dividing the sum by the number of items in that subscale. Thus, scores on each subscale could range from 1 to 7.

Results

The results of our survey show the processing of the topic by professional caregivers by the elderly in health and social service institutions at the cognitive level, when they manifestly declare their acceptance of the topic of death („*death is an integral part of life*", „*death is one of the options of how illness can end*", „*death is the culmination of life*", „*old age naturally leads to death*", „*all people are mortal*"). The balanced or „average" results in the area of cognitive conception of death refer to the fact that professional carers have insight into the topic of death, rationally understand death as an integral part of life, which is based on their professional experience of death and mortality („*our patients/clients die or will die*").

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15 Jackson, „How Gender and Self-Esteem Impact Death Anxiety Across Adulthood."; Krause a Bastida, „Contact with the Dead, Religion, and Death Anxiety among Older Mexican Americans"; Neimeyer, Wittkowski, a Moser, „Psychological Research on Death Attitudes: an Overview and Evaluation"; Russac et al., „Death anxiety across the adult years: An examination of age and gender effects".
16 Depaola et al., „Death anxiety and attitudes towardthe elderly among older adults: The Role of gender and ethnicity".
17 Dezutter, Luyckx, a Hutsebaut, „Are you afraid to die? Empirical evidence concerning the role of religion in death attitudes".
18 Falkenhain a Handal, „Religion, death attitudes, and belief in afterlife in the elderly: Untangling the relationships"; Willis, Nelson, a Moreno, „Death Anxiety, Religious Doubt, and Depressive Symptoms across Race in Older Adults"; Dezutter, Luyckx, a Hutsebaut, „Are you afraid to die? Empirical evidence concerning the role of religion in death attitudes".
19 Kisvetrova a Kralova, „ZÁKLADNÍ FAKTORY OVLIVNUJÍCÍ ÚZKOST ZE SMRTI/Basic factors influencing death anxiety".

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The sub-statements of the Atonement category (Table 1) are aimed at identifying attitudes related to spiritual/religious conceptions of death that may be comforting to religious people. This is because it is assumed that spirituality leads to reconciliation. However, it should be noted that the spirituality of the Czechs is very specific - they are not religious, they are not practitioners in the sense of church rituals, Halík[20] refers to their attitude as „ ietsist „ - they believe that something exists, but they do not subscribe to any religion. This fact has significantly influenced the results in this category. Thus, only the items „ I look forward to reuniting with my loved ones after death" and „I see death as a departure to eternity and a place of blessing" show a greater degree of agreement.

Table 1 Approach acceptance

Approach acceptance	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of Mode
Death is the promise of a new and beautiful life.	4,0	4	4	59
I see death as a passing into eternity and a place of blessing.	3,6	3	2	49
Death is a connection to God and eternal bliss.	4,2	4	4	53
I look forward to reuniting with my loved ones after death.	3,5	3	2	46
One of the things that gives me comfort at the thought of death is the belief in the afterlife.	4,0	4	6	47
I believe that after death I will be in heaven.	4,3	4	4	75
I look forward to life after death.	4,8	5	6	76
Death is the gateway to a place of ultimate contentment.	4,3	4	4	72
I believe heaven will be a far better place than this world.	4,6	4	4	68
Death offers a wonderful liberation of the soul.	3,9	4	4	69
Mean of Approach acceptance	4,1	4	4	10

The results of the investigation on the emotional level somewhat questions the clearly rational perception of death and point rather to the fear of death and other negative emotions arising from the fear of death. (Table 2) Here respondents sit on the fence. Yet the exacerbated profiles are absent. Respondents confirm fear of death and a desire to avoid thoughts of death (Table 3), but it was the confrontation with death and mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic that led professional caregivers to believe that despite understandable efforts to completely displace any thoughts of death, it was not possible to avoid them completely; they were pervasive.

Table 2 Fear of Death

Fear of Death	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of Mode
I am troubled by the uncertainty of not knowing what will happen after death.	3,9	3	6	49
I have a strong fear of death.	3,9	4	6	46
The fact that death will mean the end of everything I know terrifies me.	3,4	3	2	51
The finality of death disturbs me.	3,8	3	2	44
The prospect of my own death makes me anxious.	3,6	3	3	48
The subject of the afterlife disturbs me greatly.	4,8	5	6	67
Death is undoubtedly a grim experience.	3,6	3	2	57
Mean of Fear of Death	3,8	3,57	2	16

Respondents do not try to banish the thought of death, they try to „cope" with it somehow, to accept death as part of life, old age and illness. The answer to the question „I try not to have anything to do with the topic of death" refers to the fact that professional caregivers, whether in social services or health care, are aware of the inevitability of death and its natural embeddedness in life.

Table 3 Avoiding Death

Avoiding Death	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of Mode
I completely avoid thoughts of death.	4,4	5	6	54
I try not to think about death.	3,4	3	2	64
I try not to have anything to do with the subject of death.	4,8	5	6	60
I avoid thoughts of death at all costs.	4,8	5	6	61
Whenever I think about death, I try to push the thought away.	4,1	4	6	41
Mean of Avoiding Death	4,3	4,40	6	18

Clearly then, professional carers exhibit a conception of death as an acceptance of escape (Table 4), as demonstrated in particular by the item "Death is a release from pain and suffering". Is this the way they cope with daily contact with death? The pandemic has led to professional carers confronting the fact that death can be an end to everyday suffering, representing an escape from this world and existing suffering. Professional carers agree that death can represent a release from pain and suffering for older people and that death is the end of all problems. Death is thus viewed in a relatively conciliatory way - as an end to hardship, suffering, pain, difficulties, problems etc.

Expert articles

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20   Halík, „Otázky a pochybnosti".

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Table 4 Escape Acceptance

Escape Acceptance	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of Mode
I see death as a relief from the weight of life.	4,0	4	6	48
I see death as a relief from earthly suffering.	4,1	4	6	53
Death is an escape from this terrible world.	5,0	6	6	75
Death is a release from pain and suffering.	2,7	2	2	67
Death is the end of all my problems.	3,6	3	2	52
Mean of Escape Acceptance	3,9	3,70	6	18

The results of the survey in the category of "neutral acceptance of death" then confirm the efforts of professional carers to integrate death into their professional life - despite all the health and social care and relatively high life expectancy, geriatric patients eventually die, death is part of life, it is the culmination of aging and old age, professional carers should be prepared for their death. Yet professional carers sometimes find it difficult to accept death as a normal, natural occurrence. Especially in situations where death affects them emotionally, as the emotional component of attitude plays a key role in the process of evaluating the object under consideration, i.e. death.

Table 5 Neutral acceptance

Neutral acceptance	Mean	Median	Mode	Frequency of Mode
Death is simply part of the process of life.	1,6	2	2	91
Death is a natural aspect of life.	1,6	2	2	87
Death is to be seen as a natural, undesirable, and inevitable event.	1,8	2	2	89
Death is neither good nor bad.	2,1	2	2	81
I would neither fear nor welcome death.	2,7	2	2	62
Mean of Neutral acceptance	2,0	2	2	43

A comparison of the attitudes of health and social workers (Table 6) yielded interesting, statistically significant results. Social workers declare more reconciliation and less fear of death. They avoid death less, perceive it less as an escape and are more neutral than health workers. An interpretation of the influence of the 3rd variable is offered, as there is a statistically significant higher representation of religious carers in the group of social workers. In this group, the ratio of religious carers to non-believers is balanced (24:24). On the other hand, 73.8% of non-believers are represented among health workers.

Thus, respondents who consider themselves non-believers score higher on the death avoidance scale, which measures negative attitudes towards death, and respondents who consider themselves non-believers score higher on the death acceptance scale (positive attitudes towards death). In fact, most churches in our sociocultural environment work with the theme of the afterlife, which is usually presented as a better place than this world. Therefore, religious people perceive death as deliverance from suffering or as a gateway to a better form of existence, which is the central idea of the death acceptance escape scale. Thus, the fact that respondents who subscribe to a church score higher on the accommodating acceptance of death scale is an ex-

pected result, as the accommodating acceptance of death scale works with terms and concepts that are typical of Christian churches, which are the dominant churches in the country.

Table 6 Comparison of attitudes of health and social workers

Wilks lambda=,88596, F(5, 174)=4,4795, p=,00073				
		Mean	SD	N
Approach acceptance	Healthcare professional	4,141645	0,111696	131
	Social worker	3,950567	0,182632	49
Fear of Death	Healthcare professional	3,710469	0,117769	131
	Social worker	4,089407	0,192561	49
Avoiding Death	Healthcare professional	4,034351	0,121197	131
	Social worker	4,873469	0,198166	49
Escape Acceptance	Healthcare professional	3,717939	0,111239	131
	Social worker	4,204082	0,181884	49
Neutral acceptance	Healthcare professional	2,015267	0,063363	131
	Social worker	1,847959	0,103604	49

In our survey we have shown that believing respondents more often declare attitudes indicating acceptance of death and less fear of death. Compared to non-believers, they avoid death less and perceive death more as an escape. There is no difference between religious carers and non-believers in neutral attitude items. (Table 7)

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Table 7 Comparison of attitudes of religious and non-believers respondents

Wilks lambda=,72161, F(5, 172)=13,271, p=,00000				
		Mean	SD	N
Approach Acceptance	religious carers	3,198467	0,14796	58
	non-believers	4,523519	0,102865	120
Fear of Death	religious carers	4,055419	0,177555	58
	non-believers	3,706746	0,12344	120
Avoiding Death	religious carers	4,537931	0,187296	58
	non-believers	4,1475	0,130212	120
Escape Acceptance	religious carers	3,738793	0,169901	58
	non-believers	3,911667	0,118119	120
Neutral acceptance	religious carers	1,955172	0,093332	58
	non-believers	1,949583	0,064887	120

Discussion

In our country, death is still a taboo subject. The Czech Republic is adopting some elements of Western cultures, so we are very influenced by the cult of youth, health and wealth. The idea of death is thus perceived as something very distant, compared to Eastern cultures, for example, where old age is seen as wisdom and death and dying have their specific place[21]. Christianity has a considerable influence on our culture, but, as the results of our survey indicate, the respondents are overwhelmingly non-believers. The Czech Republic is one of the least religious countries in the world[22]. Among other things, this means that faith does not provide the respondents with comfort at the thought of death. Their attitude towards death is thus rather ambivalent. At the same time, the respondents point out that they look forward to meeting their loved ones after death and that death represents going to eternity, to a place that is a blessing. Yet, they do not look forward to life after death and worry about what will happen after death because they do not know. Uncertainty is what respondents associate with death. Paradoxically, death is the only certainty in our lives. Respondents are aware that death means the end of everything they know - and this frightens them to a large extent. Thus, they conceive death as a death, an end, rather than as a culmination, a culmination of human life, an achievement of the goal towards which we have been striving for all our lives. The finality of death as such disturbs them. They see death as a bleak, sad experience. They associate it primarily with negative experience - sadness, pain, suffering.

Despite the strong leaning towards atheism in our culture, the influence of Christianity is deeply ingrained in people's thinking, and our respondents have learned to fear death because

of it, as they may see it as throwing them into unpredictable misery, as Watts[23] confirms in his research. Even so, our society is perceived to be rather atheistic and views on death and the afterlife vary widely on an individual basis. According to research, Czech society tends not to believe in an afterlife. On the other hand, it should be noted that although the trend is reversed in Slovakia, for example, the taboo of death stretches across countries, especially in this era focused on success, power and prosperity[24].

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken our existing certainties and the experience of this situation has undoubtedly had an impact on the experience of death, which fundamentally determines the attitude towards death as such. Various tools are used to explore attitudes towards death. Our DAP-R questionnaire is a suitable method for measuring attitudes towards death, as it measures both positive and negative attitudes. It consists of a total of 32 items and is therefore not very extensive. The disadvantage of the DAP-R is its orientation towards the Christian tradition. For example, the death acceptance scale measures positive attitudes towards death as a belief in a Christian form of life after death. Despite the development of palliative care in the Czech Republic and the gradual implementation of the philosophy of palliative care in both health and social care settings, the topics of dying and death represent a sensitive issue for professional caregivers, which was reflected in a certain reluctance to complete this questionnaire. This reluctance may then have influenced the respondents' statements and may be one of the reasons for the tendency towards the mean in the respondents' answers.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

21 DiGiulio a Kranz, *O smrti.*

22 Hytych, *Smrt a nesmrtelnost : sociální reprezentace smrti*; Vojtíšek, Dušek, a Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích.*

23 Watts, *Mýtus a rituál v křesťanství.*

24 Dobríková, *Trauerbegleitung in unterschieldlichen kulturellen, sozialen und religiösen Kontexten*; Dobríková-Porubčanová, *Nevyliečiteľne chorí v súčasnosti: význam paliatívnej starostlivosti.*

Expert articles

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ON CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES CONCERNING LONG-TERM, FOLLOW-UP AND PALLIATIVE HEALTH CARE IN SLOVAKIA |
Róbert Dobrovodský, Andrea Škripeková

ON CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES CONCERNING LONG-TERM, FOLLOW-UP AND PALLIATIVE HEALTH CARE IN SLOVAKIA*

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Róbert Dobrovodský, Andrea Škripeková

1   Department of Civil and Commercial Law, Faculty of Law, University of Trnava (SK)
2   Department of Palliative Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Slovak Medical University in Bratislava and the National Cancer Institute (SK)

Abstract
Background: The article deals with the current initiative of Slovak Government on the field of health care. Article analyses the Draft act amending Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care, services related to the provision of health care, and on the amendment and supplementation of certain acts prepared by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic. The Draft act has been discussed by National Council of the Slovak Republic during its Junes 2022 Sessions.
Conclusion: The Article focuses on the main features and institutes of law such a multidisciplinary approach, the support team, long-term health care, follow-up health care, palliative health care.
Keywords: Long-term health care - Follow-up health care - Palliative health care - Mobile hospice - Artificial pulmonary ventilation.

1. Introduction: First reform steps in the provision of long-term and palliative health care

From the legal and medical point of view, the Government's draft act amending Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care, services related to the provision of health care, and on the amendment and supplementation of certain acts, as amended, and amending and supplementing certain acts (hereinafter referred to as „the Act") prepared by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic, can be regarded as a significant step in the reform of the provision of health care in Slovakia.[2] For the first time in the legal order, the Act fulfils the ambition to clearly define the different forms of care, and to ensure the availability, quality and efficacy of long-term health care and palliative health care. By regulating the provision of palliative health care for persons mainly at home or in another natural environment, the Act contributes to reconciling the work and family needs of the patient's relatives.

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✉   **Contact on author/Correspondence author: JUDr. Róbert Dobrovodský, PhD., LL.M.**
    robert.dobrovodsky@yahoo.de
✉   **Contact on author: MUDr. Andrea Škripeková, PhD. - andrea.skripekova@gmail.com**

2   The authors wrote the article based on the version of the draft act which was delivered to the National Council of the Slovak Republic on 8 April 2022 under the press number 977.

2. Implementation of long-term strategies and of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic

The aim of the Act is to solve the problems of long-term health care, which is declared not only in the Strategy for Long-Term Care in the Slovak Republic, but also in several current strategic documents in the field of health and social care. The recommendations of the European Commission are also applied and the political commitments of the Government expressed in the Government Programme Statement for 2021-2024 are fulfilled. Long-term care is also part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of the Slovak Republic, which was approved by the European Commission in 2021. One of the milestones of Component 13 is the development of a new legislative framework for long-term health care and palliative health care. The Recovery Plan highlights the need for closer cooperation between the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs and Family and Health, whose coordination has long been insufficient for the integration of social and health care needs. The Act therefore emphasises a multidisciplinary approach to health care provision (Part 3).

3. A multidisciplinary approach and the support team

The ambition of the Act is to prevent the deterioration of health and rehospitalization of persons who have not received care in the necessary time and scope. The fulfilment of this ambition can be found in the Act which, for the first time in health law, defines a **multidisciplinary approach** (Article 4(9) of Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care and services related to the provision of health care). Although the Act makes the multidisciplinary approach conditional on the possibilities offered by the healthcare provider, it clearly defines the purpose. This is the comprehensiveness of health care to be achieved through knowledge from non-medical sciences. The Act enumerates, by way of example, knowledge and practices from social work, other disciplines, and spiritual services. The multidisciplinary approach is based on the idea of health care and non-health care professionals working together and coordinating their practices. Representatives from individual professions bring their specific expertise to the team and collaborate with other institutions and individuals who are part of the patient's comprehensive care. A multidisciplinary team may include psychiatrists, nurses, carers, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, art therapists, music therapists, therapeutic educators, etc. The explanatory memorandum to the Act sets out the expectations of the work of a social counsellor. The social counsellor is to analyse the social problems of the person receiving health care, which have been accentuated by hospitalisation in a health care institution. Social work methods are to be used to address negative consequences, subject to the active cooperation of the person and his or her relatives.

In order to achieve a multidisciplinary approach to care, the Act defines the **support team** as being an auxiliary body of the attending physician (Section 2(36) of Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care and services related to the provision of health care). As is clear from the explanatory memorandum, the support team should not be confused with a medical committee. The role of the support team is to provide the person receiving health care with psychological support, social support, counselling, e.g. in the area of nutrition, as well as spiritual support. The creation of a support team will ensure the hitherto missing link and coordination of health care and social services and strengthen their provision at the community level.

To give a more realistic idea of the impact of legislative changes, the explanatory memorandum of the Act enumerates the specific life situations of patients that will be affected by the legislation. The importance of the work of the support team is demonstrated in the explanatory memorandum by the story of a geriatric patient of advanced age, without serious co-morbidities, who is lonely and childless. She fractures her femoral neck and is hospitalized. The acute care

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portion of her care is completed after 4-5 days. The patient should subsequently be rehabilitated in inpatient health care. The need for follow-up medical care is identified. Given her situation, it is clear that she cannot be left alone in her home environment after discharge from follow-up care. She is referred to the support team at the hospital by the attending physician. Subsequently, the social worker of the support team starts the process of securing care services through the municipality already in the acute ward, as the administrative procedure at the municipality's municipal office takes up to 60 days. If this process was only addressed after the patient has been referred to aftercare, there would be an unnecessary prolongation of the patient's stay in the hospital environment.

4. Defining long-term, follow-up and palliative health care in Slovakia

The key change brought about by the Act lies in the precise definition of the new three forms of health care: **long-term, follow-up and palliative health care.**

The definition of the new forms of health care guarantees the patient a **clear right** to the necessary form of care. The second added value of the definition is a **clearer separation of social care from health care.** The new definitions will help create the basis for a system of long-term integrated social and health care, the benefits of which will be felt in particular by people suffering from chronic diseases, people with palliative health care needs, people with disabilities and the elderly. The historical dimension of the Act is that previous legislative attempts to reform and merge the social services and health care systems have been unsuccessful.[3] The result is two separate systems with minimal coordination and connections.

4.1 Long-term health care

The definition of long-term care is appropriate in order to avoid **placing a burden on specialist health care staff** when caring for a person requiring social care and nursing care (4.1.3). For this reason, the Act defines long-term health care (Section 2, par. 37 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll.) through the **patient's life situation**. Long-term health care also includes follow-up care. The Act is based on the concept of **describing the life situation** in which the patient finds him or herself (4.1.1).

4.1.1 The patient

The definition describes a **patient as a person with limited functioning**. A person is considered to have limited functioning if, because of a disease or multiple diseases increasing the risk of deterioration of his or her health or because of impairment of his or her physical, sensory or mental abilities, he or she is **not self-sufficient** in daily activities and the need for nursing care may be indicated for him or her.

4.1.2 The disease

Another condition for limited functioning is the fact that the person has been diagnosed with a **disease**. However, not just **any disease**. The Act requires that the disease requires either a) **acute** or b) **emergency health care** or c) that it is a disease for which health care **can be expected** to be required. The Act directly defines **acute medical care** in the provisions of paragraph 37 as health care provided to a person due to a disease that has caused a sudden change in his or her state of health that does not immediately endanger his or her life or any of his or her essential life functions.

4.1.3 The goal

The Act further defines the goal of this form of care as follows: a) improving the quality of life, b) prolonging life, c) promoting the person's independence in the area of self-sufficiency, and d) enabling the person to remain as long as possible in his or her home environment or in another natural environment. In other words, the patient's quality of life, independence, safety and autonomy should be maintained or improved. In addition, the definition of long-term care has economic objectives stated in the explanatory memorandum, which recognises that residential care is considered **the costliest form of health care**. Despite this fact, it is still widely used in the Slovak Republic, including for long-term care purposes. Therefore, in the context of the limited resources of public health insurance, the author of the Act declares that it is necessary to **focus on the development and promotion of less costly long-term care services** outside institutional care. This is seen as a way of eliminating the above-average hospitalisation rate, as it is reasonable to assume that without systemic intervention it will increase further due to demographic indicators.

4.2 Follow-up health care

The Act defines **follow-up health care** separately (Section 2, par. 38 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll.), while the definition of long-term care (4.1.) considers follow-up health care as an integral part.[4] Similarly to long-term care, the Act bases follow-up care on the concept of **describing the life situation** in which the patient finds him or herself (4.2.1). The Act explicitly negatively defines (**separates**) **follow-up health care from continuing health care**, so that follow-up health care is not considered to be the provision of health care pursuant to Section 2, par. 8 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll. Continuing health care is defined as active and systematic monitoring of the health condition of a person whose health condition is expected to worsen, as well as his or her examination and treatment.

4.2.1 The patient

The definition states that this is a patient to whom care is **generally provided after the provision of acute** medical care or **emergency** medical care. As a rule, the patient has already been given a basic diagnosis and his or her health condition has been stabilised; however, after a sudden disease or after a sudden deterioration in health or after a worsening of a chronic disease, his or her condition requires further treatment or the provision of early physical therapy care or medical rehabilitation.[5]

As in the case of the support team (3.), the Act also offers in its explanatory memorandum specific life situations of patients who will be affected by the legislation. The explanatory memorandum states an example of **the life situation of a patient** who is to receive follow-up care **after the provision of acute medical care**: It is an obese diabetic patient who received acute medical care for a heart attack and pneumonia. The patient has limited rehabilitation potential due to his/her clinical situation, medications administered (beta blocker reducing rehabilitation potential) and obesity. The aim of follow-up care in this case is to maximise the rehabilitation potential and ensure the patient's timely return to the home environment. At the same time, it is necessary to manage medical complications (heart failure, pneumonia), to educate the patient about weight reduction, including, for example, through consultation with a psychologist who can provide the patient with motivational techniques.

3   K. Križanová, and Škripeková, A. Palliative care in Slovakia has come a long way since the 1990s /. *European Journal of Palliative Care* 22, no. 5 (2015): 257-259.

4   Section 2, par. 37, the last sentence of Act No. 576/2004 Coll.
5   Cf. the wording of a dedicated part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 52).

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As an example of **follow-up care even without prior acute medical care**, there is a description of a patient after a shoulder fracture that has already conservatively healed and this patient needs rehabilitation care to regain rehabilitation potential.

4.2.2 Medical and social goals

The Act explicitly defines the **medical goal** as the maximum possible restoration of a person's cognitive, physical, sensory and mental functions by correcting a functional impairment or replacing a function of the person's body or alleviating the manifestations and consequences of the person's illness. However, the explanatory memorandum also identifies a **social objective** of providing follow-up care in the form of creating time for the family members of the person receiving such care to **prepare for his or her arrival** in the home environment or in another natural environment.

4.2.3 Duration of follow-up health care

The Act also specifies the duration of care according to the different types of follow-up care. Follow-up health care is provided as **residential care** for a maximum of three months from the date of a person's admission to residential care. In the case of **at-home nursing care**[6], it is a maximum of three months from the first day on which such care is provided. If **nursing care** is provided in a social assistance facility, the duration shall be no more than three months from the first day of the provision of such care (Section 10(c) of Act No 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care, services related to the provision of health care). The Act also introduces **Annex 2**, which sets out specific criteria for determining the level of need for health care in the provision of nursing care in the context of long-term health care.[7]

4.2.4 Nursing care in a social assistance facility

Pursuant to Section 10a, par. 1 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll., as amended, a social assistance facility may provide nursing care if it is provided by employees who meet the conditions for the exercise of medical professions pursuant to a special regulation. However, the Act allows a social assistance institution to provide nursing care, **including nursing care provided within follow-up health care,** or nursing care provided within **long-term health care** which is not follow-up health care.

4.3 Palliative health care

The Act gives a separate definition of **palliative health care** (Section 2, par. 39 of Act No. 576/2004 Coll.). It is distinguished from long-term health care (4.1) by high symptom intensity and functional deficit. Similarly to other forms of care (see above), the Act bases palliative care on the concept **describing the life situation** in which the patient finds him or herself (4.3.1).

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6   In defining the duration of at-home nursing care, the Act does not introduce a new definition of at-home nursing care. It is based on the definition in the current Act in Section 8, par. 7 of Act No 576/2004 Coll., namely that at-home care provided by a nurse or midwife with the appropriate professional competence using the method of the nursing process is considered at-home nursing care. Nor does the Act define the term nursing care. It uses the definition in the current Act (Section 2, par. 3), which defines it as health care provided by a nurse with professional competence according to a special regulation by means of a nursing process method within the framework of nursing practice.

7   Annex 2 divides patients into three categories according to the level of health care need – a person at risk of destabilisation based on rating scales: a person with a moderate health care need; and a person with a high health care need. The Annex also specifies the level of healthcare need: for example the need for regular subcutaneous medication, or the presence of decubitus or skin lesions up to 5 cm2.

4.3.1 The patient

The definition states that it is a patient with an **incurable and progressive disease** that usually leads to the patient's death. The definition is based on the knowledge of palliative medicine, which focuses on the treatment and care of persons (patients) whose disease does not respond to curative treatment.

4.3.2 Medical and spiritual goals

The goal of palliative care is to **relieve the patient's suffering and preserve his or her quality of life**. The explanatory memorandum defines the objective set out in the Act as the best quality of life for patients and their families facing problems associated with a life-threatening disease.[8] The Act is based on the definition of palliative care according to the World Health Organization (WHO), according to which the goal of palliative care is the early recognition, skilled assessment and treatment of pain and other physical, psychosocial and spiritual problems.

The explanatory memorandum emphasises that palliative care should also include **meeting people's spiritual needs**, which has become part of improving the quality of life of people in palliative care over the last two decades. The legislator justifies this approach by stating that for persons with a limited life expectancy the spiritual dimension has an impact on how the person will cope with the suffering of his or her illness and the limitations of his or her life.[9] Another shift in the Act in the field of palliative care is a provision according to which such care also includes **crisis intervention by the attending physician** provided to the person to whom palliative health care is being provided and to **the person closest to him/her.** An equally important novelty is crisis intervention by the attending physician provided to **a close person after the death of the person** to whom palliative health care was provided (Section 10e, par. 6 of Act No 576/2004 Coll.).[10]

4.3.3 Defining payments and detailed data collection

In addition to defining the form of palliative care, another contribution is the solution to the problem related to the **lack of health care facilities** providing long-term health care and palliative health care in the Slovak Republic. This state manifests itself in the form of inaccessibility for people who are dependent on its provision.[11] In the area of economic sustainability of palliative care, the Act sets the goal that payments for the provision of long-term health care and palliative health care should ensure adequate coverage of economically justified costs incurred by health care providers. The Act therefore introduces changes in the area of **defining palliative care payments** by regulating payments in the form of **fixed prices** for individual health care providers covered by public health insurance. The change concerns the two-year period during which the

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8   Cf. the wording of a dedicated part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 53).

9   For more on the influence of spirituality, faith, and religious beliefs on a patient's treatment decisions, cf.:
A. Škripeková, Spiritual care for a terminal disease patient – is the doctor's interest necessary? *Palliative medicine and treatment of pain* 12(2e), 2019.
https://www.solen.sk/storage/file/article/PALMED_2_2019_final – Skripekova.pdf

10   In response to the change in the Act, the Slovak Government Regulation No. 776/2004 Coll., which issues the Catalogue of Medical Interventions, has also been amended by inserting a new medical intervention regulating crisis intervention in palliative health care.

11   The explanatory memorandum to the Act monitors in detail regional disparities and the unavailability of palliative care. For example, according to data from 2019, only the Bratislava self-governing region has a palliative ward (acute health care) with 19 beds. Some regions have no palliative ward at all. In terms of palliative wards within the meaning of long-term care, the Bratislava self-governing region has 7 beds, the Trnava self-governing region has 17 beds and the Žilina self-governing region has 35 beds. Only the Bratislava self-governing region has a consulting palliative team in the hospital.

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data necessary to monitor the availability and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of palliative care **will be collected**. Over a two-year period, sufficient and relevant data will be collected on the availability of not only palliative care, but also follow-up care and long-term nursing care. The data will be used for quality assessment, and subsequently the method of their financing will be adjusted without the need for regulation by the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic. **Temporary price regulation** will not only provide an incentive for health care providers to establish health care facilities for the provision of palliative care, but above all it will increase the availability of palliative care for those who are dependent on it.[12]

4.3.4 Content, duration and types of palliative care

The Act divides palliative health care into **basic palliative health care** and **specialised palliative health care**. The distinction between the two types of care is important with regard to the requirements for the provision of care, its duration and funding.

4.3.5 Basic palliative health care

In the framework of **basic palliative health care**, health care is provided by a medical doctor specialized in a **field other** than palliative medicine. The Act also divides the place of provision of health care into **outpatient care** or **residential care in a hospital** in a ward other than the palliative medicine ward. Outpatient care is provided for **as long as such care is indicated**.

4.3.6 Specialized palliative health care

Specialised palliative care must be provided by a medical doctor with a specialization in the **field of palliative medicine**. Along with the Act, an implementing regulation (Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic No. 09812/2008-OL of 10 September 2008 on Minimum requirements for staffing and material and technical equipment of individual types of health care facilities) was submitted to the legislative process, which also takes into account the possibility for doctors to participate in preparatory training. According to the draft transitional provision, the inclusion of a medical doctor in a training for specialisation in the field of palliative medicine by 30 June 2024 at the latest is also considered as fulfilling the staffing requirement.

Specialised palliative care is provided in an **outpatient form** or **residential form** in a hospital **palliative care ward** or in a **hospice** or **nursing home**. Palliative care is preferably provided in the patient's home or other natural environment. If the person has a safe social background at home and is mobile, he or she may stay at home, utilising at-home nursing care, with medical care being provided by way of a palliative medicine office.[13]

The explanatory memorandum to the Act explains that specialised palliative health care includes not only symptom management but also the definition of the clinical situation where death may be a relevant outcome. In the provision of health care, emphasis should be placed on the **comfort of the person, as well as on communication with family members and loved ones**. [14]

Furthermore, the explanatory memorandum explains why the Act distinguishes between different types and forms of palliative care and what aim is to be achieved in practice: the Act is based on best practises according to which specialised palliative care is provided in the context

of institutional care. Most frequently, these are palliative medicine wards or hospices where care is provided directly by medical doctors with a specialisation in palliative medicine. According to the explanatory memorandum, a person's stay in a residential health care facility while receiving palliative health care **should not be regarded** as the provision of long-term health care in terms of time (4.1). The role of a **palliative care ward** should be to provide health care to a **person with high symptom severity** who **cannot or is unable to cope with treatment** at home or in another natural environment and, once the condition has been stabilised, to recommend one of the palliative health care options, e.g. a palliative medicine office, a mobile hospice or a hospice. **Dying badly as a clinical situation** is a reason for admission to a palliative health care ward and is conditional on the person's clinical condition and causally related to his or her terminal illness.[15] Specialised palliative care can also be provided **in the form of outpatient care**. This is not only in a palliative medicine office, but also in the environment in which the person is placed, e.g. in a social services facility, where care is provided by a mobile hospice.
If the person has a safe social background at home and is immobile, health care is provided **by means of a mobile hospice** by a medical doctor with a specialisation in palliative medicine and a nurse, possibly in collaboration with the helping professions. If the person requires **nursing care on a daily basis** or more frequently than from visits by a mobile hospice doctor, care may be supplemented by at-home nursing care agencies.

If the person to receive specialised palliative care does not have a safe social environment at home and has a life expectancy of less than 6 months, he or she may be cared for in a **hospice**. An alternative to care in a 'bricks and mortar' hospice may be a combination of health and social care in a social services facility with nursing care or at-home care agencies in collaboration with a mobile hospice, or in a nursing home in collaboration with a mobile hospice. [16]

4.3.7 Duration and cost of palliative care

The Act stipulates that specialized palliative care in a hospital **palliative care ward** is to be provided for a **maximum of one month** from the date of admission to residential care. In the case of residential care in a **hospice**, this period must not exceed **six months** from the date of admission to residential care. The period of palliative care provision **may be extended**. The consent of the health insurance agency is required for such extension to be granted. Repeated extension is also possible. The provider requests approval from the health insurance agency based on a medical consultation. With regard to the possibility of extending the provision of palliative care, the Act introduces a new obligation for the health insurance agency: Section 1, par. 1(am) of Act No. 581/2004 Coll. on Health Insurance Companies and Health Care Surveillance defines the obligation for the health insurance agency to send a decision no later than 15 days after receipt of the request as to whether or not it agrees with the extension of the period of provision of long-term nursing care or palliative health care. The insurer is also obliged to state the period by which the provision of such care is extended.

The Act **temporarily, i.e. from the planned date of effect** (1 July 2022) **until 30 June 2024**, empowers the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic to regulate the price (reimbursement) set by the health insurance company. According to the draft pricing measure, the fixed price for specialised palliative health care provided by a facility that has a hospital operating permit and which **operates a palliative ward** and meets the **staffing and material and technical equipment requirements set for a palliative ward** shall be as follows:

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12 According to the selected impacts clause of the Act, the financing of long-term health and palliative care is currently inadequate, regardless of the place of provision of this care, i.e. whether in an inpatient facility (palliative wards, nursing homes, etc.) or in a community setting (through nursing care agencies or mobile hospices). The clause gives an illustrative example of mobile hospices where contributions from health insurers for 2019 did not even cover 15% of the annual costs.

13 Cf. the wording of the specific part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 64).

14 Cf. the wording of the specific part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 64).

15 Cf. the wording of the specific part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 64).

16 Cf. the wording of the specific part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 65).

Expert articles

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ON CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES CONCERNING LONG-TERM, FOLLOW-UP AND PALLIATIVE HEALTH CARE IN SLOVAKIA |
Róbert Dobrovodský, Andrea Škripeková

a) from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022 – EUR 237 per bed-day;
b) from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 – EUR 251 per bed-day;
c) from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 – EUR 266 per bed-day.

The above amounts apply provided that the average length of hospitalisation per calendar month in a palliative care ward does not exceed 12 days. If the average number of days of hospitalisation per patient is exceeded, the fixed price shall be reduced accordingly in the next billing period.

Similar to the palliative care ward, the Act temporarily regulates payments for mobile hospices. The fixed price for health care provided to a provider who is licensed to operate a **mobile hospice** shall be as follows:

a) from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022 – EUR 55;
b) from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 – EUR 58;
c) from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 – EUR 61.

for **each visit to a person** in palliative health care in their home or other natural environment by a mobile hospice medical doctor and a nurse. The proposed amounts apply to a maximum of 8 visits per person per 12 calendar months, with the possibility of increasing the number of visits upon approval by the person's health insuring agency. In addition to this amount, the mobile hospice is entitled to EUR 0.30 per kilometre of travel for each visit to a person in palliative care. A **higher amount** is payable to the mobile hospice if it provides specialised palliative care.[17]

4.3.8 Expansion of the minimum network of palliative care units and hospices

The Act also introduces changes to Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 640/2008 Coll. on the Public minimum network of health care providers in relation to the minimum network of hospices and places providing palliative care. Changes in the number of the public minimum network of health care providers is of great importance for the availability of health care. The **public minimum network of providers** is defined in the Act as an arrangement of the smallest possible number of publicly available providers on the territory of the Slovak Republic or on the territory of the relevant self-governing region or on the territory of the relevant district in such number and composition as to ensure effectively accessible, uninterrupted, continuous and professional health care (Section 5, par.1 of Act No 578/2004 Coll. on Health care providers, health care workers, and professional organisations in the health care sector). According to the currently valid wording of the Government Regulation, the public minimum network for hospice and mobile hospice was established by at least one hospice and one mobile hospice per territory of a self-governing region.[18] However, the Act introduces a change to a **minimum of two hospices**.

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17 a) from 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022 – EUR 89 per bed-day;
b) from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 – EUR 94 per bed-day;
c) from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024 – EUR 100 per bed-day.

18 According to the explanatory memorandum (p. 23) to the Act, the need for mobile hospices is defined by EAPC16 at approximately **1 mobile hospice per district**. Slovakia currently has **79 districts with 8 mobile hospices**, of which only seven are staffed by medical doctors with a specialisation in specialized palliative medicine. The care provided by a mobile hospice should be supplemented by a support team (e.g. psychologist, physical therapist, spiritual, nutritional counsellor, etc.), which is almost completely absent in the Slovak Republic. Mobile hospices as a part of specialised outpatient palliative care with the possibility of visiting services by a doctor and a nurse are available in only five regions of Slovakia.

4.3.9 Instructing the person identified as being in need of palliative care

The Act regulates in a special provision the conditions for instruction when available curative treatment options have been exhausted and before the provision of palliative health care is initiated. Instructing a patient with a terminal and progressive disease is a particularly important moment for the continuous provision of health care, where the attending medical doctor has the right and the possibility to refer a patient with a high intensity of symptoms, where death is a relevant outcome of the clinical situation, to a doctor (palliative medicine specialist) who can care for the patient, when all available treatment options have been exhausted.[19] The Act therefore introduces a **specific instruction to the person** identified as being in need of palliative care. The instruction is to be given if the attending medical doctor identifies a person as having an incurable and progressive disease, usually leading to death, and decides on **the need for palliative health care**. In this case, the medical doctor must provide the person with instructions, which must include

a) information on
  1. the exhaustion of available treatment options to avert disease progression;
  2. the possibility of providing palliative healthcare;
  3. the possibility of social assistance or spiritual support by support teams in the provision of residential care;
b) identification data of the provider who can provide health care to the person, including the name of the provider, the address of the provider, and the name and surname of the medical doctor with a specialisation in palliative medicine.

4.4 Conclusion: Conditions for the provision of artificial pulmonary ventilation

The Act, in the provision of Section 8, par. 12, regulates the possibility of providing artificial pulmonary ventilation in an outpatient form also in a home environment or in a facility for social and legal protection of children and social guardianship. This is subject to suitable conditions for its provision created in this environment. As is clear from the explanatory memorandum to the Act, the aim is to promote **at-home artificial pulmonary ventilation**, which combines the use of artificial ventilation with the benefits of the home environment, resulting in an improvement in the psychosomatic condition of the person who is dependent on life-long artificial ventilation. The benefit of at-home artificial pulmonary ventilation is not only the comfort of the home environment, but above all the **presence and support of loved ones**. In order to provide at-home artificial ventilation, the patient, the patient's loved ones and the attending healthcare professional must go through a **process of education and training in all nursing procedures and techniques**. The sponsor of the Act expects that the number of patients in at-home care will increase, freeing up acute intensive care beds in hospitals.[20]

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. But at the same time, all the authors

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19 Cf. the wording of the specific part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 55).
20 Cf. the wording of the specific part of the explanatory memorandum to the Act (p. 57).

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declare that they were involved as the members of the expert group of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic which has prepared the Government's draft act amending Act No. 576/2004 Coll. on Health Care, services related to the provision of health care, and on the amendment and supplementation of certain acts, as amended, and amending and supplementing certain acts. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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Act No. 581/2004 Coll. on Health Insurance Companies and Health Care Surveillance

Decree of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic No. 09812/2008-OL of 10 September 2008 on Minimum requirements for staffing and material and technical equipment of individual types of health care facilities

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PALLIATIVE CARE IN INPATIENT HOSPICES IN SLOVAKIA*

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Patricia Dobríková [1,2,3] ✉, Diana Horniaková [3], Pam Firth [4]

1   Faculty of Health Care and Social Work, Trnava University in Trnava (SK)
2   Hospice Milosrdných sestier in Trenčín (SK)
3   Hospice Rafael, Bratislava (SK)
4   Independent Consultant in Psychosocial Palliative Care St. Albans (UK) ; Co- Chair EAPC Social Work Task Force (UK)

Abstract

Backround/(Aim): Palliative care is an important component of health care in pandemics. Global pandemics, which includes COVID-19, are leading to a sharp increase demand for health services, including palliative care. To examine preparedness for, and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on hospices in Slovakia and to inform other countries of the Slovakian response.

Methods/(Design, Setting): Telephone survey of hospices in Slovakia based on a semi-structured questionnaire. The research sample consisted of 11 inpatient hospices in the Slovak Republic, of which 10 of them participated in the research.

Results: All hospices immediately implemented changes to existing procedures, developed their own written guidelines and policies for working in times of emergency declared on the basis of a rapidly spreading virus. The biggest problems were the lack of staff guidelines on crisis management and how hospices should work in times of emergency and the lack of personal protective equipment. The results indicate the necessity for the cooperation of the entire interdisciplinary team of hospice staff, with social workers and psychologists proving to be an important part of the interdisciplinary team.

Conclusion: Hospices offer comprehensive care to patients in the terminal stages of various diseases and they are capable of responding flexibly and rapidly to COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that the government and the entire health sector of the Slovak Republic recognize the need of palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic and seek to ensure the protection and full integration of hospices in the care of end-stage patients during a global pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19 – Pandemics – Hospices – Palliative care.

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Introduction

In Slovakia, the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was occured on the 6.3.2020. The Government of the Slovak Republic responded to the threat with timely measures (eg. mandatory wearing of facial masks, restriction of freedom of movement during the Easter holidays with valid exceptions, school closures, border closure and mandatory 14-day quarantine for Slovak citizens coming from abroad, closure of international airports, suspension or restriction of international bus and train transport).[2] The first wave of the pandemic in Slovakia lasted until about July 2020. However, the gradual relaxation of measures and the summer holiday season led to Slovakia experiencing a second wave of the disease. Based on the significantly deteriorating epidemiological situation, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved a curfew for the whole territory of Slovakia from 24.10.2020 to 1.11.2020, allowing several exceptions (eg purchase of food and medicine, doctor's visit, caring for a close person). To prevent a further deterioration of the epidemiological situation and an increase in the number of people with COVID-19, the Government approved 2 rounds of nationwide testing of all Slovaks over 10 years for COVID-19 by antigen tests. Gradually, the need for regular testing, once a week with antigen tests was introduced in Slovakia, this depended on the current epidemiological situation in specific districts or regions.

The need for palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic is high[3] and healthcare systems across the world should consider the need and necessity for palliative care in wards or hospices whose capacities, materials and equipment are also limited in order to enable people to receive the adequate care required by their current state of health[4] in order to protect them from suffering.[5] Indeed, clinical research and observation show that patients who die of COVID-19 require symptomatic treatment because they most often suffer from shortness of breath, fever, and agitation.[6] Thus, symptomatic, palliative, care is shown as effective. However, during the first weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, deaths in hospitals and nursing homes increased and in hospices, paradoxically, the number of deaths decreased.[7] A similar phenomenon was observed during the SARS pandemic in 2003.[8] It follows that hospices may be particularly sensitive to disruption during a pandemic but there is very little data on the response or impact on palliative care in these situations.

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The aim of this study is to examine the preparedness and impacts of infectious viral disease COVID-19 on hospices in Slovakia. We were very inspired by the research of Constantini et al.[9], who conducted research on the impact of COVID-19 in Italy, the first country reporting the disease in Europe.

We set the following research questions:
1. How did hospices in Slovakia change their services, procedures and management as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What impact did COVID-19 have on hospice staff and how stressed were they from possible virus infection?
3. What aspects worried or limited their ability to respond to COVID-19?
4. Has the interest in hospitalizing patients decreased as a result of the pandemic?
5. Has any of the hospices had any experience with a patient or staff member infected with COVID-19 and if so, how and whether this has affected their procedures and services in the facility?
6. What were the differences between the first and second wave of the pandemic in the functioning of hospices in Slovakia?

Methods

Design

Telephone survey of hospices in Slovakia based on a semi-structured questionnaire answered a member of the senior management team.

As already mentioned, we were inspired by the study of Constantini et al.[10], which we reworked and adapted the research questions with regard to the course and development of the pandemic situation in Slovakia.

As this is not a clinical study, no formal ethical approval was necessary (according to the legislation of the Slovak Republic). We agreed with hospices to keep their identity anonymous.

Sampling and data collection

We decided to address all inpatient hospices in Slovakia (N = 11) in our research, which we found listed in the lists of hospices in Slovakia on websites. We did not address the palliative care departments that are part of the hospitals in the survey, because they must follow the general crisis procedures that apply to the entire hospital facility. We approached the inpatient hospices because they formed their procedures, rules and crisis plans directly for their facility, and thus were able to provide us with the most accurate information possible to answer our research questions. Hospices were contacted by telephone by the authors of the study. The director, head doctor or head nurse of the hospice were contacted. The questions were read to the respondents and their answers were written down by authors. We informed respondents that their participation in the research was voluntary and also reassured them of anonymity.

The research sample consisted of 11 inpatient hospices:
1. Dom Rafael, Bratislava
2. Hospic Milosrdných sestier, Trenčín

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9   M Constantini, KE Sleeman, C Peruselli, et al. Response and role of palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic: A national telephone survey of hospices in Italy. *Palliative Medicine* 34, no.7, (2020): 889-895. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0269216320920780

10   M Constantini, KE Sleeman, C Peruselli, et al. Response and role of palliative care.

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3. Hestia Lučenec
4. Tolerancia, Trstice
5. Dom Božieho milosrdenstva, Banská Bystrica
6. Hospic sv. Františka z Assisi, Palárikovo
7. Hospic sv. Alžbety, Ľubica
8. Hospic Ľubietová
9. Liečebňa sv. Františka, Bratislava
10. Dom pokoja a zmieru u Bernadetky, Nitra
11. Hospic Matky Terezy, Bardejovská Nová Ves

Ten hospices agreed to participate with the research. One hospice did not participate in the research due to the long-term incapacity of the Hospice director, who was therefore unable to agreed participation in the research. The interview lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Analysis
Descriptive analysis was undertaken of quantitative and qualitative data. We explored patterns and did not plan statistical comparisons.

All transcripts were coded thematically by two of the three authors who met regularly to identify areas of convergence until full agreement was reached. The team identified and consensually validated emerging themes and appended segments of dialogue supporting the proposed themes. The team systematically reviewed the themes and sorted them into content domains. The third author maintained an audit trail to track the team's developing thinking. Finally, as a test of 'goodness-of-fit', we carefully reviewed the interviews for any 'deviant' cases that did not fit the categories we had developed.

Ethical issues
As this is not a clinical study, no formal ethical approval was necessary (according to the legislation of the Slovak Republic). We agreed with hospices to keep their identity anonymous.

Results

Positive cases of COVID-19
During the first wave, three hospices had experience with COVID-19.

In one hospice, the patient had to be transferred from hospice to another facility and so she was tested before leaving the hospice and the test result was positive. The patient was asymptomatic and was transferred to a separate room where she was isolated from other patients. In another hospice, they had two experiences with the COVID-19 virus, both of whom were hospice paramedics. In another hospice, the employee was in quarantine since she found out that her daughter was ill.

After the second wave, COVID-19 appeared in all hospices except one. The infection appeared to be spread in the facilities in various ways; from a visiting relative of the patient, from staff, or from newly admitted patients from hospitals. In one hospice, the patient became infected in the hospital during regular dialysis.

Measures of dealing with the infection varied depending on whether the infection spread mildly or very rapidly. Three hospices suspected of having a British disease mutation in their facilities found that the infection spread so fast that three days after the infection was detected, the infection had spread throughout the whole facility, among patients and staff alike. Initially, they created quarantine rooms, later the entire facilities were quarantined, by the order of the

Regional Public Health Office. One of the facilities had to call in the service of volunteers at the peak of the contagion, as almost all employees were infected. Employees who were infected but had only mild or no symptoms also went to work.

The remaining facilities, after detecting the infection in the patient, quickly tested all patients and staff and created quarantine rooms. After overcoming the COVID-19 and ending the quarantine of the infected patients, they returned to the standard regimen. One of the hospices had 2 quarantine rooms and 2 rooms for post-covid patients in case of COVID-19 recurrence. These rooms are left vacant.

All hospices stated that in the event of deteriorating patients, hospitals either did not want to admit hospice patients in the terminal phase or did not want them to be transported to the hospital by the patients themselves or their relatives. The director of one of the hospices stated that after Covid positivity was detected by a PCR test in one patient, the hospital refused to accept him for admission because, although the patient had COVID-19, the infectivity was low.

In one facility, the government ordered the commissioning of 15 beds for infected people with coronavirus.

Procedures and guidance for patients, volunteers and visitors
During 1st wave, all 10 hospices had written procedures or guidelines in the event of positive test results among patients, relatives, and staff members. Eight hospices had guidelines also in the event of a suspected of positive case of infection.

All facilities developed their crisis plans on the basis of general guidelines and regulations of the crisis staff, the Government of the Slovak Republic or the Public Health Office, which they supplemented and adapted according to their own needs.

Two hospices had written procedures in place if a volunteer tested positive for the virus or was suspected of having the disease. During the first wave, a volunteer support system operated in these hospices, despite the extraordinary situation, but volunteers had to observe increased hygienic measures. In one hospice volunteers had to be tested for COVID-19. In six hospices, volunteer support has been suspended since March. In two hospices, there is no volunteer support system.

During the second wave of the infection, volunteers worked in only one of the hospices, and the volunteers had to provide a negative antigen test once a week. One hospice launched the possibility of volunteering, but the volunteers must be vaccinated. Other facilities have suspended volunteering at the patient's bedside or they consider each request individually.

Changing in visiting policies
All hospices changed their unlimited visiting hours and set a time for relatives to visit patients and instigated increased hygiene measures. The range of visits varied, but all hospices agreed that visits of relatives were considered on an individual basis and if the patient was at the end of life (in finem), visits were allowed to the patient's relatives. This also applied to two hospices, which for several days agreed to a total ban on public visits. The two hospices created a fixed schedule of visits for relatives. Most hospices only allowed visits on weekdays. In one hospice, relatives had a separate entrance to enter the building. In one hospice, visits were allowed only outdoors. Hospices also agreed to limit the number of visitors per patient to 1, max. 2 people.

All hospices ordered mandatory wearing of a mask for the entire duration of the visit, disinfection of hands or wearing disposable protective gloves and measurement of body temperature before entering the building.

In other measures, hospices already differed individually. In three hospices, relatives had to sign an affidavit stating that they were not suffering or that they had not met anyone suffering

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from the viral infectious disease COVID-19. In five hospices, employees took an epidemiological history of relatives. In one hospice, relatives had to have a negative test result for COVID-19. In two hospices, they required confirmation from a relative from foreign country of a negative test result for COVID-19 by PCR. In one of the hospices, they required the wearing of disposable coats, in another disposable shoe covers and head covering.

During the second wave of the infection, as in the first wave, individual hospices set their own rules. Visits were generally banned during the outbreak of the disease in some facilities. Otherwise, the visits to the hospices operated a schedule of visits, which was managed by the social workers of the hospices. In some hospices, visits were organized so that patients were taken into the lobby of the facility and relatives remained in front of the building so that they had the opportunity to see each other through the glass and make a phone call.

All hospices required confirmation from relatives of a negative antigen test result before visiting the patient's bedside. The validity of the confirmation was determined by the hospices. The range ranged from the test result on the day of the visit to the 7-day-old test. The rules also differed for relatives who were vaccinated against COVID-19 and those who had been infected by COVID-19 within 90 days. Some hospices required confirmation of a negative test result from them as well, some hospices did not. The hospices also determined the hygiene measures for relatives individually. The same measure was the mandatory wearing of a face mask FFP2 throughout the visit.

All hospices allowed visits to the patients in the terminal phase of the disease (in finem).

Protective equipment
In terms of protective clothing and work equipment, most hospices experienced a huge shortage as their supplies quickly ran out. The prices of protective clothing and work equipment rose sharply, especially in the case of disposable protective masks, disposable rubber gloves and disinfection. Most hospices have solved this fact mainly by saving protective equipment, for example with reusable masks made of cotton which could be washed and ironed. Face shields were in stock in the event of COVID-19 occurrence.

Disposable protective coats were used in only one hospice before entering each room. In another facility, they used rubber coats, which they disinfected after use. Other hospices had disposable protective coats in stock in case of emergency.

Respondents to the survey said they also purchased new or more of germicidal lamps, thermometers, disinfectant dispensers.

In one of the hospices, management organized an educational seminar on the use of protective clothing and work equipment. In another facility, they created a disinfection zone at the entrance to and from the facility where the employees changed clothes, measured the temperature, signed a binding declaration, disinfected the coats, ironed the masks. In another hospice, they prepared „covid packages", with protective equipment for immediate use in case of COVID-19 occurrence.

During the second wave of the disease, protective equipment did not differ significantly from the period after the first wave of the disease. FFP2 face mask have become mandatory. If COVID-19 disease occurred in the facility, hospices used the protective equipment they had in their warehouses for such a case. Due to the above-mentioned increase in the price of protective equipment, hospices used protective equipment that they could afford or was donated to them by sponsors. In some hospices, they used disposable coats for covid-positive patients, in others they wore protective suits.

Admission criteria
Seven hospices during 1st wave admitted new patients to the facility only after presenting a negative PCR test result. In one of these hospices, in addition to the negative PCR test, they placed the newly admitted patient in a separate room for 10 days. In another hospice, they considered admitting high-risk patients with diagnoses such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or lung cancer. In another facility, they restricted the admission of new patients only from the catchment area of the region to eliminate possible infection during a transport from a greater distance. In another hospice, they required two negative PCR tests performed in succession 24 hours apart.

In the remaining three hospices, they only took a detailed epidemiological history from patients and their relatives.

In the second wave of infection, eight hospices require a negative patient test result before admission to the facility. Some hospices set aside quarantine rooms, where a newly admitted patient is quarantined for at least another 5 days. One of the hospices tested a newly admitted patient with an antigen test on admission, on day 5 and day 8 after admission of the patient.

Two hospices also accepted patients with COVID-19, one of which had government-mandated commissioning of 15 beds for infectious patients.

Care after death
Although the last farewell of relatives with the deceased in the hospice's reverence room was generally prohibited, managers granted individual exemptions.

The solemn memorial holy mass, which is provided in hospices as part of the palliative care of bereaved relatives, has in most cases been cancelled, rescheduled or carried out in private within interdisciplinary staff teams.

Impact on workforce
Unjustified absences of employees were recorded only in one hospice.

We used the Likert scale of 1 to 10 to determine the extent to which employees were stressed by the need to care for their children and relatives because of pandemic situation. The employees showed a degree of stress in the average range (M = 4.9; SD = 2.73). The stress and fear that employees might infect their relatives was slightly higher (M = 4.7; SD = 3.06) than the stress that they could infect hospice patients (M = 4.2; SD = 3.19).

Managers in hospices with low levels of stress among their employees attribute this to the fact that they communicate clearly and openly with hospice staff and do not withhold information from them.

During the second wave of the disease, unauthorized absences of staff were only recorded in one of the hospices.

The stress of employees associated with the need to care for their children or relatives decreased (M = 3.5; SD = 2.03). The level of stress resulting from the possibility of infecting their relatives (M = 3.6; SD = 2.34) and from the possibility of infecting patients in a hospice (M = 3.2; SD = 2.15) has also decreased.

Facility managers attributed reducing the level of stress and anxiety among employees, to the fact that employees have adapted to a situation that has persisted for more than a year. Each facility set its own measures and rules at the beginning of a pandemic situation. In the first wave overcoming the incidence of COVID-19 in the facilities, demonstrated which measures were sufficient, and which were not. Now, it seems that hospices already have their usual and functioning rules and measures that have worked for them.

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Reduction in hospitalization

During the 1st wave of the infection, six respondents stated that they had not noticed a reduction in hospitalization since declaring an emergency caused by the spread of COVID-19. One respondent said that interest in placement new patients had risen from a local hospital from which they wanted to refer unindicated patients because they did not have wards where to place patients, due to the occupancy of beds in their facility, due to the COVID-19 virus. Other respondents stated that the number of people interested in hospitalization in their facility had decreased significantly.

During the second wave, up to 8 respondents stated that they noticed a reduction in hospitalization. According to them, the main reasons were the concerns of relatives about placing their loved ones in medical facilities because of COVID-19 occurrence or the fact that relatives were able to take care of patients at home, as most of them worked from home.

One facility reported that the number of applicants to their hospice had increased, but these were patients who were not indicated for palliative care but did not want to be hospitalized in the hospitals

One facility did not notice a reduction in the number of people interested in hospitalization.

Other comments

Respondents agreed that the need for interdisciplinary cooperation of hospice staff has manifested itself as never before, mainly due to the need for uniform approach and information to patients' relatives. Hospices, which employed psychologists as members of their interdisciplinary team stated that their professional approach and expertise had helped to alleviate the level of stress experienced by staff and by patients' relatives. Hospice social workers have proven to be important members of interdisciplinary teams, for example in taking epidemiological histories of patients, eliminating feelings of loneliness due to restrictions on visiting hours, etc.

Hospice leaders agreed that they considered the greatest impact of a global pandemic to be a violation of the basic principles of hospice care, such as the need to limit visiting hours from unlimited, a significant reduction in the satisfaction and care of patients' spiritual needs (e.g. bans on gatherings and thus a ban on the service of masses and worship, restrictions on visits by clergy to patients only during the terminal phase - in finem), limiting the acute admission of dying patients to the hospice due to the need to wait for the result of antigen tests. In many cases, respondents stated that the relatives of the potential patients, due to the high cost of the PCR test, which was a condition for admission to most hospices, decided that they could not place their relative in the hospice for financial reasons. In one of the hospices, they stated that they were trying to eliminate the intake of patients with lung disease, due to concerns about possible infection with COVID-19 and therefore could not be given palliative care which the patient needed. Another threatening factor for the adequate provide of palliative care in hospices was the ever-increasing experience of stress and anxiety among hospice staff, as well as the hospice's perceived lack of support in providing protective equipment and antigen tests by the state.

We find it interesting that some hospices have agreed that hospices are not designed to manage the possibility of a pandemic or highly infectious diseases. This is because hospice buildings are designed to resemble homes as much as possible and not hospital facilities, so in the event of an outbreak in the facility, it was not possible to create a quarantine zone for positive patients, create a disinfection room for employees, etc.

Due to the finding from our research sample only one hospice did not record a single case of COVID-19 in the facility, and so we decided to describe in more detail the procedures and measures of this hospice:

- Daily control and reporting of body temperature of all employees 3 times a day
- Daily control and reporting of body temperature, blood pressure and pulse of all patients 3 times a day
- All employees were obliged to wear a disposable face mask or FFP2 face mask (type according to the current government regulation) in all internal areas of the hospice
- Indoor patients´ visits are prohibited, only regulated contactless visits in the entrance hall through glass are allowed, while the patient communicates with relatives via a mobile phone, which is intended only for these purposes
- An exception to the ban on indoor visits is if the patient is in the terminal stage of the disease (in finem), where one family member can come for a maximum of 15 minutes and must have protective equipment – face mask FFP2, face shield, cap, disposable overall, shoe covers and gloves and must keep a minimum distance of 2 m from the patient. A separate guest room with access from the terrace and a germicidal radiator was reserved for such a visit, the relative must measure the body temperature and fill the Covid - 19 Questionnaire before the visit.
- In case of contact with relatives of patients, all employees wear a face mask FFP2, protective shield and gloves, contact takes place in a dedicated entrance room at a distance of at least 2 meters from the employee and in the presence of a switched-on germicidal radiator
- Relatives are only allowed to bring packaged foods for patients. All packages are disinfected and radiated with a germicidal radiator before being given to the patient. Delivery of such packages takes place contactless - relatives ring through the gatehouse with a camera system, inform the nurse of the patient's name, place the package in front of the door and the nurse picks up the package immediately after the relatives leave.
- Germicidal radiators are in operation 24 hours a day, all hospice rooms are irradiated, time records are kept about their use in individual rooms of the entire hospice
- On admission, the patient is isolated in a separate quarantine room with the germicidal radiator for 14 days, his personal belongings and medicines are either disinfected, irradiated with the germicide radiator, or a combination of both, depending on the material. Any medical documentation brought by the patient is irradiated with a germicidal radiator, and only after this process is recorded in the nurses' office. The patient's personal clothes are washed immediately after the admission, using a disinfectant detergent and the clothes are disinfected also during ironing.
- If the patient does not feel well or develops a sign of acute illness, he / she is isolated in a separate quarantine room with the germicidal device switched on
- Disinfection mats and hand disinfection are placed at each entrance to the building
- There is 3 times a day disinfection of all areas and surfaces in the entire hospice.
- In addition to the normal hygiene of patients' hands, their hands are disinfected before each meal with an antiviral disinfectant
- Patients are taking vitamin C, D, zinc and melatonin for a long time
- When satisfying the spiritual needs of patients, the priest is allowed to visit the patient only in protective equipment - face mask FFP2, face shield, cap, disposable overall, shoe covers and gloves
- If an employee does not subjectively feel well, or develops any acute illness, or comes into contact with a person who is positive for COVID-19, immediately contacts the facility director, does not come to work, and has to be tested for COVID-19 with PCR test
- Testing of staff and patients for COVID-19 with antigen tests is performed regularly every week

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Discussion

All hospices in Slovakia described difficulties and changes in their functioning, procedures and criteria in the admission and care of patients. The biggest problems for hospice managers were the lack of personal protective equipment for employees and the enormous price increases of suppliers. This would have led to the closure of many hospices, without the sponsors and donors who helped the hospices by providing them with the necessary protective equipment and resources. Hospices also had difficulty in drawing up crisis plans for operating their facilities during a pandemic, as was also shown in research carried out in Italy.[11]

One of the measures was the admission of patients to the hospice only on the basis of the submission of a negative PCR test result. Hospices that did not require a negative test result took a detailed epidemiological history. Although insisting on a negative PCR test result on the one hand and confidence in the true statement of epidemiological history on the other, may appear to be two conflicting measures, they have a common denominator, which is the financial difficulties encountered by all hospices not only in Slovakia but they are also discussed by research abroad.[12] The arguments for requiring a PCR test when admitting a new patient served mainly to protect hospice staff. Indeed, in the event of infection of several workers at once, there would be a risk of collapse in the provision of comprehensive care in hospices. Arguments advocating taking the epidemiological history of potential hospitalized patients as a sufficient measure were cited by respondents mainly because, in addition to paying for hospitalization, which is already costly, they do not have to pay extra for a PCR test, the price of which was also high. They wanted to protect patients from overpayment and also to avoid the possible risk of refused hospitalization by potential new patients, thus reducing their bed occupancy, which is crucial for their survival due to the need to cover the costs associated with operating the facility. It should be noted that the financial costs associated with healthcare are associated with a deterioration in patients' well-being in all physio-psycho-socio-spiritual areas and also with a greater degree of subjective experience of pain and suffering.[13]

Our study shows, that it is important that hospice management and superiors communicate the ever-changing COVID-19 facility situation with all members of their interdisciplinary staff team on a regular and transparent basis, without obscuring the facts, even though truthful information could increase stress and concerns of employees due to the threatening nature. To mitigate the impact of emotionally demanding work because of COVID-19 on employees, an organized and systemic approach is recommended, which includes access to informal and professional support.[14]

The collaboration of all members of the hospice interdisciplinary team has been shown to maintain the best possible providing of comprehensive care for end-stage patients during a pandemic, with social workers proving to be an important part of the teams. Their role is to provide social counseling to patients and their relatives, emotional support, and to constantly ensure communication with them.[15]

In our study, four hospice managers saw a decrease in the number of people interested in hospitalization. A similar phenomenon has manifested itself in other countries, where palliative care for various infectious diseases has proved to be underused.[16]

The limitations of this study are that it was a rapid telephone survey. We chose purposive sampling because this is known to be very useful in situations where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern, for example in the context of rapid spread of COVID-19 and a lack of information on the hospice response, and when a targeted sample is needed quickly. We saw the need for a quick summary of hospice experiences during the pandemic, so we tried to do a qualitative data analysis as quickly and efficiently as possible, so that hospices could compare their procedures with other facilities.

Conclusion

Hospices in Slovakia are constantly, not only during the pandemic, encountering insufficient support from the state and health insurance companies, lack of funds for their operation and lack of staff due to inability to equalize salary conditions in compare of hospital staff. It is important that the government and the entire health sector of Slovakia recognize the need of palliative care during the COVID-19 pandemic and seek to ensure the protection and full integration of hospices in the care of end-stage patients during a global pandemic.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

P.D. and D.H. conceived the idea, conducted the interviews and led analysis of the data with critical input from all authors. P.F. conducted the search for evidence with input from all authors. P.D. with D.H. wrote the first draft of the paper. All authors contributed to critical review.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO THE CHALLENGES OF PATIENT CARE IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA

❖

Karel Sládek ✉

Department of Nursing, Faculty of Health Studies, Pardubice University, Pardubice (CZ)

Abstract

Background: The aim of the article is to present selected spiritual-ethical topics that highlighted the time of the pandemic in the feedback of health professionals themselves during their concurrent university studies at the Faculty of Health Studies, University of Pardubice in the Czech Republic.

Methods: The method of work is an interdisciplinary interpretation of a pilot survey among health professionals who have served in the COVID-19 departments at the ethical, philosophical, and spiritual levels.

Results: In contrast to the already existing outputs from sociological surveys among health professionals, the inherent value of the article is its interdisciplinary approach to the interpretation of the obtained data. The topic of the first chapter reflects the legitimate need to protect oneself from the spread of the disease with the help of respirators and other protective equipment, which has limited the possibilities of communication between healthcare professionals and patients. This has proven the importance of the human face in communication. Another topic concerns the care of mental health of health professionals in the prevention of burnout syndrome, which they face due to work overload in covid department. Finally, the topic of the noon third chapter presents the current discussion of moral dilemmas and moral distress among health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a new burden on health professionals on a physical, mental and spiritual level. The pre-existing post-lid syndrome among health professionals will require an interdisciplinary approach, the establishment of interdisciplinary counseling teams, mentoring and forms of support at the level of ethical, psychological and spiritual support for health professionals.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic – Nursing – Ethics – Spirituality – Burnout.

Introduction

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the functioning of society as a whole, with healthcare facing the biggest work demands. In the Czech Republic, medical staff, firefighters, soldiers and frontline workers were applauded in the first wave of the pandemic in 2020. However, this appreciation towards the efforts of these workers decreased in the subsequent waves, which were disproportionately more demanding. Nevertheless, it is necessary to reflect on the complexity of nursing care in pandemic emergency conditions. Healthcare professionals

✉   Contact on autor: doc. RNDr. ThLic. Karel Sládek, Ph.D. – e-mail: karel.sladek@upce.cz

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themselves must not be left alone with the fears, questions, and dilemmas they encounter daily in their dedicated service.

The main focus of nursing care during the pandemic, especially, was the care of critically sick patients. While there have been studies about the impact of the pandemic on the physical, mental and spiritual health of nurses, we aim to use an interdisciplinary approach to the interpretation of the obtained data. The method of work is an interdisciplinary interpretation of a pilot survey among health professionals who have served in the COVID care departments at the ethical, philosophical, and spiritual levels. It is the need for dialogue between different scientific disciplines on the impact of a pandemic on the lives of health professionals that will play an important role in post-period care for health professionals.

The aim of the article is to present selected topics of medical ethics, which highlighted the COVID-19 pandemic in the feedback of the medical students themselves. The source of topics was seminar exercises at the Faculty of Health Studies of the University of Pardubice, which were attended by full-time or part-time students of the field of general nursing, health and social worker, and paramedics. The seminar "Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Nursing and Palliative Care was attended by 29 students, the workshop Spirituality of Helping Professions", which was also organized as a spiritual support for students during a pandemic, who work in hospitals as part of internships. At the same time, many of them joined hospitals as volunteers, including theCOVID-19 care department. The following topics arose from their practical experience. The text itself consists of three separate topics and their development within an interdisciplinary approach at the level of ethics, philosophy and spirituality (the text therefore has a focus on theoretical reflection). Being aware that this applied research is the beginning of this issue, and will be relevant in the post-Pentecost period, the text provides impetus for further sociological research among health professionals. Although there are still few outputs, the first articles and studies on these topics have already been published in various parts of the world, which will also be referred to, to underline the similarity of healthcare professionals' experiences across continents. The limit of the article is certainly the absence of a large sample size and a more comprehensive survey, although a questionnaire survey was conducted within the seminar due to the thematic focus of individual meetings (i.e., not with the aim of quantitative expression of answers). It was not even about qualitative interviews in the sociological sense, but rather about a joint dialogue and workshop on topics that students addressed in the context of comprehensive mental health care during hospital practice.

The first important topic that came up with the legitimate need to protect oneself from the spread of disease is the importance of the human face in communication. The students themselves came up with a photo of a young smiling nurse, next to which they gave a picture of the so-called „COVID nurse" for comparison, who was covered in a respirator, a shield and in a protective suit. In the first chapter, therefore, we will focus on an essay-based reflection on the importance of the human face in the ethics of communication, especially in connection with the relationship of medical staff to patients. The second topic that interested students was mental health care in the prevention of burnout. During the pandemic, there were discussions about the post-traumatic stress disorder of health professionals and the danger of burnout. Therefore, the students of the faculty came up with the topics of prevention and care for mental health in difficult conditions. The care of the soul as an expression of the health professional's own spirituality and the need to accompany the health care during the pandemic manifested itself with its urgency. From here we will move on to the topic of the third chapter, which will take into account discus-

sions about moral dilemmas and moral distress in the health care provider during a pandemic, which is also a topic of interest for the students of the Faculty of Health Studies of the University of Pardubice.

The human face - the ethical code of nursing care even when using respirators

Covering the faces with respirators has created a psychological wall in communication between nursing staff and patients. Wrapping her face in a respirator created a barrier that medics had to deal with. The face expresses something fundamental from human nature. Already at the linguistic level, the face, the expression on the face, the look into the eyes face to face are connected with the understanding of man as a person (see Hebrew „paním", Greek „prosópon", Russian „lico", which express face and person). A person expresses himself and relates to another primarily by his face. In an encounter with the other's face, an ethical question arises: „May I do this?".[2] From the point of view of philosophical anthropology, man as a person always remains a mystery. Its basic elements are freedom and love, the ability to relate and even give in to help another person. An important characteristic of a person is the ability to be a gift to another. The person is able to surrender to the other (he is *cenotic*), and in this surrender to the other he returns to himself.[3] Although the other person is a mystery, infinitely transcendent, his face, and what the other person's face reveals to us in his glory (epiphany), creates space for sharing the same. The other person's face will always be different, but this in no way denies what we have as the same people. The face-to-face conversation opens up the ethical dimension of human behavior, which is free from violence against others. In a friendly view of the other person, the will opens up to the mind, which leads the will to act responsibly.[4] The human face is thus the ethical code of nursing care, which creates contexts connecting soul care and ethics. By monitoring the reactions of the patient's face, every healthcare professional will gain important information about what is going on. The face tells of the mystery of being human beyond empirical givens. After all, medicine also deals with the human face and the parts of the brain connected with it carefully and rather avoids this topic.[5]

From the above, it is clear that the face is inextricably linked to human-human encounters and is important in the healing process. The current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic has enveloped paramedics in a respirator and an entire suit so that it will not be exposed to the infection. Not only was the care of patients with COVID-19 affected, but all healthcare, which was often limited to the most necessary tasks, i.e., in palliative care, which has its problem areas in communication[6], intensive care of medical staff had to focus on accompanying the dying, who were completely isolated from their loved ones.[7] The paramedic was the only one who was close to the dying man in the last moments of his life. At the level of communication, a barrier has emerged, which health professionals are trying to overcome with alternative verbal and nonverbal communication. Deployed in the front line, they try to express their compassion and love, their effort to help, to pass on the hope of healing and the joy of care in a way other than facial expressions. It is

2   Sokol, *Filosofická antropologie*, 172–173.

3   Špidlík, *Ruská idea*, 22–24.

4   Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 194–219.

5   Payne, *Lidská tvář*, 197–211.

6   Horačková et al., „The Impact of Inaccurate Terminology on the Provision of Nursing Care in Case of the Indication of a Palliative Care," 123–134.

7   Trebski et al., „Specifics of Palliative Care in Italy Relevant to the Current Post-Covid-19 Period," 148–160; Vansač, Noga „Spiritual Accompaniment of Patients in Palliative Care Affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic," 199–219.

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basically a smile expressed through the eyes and the intonation of the voice. Learning to express hope only with the eyes is a great gift for patients who desire healing. From these assumptions, another ethical question also arises as to whether the restriction of face-to-face contact due to respirators may not pose a risk of human perpetuation. If a person deliberately avoids meeting the face of another person, then he may be prone to erroneous ethical decisions, which may be on the border between life and death.

Soul care - prevention of burnout syndrome during a pandemic

Perhaps everyone knows from the media photos of paramedics after the service in the COVID-19 departments. Their faces are tired, white, with circles under their eyes and red prints from respirators. The most common concerns of health professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic are the infection and spread of the disease in their own family, which is accompanied by fear of an outbreak of burnout syndrome. The health professionals themselves do not want to get into a situation where they would have to change their profession due to burnout. Healthcare professionals around the world have been confronted with a lack of pandemic preparedness, a lack of personal protective equipment, self-anxiety and fear among patients and professionals, social distance.[8] Daily stress can lead to burnout. Already the first studies confirmed post-traumatic stress disorder in first-line nurses fighting COVID-19. The situation has highlighted the importance of psychological counseling, for example by telephone.[9] Questions have also been raised as to whether a nurse has the right to refuse service in the COVID-19 ward because of fear of contracting the risk of death.[10] Unfortunately, cases of suicide of nurses from these concerns have also been reported.[11] Early studies also define a new diagnosis: post-COVID-19 syndrome and the importance of psychological and spiritual therapy.[12] Experience from abroad therefore created concerns among our nurses, students of the faculty.

Burnout syndrome is characterized as an experience of exhaustion at the mental, physical and social levels. Burnout syndrome breaks out at a time when forms of external stress and work responsibilities lead to states of anxiety, awareness of failure and loss of interest, fatigue and irritability, as well as the presence of other people. In its severe form, it leads to the inability to get up in the morning, maintain basic hygiene habits and often end in serious illness. Very often the burnout syndrome is accompanied by a conflict between expectations and real possibilities to influence the results of one's activities.[13] The prevention of burnout syndrome on a psychological and spiritual level is, among other things, time management, or optimal time distribution. The timing of the day, week, was also in the discussions between the students, who dealt with study, practice, volunteering, caring for the family, or children. The important thing is whether and how one can separate working time and non-working time. Merging these times is problematic

because one then has no room where and how to regain one's strength and energy to cope with work stress and stress, especially when managing it seems beyond strength and causes depression, disappointment and distress. In the Christian tradition, caring for time has been expressed in the tension between activity (praxis) and contemplation (theoria), between prayer (ora) and work (labora). A person (not only) in a difficult situation needs to have time for life rituals and maintaining an internal order that will allow him to cope with the difficulties of everyday life, while maintaining health, creativity and good mental comfort.[14] The art of living in this polarity, the time of work and the time of meditative rest, which creates the whole of life, is an important part of creating your own plan to cope with situations that cause stress (coping strategies) during a pandemic. Even during rest, one should not lose the meaningful goal one needs for one's growth. The topic of the meaning of life and the meaningfulness of work manifested itself during the pandemic with its urgency. During rest periods, in addition to responsibilities related in particular to family security, time should be set aside for a deeper reflection on the meaningfulness of one's life attitudes during a pandemic. Students of the Faculty of Health Studies were also interested in the possibilities of spiritual support.

Spiritual care for health professionals during the pandemic arose with its urgency in the experience abroad[15] and also became a challenge for universities educating health professionals.[16] In connection with the spiritual care of the soul, today we most often encounter the concept of meditation (meditatio). The techniques of concentration, concentration, practice of vigilant perception of the present moment, and silence of the mind, which are inspired by traditional religions, are commonly used today. Medical science reveals the influence of these techniques on the human body: change in body temperature, reduction of heart rate and metabolic processes, change in the chemical composition of the blood (hormone, lactate, cholesterol levels), slowing down the recording of brain activity on an electroencephalograph (EEG). The therapeutic and risk effects of meditation on mental and mental health are monitored. Research in this direction will also focus on the goals of meditation, which are to strengthen ethical conduct, love, compassion, wisdom, and service to others.[17] The effects of meditation can manifest themselves in a change of mindset, a gain of strength, and in medical practice through the development of virtues.[18] Physicians professing different religions are advised to intensify their religious practice, which includes seeking support in God and in the awareness of God's love for man, visiting churches and places of prayer, dialogue with clergy.[19]

During non-working hours, paramedics emphasized the importance of staying in the wild. Being able to be alone and without a respirator, along with taking care of your physical condition, helped you manage the stressful situations from work. Movement and oxygenation of the body is a prevention of depression and anxiety. Observing the aesthetic side of nature increases the sensitivity to the perception of beauty. Contemplation of human beauty gives hope in life, even though he sees more traces of death before him. A health care provider who deals with the deaths of ever new patients on a daily basis needs time for images of the onset of life, its beauty,

8   Nyashanu et al., "Exploring the challenges faced by frontline workers in health and social care amid the COVID-19 pandemic: experiences of frontline workers in the English Midlands region, UK," 655-661; Turale et al., "Challenging times: ethics, nursing and the COVID-19 pandemic," 164–167.

9   Li et al., "Posttraumatic growth in Chinese nurses and general public during the COVID-19 outbreak," 1-11

10   Zhu, Stone, Petrini, "The ethics of refusing to care for patients during the coronavirus pandemic: a Chinese perspective," E12380.

11   McKenna, "Covid-19: ethical issues for nurses," 103673.

12   Maltezou et al., „Post-COVID Syndrome: An Insight on Its Pathogenesis," 497 ; Cirulli et al., „Long-term COVID-19 symptoms in a large unselected population," 20208702; Mahmud et al., „Post-COVID-19 syndrome among symptomatic COVID-19 patients: a prospective cohort study in a tertiary care center of Bangladesh," e0249644.

13   Bedrnová, Management osobního rozvoje, 241–246

14   Grün, Assländer, Time management jako duchovní úkol, 117–127.

15   Brandstötter et al., "Spiritual well-being, attitude, involvement, perceptions and competencies: Measuring the self-perception of nursing students during 2018, 2019 and the first wave of COVID-19 in 2020," 175–190

16   Nasser, et al., "Ethical issues in caring for COVID-patients: a view from Gaza," 1605–1606.

17   Walsh, "Meditation Research: The State of the Art," 60-66.

18   Merton, Spiritual direction and meditation, 65-102.

19   Green, "Spiritual Health First Aid for Self-Care: Nursing During COVID-19," E28 – E31

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goodness, and truth that is stronger than the darkness of death in everyday experience. Observing the beauty of nature reveals the happier side of life. The contemplative dimension of life, the development of aesthetic feelings and contemplation of goodness and beauty, which appear during a walk in nature, already form an integral part of environmental studies and commonly recommended care for the soul.[20] Nature carries these so-called „God's footprints", although its laws may seem cruel and ruthless in the time of COVID-19. Not only in a time of pandemic, it is important not to let the consciousness of the power of life, which is stronger than death, fall into place, even though for many the time has come for legitimate mourning over the loss of a loved one. Spiritual care for the soul involves the search for symbols of hope in the power of life during a stay in nature.

Another important dimension of soul care during a pandemic is psychosocial relationships within the family. Restrictions in an emergency brought a new, challenging experience to the lives of many families whose children could not go to school, which was, after all, a problem for health professionals around the world.[21] The time of caring for the family also manifested itself in the polarity of the stress from the demands of distance learning. Unfortunately, the flip side of the lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic was the increased incidence of domestic violence. On the other hand, if the work is on the edge of strength, then a good family background helps to mentally stabilize and gain energy for the next day. Social isolation has evoked new creativity in the search for forms of online contact on social networks, creating intergenerational bridges of relationships between people who would not have met so often in the past. For some nurses, the family was a strong background, while for others, stress and work overload did not contribute much to marital cohabitation with threats of divorce. Nevertheless, the students' complications underscored the importance of the family in such a challenging time. From the point of view of spirituality, the medics longed to experience feelings of acceptance and love that would support them in their demanding ministry.

The situation was all the more challenging for healthcare professionals so that patients who could not be in direct contact with their loved ones due to the visit ban, and often moved from room to room when a patient was positive in the COVID-19 test, did not suffer from social isolation. The patient-centered approach was limited, which did not go without an ethical and professional crisis of nurses.[22] Worldwide, healthcare providers mitigate potentially dehumanizing care scenarios through imaginative solutions that do not sacrifice compassion and equal respect for each patient and their family.[23] The students of the Faculty of Health Studies of the University of Pardubice also came up with their own ideas on how to enable patients to have at least a short online meeting with their family, for example in the form of borrowing tablets and arranging contacts via social networks. This also partially addressed the additional stress that was placed on healthcare professionals when they saw their patients' health deteriorate due to social isolation - and they were often helpless.

Forming one's own conscience - prevention of moral distress in the time of COVID-19
A frequent topic of discussion for medical students was: moral dilemma and moral distress. A moral dilemma arises when there are choices before a person that are not acceptable, but still one is forced to make a decision. The pandemic brought difficult ethical decisions in the tension between the ethics of duties (deontological ethics) and individual ethics (situational ethics). It was necessary to accept the fact that one will have to choose solutions that are not optimal, which has an impact on patients, one's family and even the healthcare professionals themselves. Accepting such a situation leads to a disruption of mental well-being.[24] Moral distress is a type of distress caused by a reality in which the environment, conditions, regulations, legislation, or superiors do not allow the health care provider to act as he or she believes to be right. This distress has a major impact on the physical and mental condition of nurses, including the impact on the quality of care.[25] Of course, the nurse does not make fundamental ethical decisions that belong to the physician or medical commission in terms of competencies and rights, but she is still part of the workplace and carries out orders that may not always resonate with her conscience. The following examples of ethical dilemmas in the COVID-19 era faced by health professionals (during hypothetical debates, but this will certainly be open back to research) take into account their concerns during seminars and workshops.

Experience from abroad during the COVID-19 period raised concerns about the lack of medical staff and mechanical lung ventilators to choose who and under what criteria to allow treatment, which in practice would often mean not giving or giving a chance of survival. In the Czech Republic, the so-called principles of allocation of scarce resources have been discussed, which reflect the circumstances under which it would be acceptable not to allow a patient to connect to or be disconnected from pulmonary ventilation so that ventilation helps another patient with a better prognosis. The criterion for selection cannot be: whoever came to the hospital earlier is entitled to be connected to the ventilator earlier. This could discriminate against patients who live further from the hospital and have a better prognosis. The discussion of ethics seeks justification as to whether, in the absence of fans, it is ethically acceptable to prioritize the treatment of healthcare workers (doctors, nurses) or rescue infrastructure (police officers, firefighters, soldiers), as these are necessary to maintain the system. The most discussed ethical selection criterion was whether it is ethically defensible to allow the assignment of a ventilator to a younger patient over an older one with the same chance of survival.[26] It was the criterion of age that provoked a critical reaction different from other medical ethics, who argue that this is only a hypothetical possibility, because in practice we will never meet two identical patients with the same prognosis, and the difference would be only in age. Concerns about age discrimination in stress decision-making were mentioned. In this context, it will always be up to the physician to be able to individually evaluate the expected prognosis.[27]

Nurse - students were interested in the principles of medical ethics, on which they can base their attitudes. In medical ethics, the so-called four medical principles have spread: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, which were reflected in transnational solidarity from

20 Sládek, *Ekologická spiritualita a etika*, 71–77.
21 Combe, "Reopening Schools During COVID-19: school Nurse Ethical Conflicts and Moral Dilemmas," 308–312.
22 Gebreheat, Team, "Ethical Challenges of Nurses in COVID-19 Pandemic: Integrative Review," 1029–1035
23 Morley et al., "Covid-19: ethical Challenges for Nurses. In: Hastings Cent Rep," 35–39.

24 Robert et al., "Ethical dilemmas due to the Covid-19 pandemic," 84.
25 Pendry, "Moral Distress. Recognizing it to Retain Nurses," 217–221.
26 Černý et al., "Etická a právní východiska pro tvorbu doporučení k rozhodování při poskytování zdravotních služeb v rámci pandemie COVID-19," 19
27 Dragoun, "Spor o etiku přidělování ventilátorů. Diskriminovat starší nemůžeme, říká Vácha."

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the beginning during the pandemic.[28] They do not have the answers to every case and it is up to the ethical erudition of the doctor how he can handle them in his rational reflection. Tensions and conflicts between these principles are crucial, where the physician must decide how strong the principle of autonomy in patient decision-making is versus the physician's commitment to the principles of benefit and non-maleficence. At the international level, the possibilities of creating so-called sorting teams were debated, which would take into account the possibilities of therapy for individual patients in the overcapacity, in the tension between the principles of autonomy, justice and the principle of general good for the benefit of the larger community.[29] At the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the principle of autonomy receded into the background, which allows the patient to have the right to decide on his treatment or to terminate it. In the case of refusal of therapy, such as connection to artificial lung ventilation, the ethical question is why the patient refuses treatment. Ethically justifiable (as a choice with heroic virtue) was the case of the senior priest Giuseppe Beraldelli, who in Italy refused to be connected to a lung ventilator himself, in order to save the lives of someone younger. The choice was made for altruistic reasons. The priest died of COVID-19.[30] Non-standard times have brought difficult life choices.

As part of the formation of one's own attitudes, the topic of conscience and education in the field of ethics was discussed in the above-mentioned topics, with an emphasis on the ethics of virtues. It is the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance) that are the springboard for attitudes during difficult and tense situations during health care in a pandemic. They are important in cases where health professionals encounter a disproportionate and unjust negative reaction from patients or family members who are also under pressure due to illness in the family. Wise conduct is proportionate to the real situation, which should be recognized by reason from different angles. The wisdom of reason based on so-called primordial conscience commands one to love the good and to strive for it in life. Practical wisdom seeks the means to accomplish it. It is then unwise to act indecisively. Wisdom desires to know the state of affairs of a particular situation and decide to reconcile reality with its goal, or with the goal of human life (intentio finis). In the thomistic reflection on wisdom, the memory (memoria) of being faithful, the ability to get advice, say something, learn (docilitas) and quickly decide for good (solertia) in a specific situation is considered its completion. Cardinal virtues and their importance in health care have returned to spirituality and the formation of personal attitudes.[31]

It was clear from the dialogue with the students that they did not want to face such difficult situations in the hope that they would not have to confront it during the internship. From these starting points, the topic of moral distress in nurses will certainly be one of the key topics of research. At the time of the interviews during the seminars, they did not have this experience yet. In harmony with foreign studies[32], students of the Faculty of Health Studies of the University of Pardubice tried to prepare positively for ethical challenges and did not consider the experience of a pandemic a reason for a change of profession. They also showed help by brave volunteering in hospitals in the first line of the fight with the covid.

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28 Druml, "COVID-19 and ethical preparedness?," 400–402

29 Dudzinski et al., "Ethics Lessons From Seattle's Early Experience With COVID-19," 67–74; Shah, Aacharya, "Combating COVID-19 Pandemic in Nepal: ethical Challenges in an Outbreak," 276–279.

30 Bonzanni, "«Prima gli altri»: don Giuseppe Berardelli e lo «Prima gli altri»: don Giuseppe Berardelli e lo „stile" bergamasco „stile" bergamasco."

31 Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues.*

32 Sperling, "Ethical dilemmas, perceived risk, and motivation among nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic," 9–22; Jia et al, "Nurses' ethical challenges caring for people with COVID-19: a qualitative study," 1–13.

Conclusion
The article introduced selected topics used by medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic. Wearing veils and respirators brought the importance of reflection on the importance of the face in communication and nursing care. Through the face you can read what a person's life is like. Meeting the friendly and loving face of a healthcare professional can speed up therapy. The veiled face of the paramedic has brought a certain obstacle, which nurses try to solve with alternative ways of expressing their closeness to a sick person. The complexity of the emergency medical profession increased their stress, and unexpected tense situations were often portrayed as traumatic. The emphasis on spirituality, care for one's own mental health and professional accompaniment of health professionals thus gained in importance. The emergency situation has put nurses in a position that can be very ethically challenging for them. This example, with the dilemma of selecting patients for mechanical ventilators in the event of a shortage, also touches the conscience of nursing staff - and none of the nurses wants to face such a difficult situation. The primary research and the topics of student discussion presented here show the similarity of the experience of health professionals during a pandemic across continents. In conclusion, the research should focus primarily on the prevention and care of the mental health of the nurse during difficult pandemic situations.

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic brings new challenges for research and for the practical impact on nursing care. If in the beginning the patient was the center of attention, it is now clear that the focus of care in the post-pandemic period and in a possible future similar crisis will be not only the sick person but also the medical staff. From the article, it is believed that it will be appropriate:

● at the empirical level, to further investigate the effects of the stress situation from the COVID-19 pandemic on the physical, mental and spiritual health of the health professional with respect to a holistic approach to man at the scientific, philosophical and spiritual level;

● to create a system for monitoring the impact of crisis situations on the health care of health professionals and create a preventive network of psychological and spiritual support, including the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and burnout risks in health care workers;

● based on the experience gained, to create the possibility of mentoring, which would include the transfer of experience in managing a pandemic in all areas of health care: prevention of burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder therapy, ethical counseling, time management optimization in caring for work and extracurricular relationships, especially family relationships .

Interdisciplinary advisory teams should be set up at national, regional and regional level to address this issue, addressing the nursing blind spots identified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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TRANSHUMANISM, SUFFERING, DEATH AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

❖

Vladimír Thurzo✉

Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius (SK)

Abstract

Background: Transhumanism in its various forms and directions raises a number of ethical questions. Due to its multidimensionality, the current level of knowledge and the speed of technological development, it is difficult to draw up an ethical code for human enhancement, which is its primary goal. At best, it is possible to provide either a summary of very general concerns or a reflection on specific partial problems that we can already foresee today. However, we know that it is about ensuring prosperity and well-being in a highly subjective sense. Transhumanism has the ambition to maximize one's self-determination, power and control over one's own body and mind, that is, to be the creator of one's own identity. Suffering and death have no place in such a perspective and become nonsense to be eliminated at all costs.

Conclusion: Unavoidable suffering and death are an integral part of human life to which man is powerless. He can adopt an attitude of revolt and resistance towards them or he can try to find meaning in them as well. Suffering and death are metaphysical evils, but they have great potential to be transformed into good and to find its meaning. Viktor Frankl, also on the basis of his own existential experience, considers death and life to be facts that essentially give meaning to human existence. Transhumanism seeks the elimination of all suffering, regards the postponement of death or earthly immortality as its distant goals. Although it seeks to present itself as a philanthropic movement, it is ultimately very dehumanizing. Suffering and death are part of human nature that must be defended as an impassable limit to human enhancement.

Keywords: Transhumanism – Suffering – Death – Viktor Frankl – Searching of meaning.

Introduction

Transhumanism is a way of thinking and scientific-technological research that aims to overcome all human limitations through technology[1]. All transhumanists have in common the conviction that the human being can be transformed thanks to technoscience, up to reach a condition

higher than the original human nature, located „beyond" the human being and represented by the symbol H+. The present human reality is considered a moment of transition, within a new evolutionary phase, aimed at a posthuman future. The new evolution must be guided not by a „natural" Darwinian selection[2] but by an intentional one, produced entirely by human ingenuity, scientific and technical means, and oriented towards a future in which man will be super-intelligent, able not only to heal every frailty, but also to enhance the body transforming it through nanotechnology, robotics, biotechnology, and genomics and postpone death. Among the results achievable in a not very distant future, transhumanists are confident that there is even immortality, and thanks to intentional evolution are convinced to witness the birth of a more perfect new species: the posthuman.

The beginning of transhumanism dates back to the 1980s and 1990s.[3] The main issues of transhumanism are well summarized in the so-called Transhumanist Manifesto. This document challenges the issue of human aging and the finality of death by advocating three conditions: aging is a disease; augmentation and enhancement to the human body and brain are essential for survival, and that human life is not restricted to any one form or environment.[4]

Reductionism of Transhumanism

Transhumanism is connected to the current philosophical debate that aims to redefine the notion of human nature. It is based on the premise that human nature is not fixed and that the future of humanity is malleable due to the dramatic advancement of technological capabilities. It is a technology that will allow humans to gradually transform into people whose capabilities will exceed those we now recognize as humans. Transhumanists see human nature as a work in progress, a half-baked beginning that we can learn to reshape in a desirable way. Present humanity is not the end point of evolution, but through the responsible use of science and technology, we will eventually succeed in becoming posthuman beings with far better abilities than

current humans possess.[5] According to Vittorio Possenti, this aspiration to change human nature is very dangerous. He sees one of its main reasons in the existentialist theses of J.P. Sartre.[6]

Transhumanist's ambition is the enhancement of man, but the emphasis is on the perfection of the human body and its external qualities. Man is reduced to the biological dimension of his existence, to a set of mechanisms, chemical reactions, neurons, muscle cells, genes, etc.[7] In this perspective, each individual has the „right to self-improvement", considering the benefits in relation to his desires and risks, and in relation to his health and conception of life. Transhumanism, as Natasha Vita-More says, advocates for the ethical use of technology and evidence-based science, and each person has the right to augment and enhance, but nobody should be coerced to augment and enhance.[8]

The right to enhancement derives from the „right to the pursuit of happiness" as the individual's right to the realization of what is subjectively considered pleasurable and desirable. This position presupposes and implies a materialistic-mechanical conception of the body, considered an „extended object" available to the subject to whom it belongs, which can be manipulated, controlled, shaped and designed. In the context of the evolutionary conception of nature as an „imperfect machine", every manipulation is justified by the aim of perfecting it; every machine is always perfectible, susceptible to improvement through direct interventions that allow the exchange of parts, the quantitative strengthening of capabilities, the refinement of characteristics considered desirable. Nature is deprived of ontological meaning and reduced to a system of entities where every function or change must be governed by the rules of the organism according to a specific deterministic law.[9]

The consequence of the fact that the enhancement technologies act directly on the body, neglecting the spiritual side of man is, that subject tends to internally remain passive, not playing an active role in change. The subject undergoes and feels the effects induced by the use of technology, but does not understand its meaning in human terms, because it does not „acquire" the results inwardly, but only reaches them outwardly. In this sense, it is highlighted that the negative element of the emerging technologies is the deformation of the deep structure of human activity,

which affects the same identity. Palazzani calls this a „biotechnological shortcut".[10] Enhancement can produce an alienation of the agent's identity, preventing the individual from expressing the true self, impoverishing him to the point of dehumanizing him.

The experiences that a person achieves in activities constitute his identity.[11] On the other hand, technological enhancement causes changes without affecting the transformation of the person. By breaking the relationship between activities and results, between the knower/doer and his goal-directed activities, blurs the boundary between what we achieve by our own efforts and what is the result of the action of applied technologies. In this sense, it blurs the authentic creation of a person's identity.

As opposed to technological enhancement, „achievement" allows a substantial transformation of the subject, as an „improvement" in a qualitative sense or overall growth of personal identity. Through our effort we „acquire" results and just in acquiring them inwardly, we grow intimately, we form our identity and personality, relating to ourselves and to others. Achievement allows, even at the cost of sacrifices, to realize the change of himself, as subject of actions. A truly „human flourishing"[12] is not the accumulation of results of excellence obtained artificially, but consists of daily effort, constant and regular, in life for self-realization: an effort that allows, through direct and personal experience, to test our abilities even in the face of adversity. It is the awareness of the limit, of vulnerability, of lack that founds the authentic aspiration of man to self-realization.[13]

It is our common human experience that the deepest happiness does not coincide with mere sensory satisfaction and well-being. In the long run, progressively, a selfish and hedonistic practice, focused only on the achievement of sensible pleasures, causes a decrease of the same sensible pleasure: it produces a less and less enjoyment and an increasing desire, producing a situation that sometimes results in frustration and pathology.[14]

In the perspective of Viktor E. Frankl, transhumanist reductionism can be considered one kind of nihilism - physiologism. Frankl calls such a reduced version of man homunculus, i.e. reduced to his bodily reality. Man himself, as well as his essence, is merely an apparatus or automaton, controlled by conditioned or unconditioned reflexes.[15] A deeper fulfilment of life, developing one's abilities through one's efforts, living one's own life take a back seat. A one-sided focus

5   Nick Bostrom, *The Transhumanist FAQ*, 2.1 (World Transhumanist Association, 2003), https://www.nickbostrom.com/views/transhumanist.pdf. (accessed: 10 October 2021)

6   According to Possenti, technology can lead to anti-humanism when man is thought to be devoid of nature or essence, or when it is believed that existence precedes essence so that man is not defined a priori but a posteriori. This assumption was extended by Sartre's existentialism, but taken up with great force by the ideology of technology. Sartre's assumption allowed technology to reach the subject by providing him with the means to self-design: not in and with freedom, but with genetic and neuroscientific manipulation, with the general idea of enhancing human life. For Sartre, man can self-design in his radical freedom because there is no human nature. For the technology ideology, man can, or rather must, be redesigned by technology insofar as he is a mere body that could not escape from the constraints of matter. In the end, it is not man who designs himself, but the project is in the hands of technology and man becomes a product. Vittorio Possenti, "La disumanizzazione degli umanesimi", *Espíritu: cuadernos del Instituto Filosófico de Balmesiana* 60, n. 141 (2011): 22. See also Antonio Malo, "Umano, non umano, transumano, post-umano. Riflessioni antropologiche", *Studi Cattolici*, n. 679 (2017)..

7   Our body is basically made of „only" flesh, a very weak element in a hostile external environment both physically and chemically, and therefore easily attacked by external elements. So why not enhance the human body in the future, trying to strengthen it with hard metals that better resist environmental pressures? Or why not enhance its cognitive and sensory performance? (Giuseppe Vatinno, *Il Transumanesimo. Una nuova filosofia per l´Uomo del XXI secolo* (Roma: Armando Editore, 2010), 19.)

8   Vita-More, "The Transhumanist Manifesto (Fourth version)". (accessed: 15 October 2021)

9   Laura Palazzani, "Le tecnologie emergenti: le sfide etiche della tecnoscienza", *Teoria e Critica della regolazione sociale*, Mimesis Edizioni, n. 2 (2018): 86.

10   Palazzani, 91.

11   The distinction made by Aristotle on the tripartition of human action remains valid (*Nicomachean Ethics*, I, 1-2, 1094 a; X, 7, 1177 a-b). Plato already showed how human achievements that „produce" an external work cannot be considered as the ultimate goal of action: human production cannot replace human praxis. These concepts are then perfected by Aristotle: the activity of man develops in three different domains, theoresis (contemplation), praxis (acting in a moral sense) and poiesis (doing which involves an objective change in the world). Praxis perfects the human subject as such, makes him a „good man", and relates to moral conduct and moral values. It enriches man in his interiority, and from his interiority he develops ethical virtues. This tripartition is fundamental for understanding human behaviour. It is also essential to emphasize the unity of every human act, which is characterized simultaneously by theoretical knowledge, transitive action and moral action. (Enrique Colom, *Chiesa e società* (Roma: Armando Editore, 1996), 90.)

12   Term used by Nick Bostrom as one of the main goals of transhumanism.

13   Palazzani, "Le tecnologie emergenti", 92.

14   Giacomo Samek Lodovici, "Transumanesimo, immortalità, felicità", *Etica & Politica* XX., n. 3 (2018): 529–30.

15   For Frankl, homunculus is a product of formal nihilism. Nihilism is an anthropology that sees man as nothing more than the result of co-driving forces, represented by biological, psychological or sociological condition. Man is then represented only as a product of drives, a product of heredity and environment, i.e. a homunculus, not a human being. (Victor E. Frankl, *Feeling of Meaninglessness : A Challenge to Psychotherapy and Philosophy*, ed. Alexander Batthyány (Milwaukee, UNITED STATES: Marquette University Press, 2010), 90, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uniba-ebooks/detail.action?docID=688675.). The essence of nihilism, according to Frankl, does not consist in the complete denial of being. It does not deny the existence of being, but its meaning. Rather, he states that reality is nothing else but only that to what nihilism limits this reality

on one's performance and efficiency prevails in one's life, which deprives one of the direction towards the fulfilment of one's deepest desires and the discovery of the meaningfulness of reality.[16] If the view of man is limited to only one dimension of him, that is, reduced to one layer of being, it is impossible to make sense of one's own being. Therefore, any form of nihilism, reducing reality and the view of man to one layer of being, cannot arrive at the experience of the meaning of life. Unless we also take into account the spiritual nature of man, his basic tension towards values and meaning, we cannot discover the significance of reality or the meaning of being in all its fullness. Anthropology then becomes merely a self-evident appendix to zoology, and the doctrine of the true nature of man becomes the doctrine of certain mammals which have been „hit on the head" by upright walking.[17]

In contrast to the support of human enhancement, there are theories that fear that the very rapid development of technologies, while beneficial to humans and humanity, poses too many risks to humans. These fears have taken its most extreme forms in „technophobic catastrophism"[18], which, in the early stages of emerging technologies, expresses a strong condemnation of their destructive potential. This position tends to fade in the current debate, even with regard to the evaluation of the positive elements of certain technologies for medical applications, while maintaining a critical reflection with regard to extreme theories of evolutionary enhancement of transhumanism. The negative view of human enhancement is based mainly on the idea that perfect life/health does not exist and is not attainable, and that the pursuit of perfection leads humans not to accept the imperfections and limitations inherent in their nature, originally characterized by limitation and ontological fragility.

Suffering and death from the transhumanist point of view

The drama of man rises to the forefront especially against a background of suffering and death. Confronted face to face with them, it is impossible not to ask the question about the meaning of one's own existence[19]. One may primarily look for the material prosperity, but inevitably experiences insuperable limitation in suffering and death, accompanied by doubts, restlessness, and anxiety. Death is a mystery for man, in front of which all human securities fall. Suffering and death pose the most difficult questions. In the purely human perspective, it is very difficult to offer answers able to dispel doubts and anxiety, naturally arisen by death and suffering.

Suffering, although being a part of everyday human life, at the same time, transcends it highly. Suffering is a metaphysical evil, something undesired, naturally asking to be eliminated from human society. It is an earthly reality, deeply human, but at the same time substantially transcendental, to which it is not possible to answer thoroughly of one's own accord. Suffering

is something that is still wider than sickness. There is a distinction between physical suffering and moral suffering.[20]

Transhumanism stems from a fundamental dissatisfaction with the finiteness of man. Man generally has a right to enhancement, which is seen as the individual's right to realize what he subjectively finds pleasurable and desirable. All factors limiting the right to the pursuit of happiness are seen as evils to be eliminated. Understandably, the antithesis and enemy of the state of lasting happiness is, in particular, suffering and death.[21] From this perspective, suffering and death lack meaning and need to be removed from human life.

According to Bostrom, the desire to transcend death is as natural as the fact that death is part of the natural order. Before transhumanism, there was no real hope of avoiding death. „Resurrection in another world" is considered a figment of human imagination. That people justify and accept death is understandable, he says, because no one has been able to do anything about it until now. However, today, we can foresee the possibility of eventually abolishing aging and we have the option of taking active measures to stay alive in the meantime, either through life-extension techniques or cryonics. Probably most people, if they had such an option, would choose life extension (e.g. through injections) to stay healthy, vital, and be able to remain in the company of friends and loved ones. The decision of those who would choose death should be respected, albeit with regret. The transhumanist position on the ethics of death is crystal clear: death should be voluntary. This means that everybody should be free to extend his life and to arrange for cryonic suspension of his deanimated body. It also means that voluntary euthanasia, under conditions of informed consent, is a basic human right. Transhumanists believe, that it is too early to tell whether our days are necessarily numbered. For now, our only option is to live in that uncertainty, along with the much greater uncertainty of whether any of us will manage to avoid dying prematurely, before technology has become mature.[22]

Man's finiteness is an opportunity to find the meaning

By the fact that suffering and death belong necessarily to life and at the same time transcend it, it makes man feel the essential finiteness of his existence. This reality, however, is not something that prevents man from finding meaning. On the contrary, it is an opportunity for finding meaning.

Finiteness of man is present in uniqueness of the person and the singularity of the situation, these two essential factors of his existence. Uniqueness and singularity are the conditions for the growth of his responsibility. By the fact that human life is limited in time, its character is irre-

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or from what it derives it. Frankl distinguishes three main kinds of nihilism: physiologism, psychologism, sociologism, according to the respective reality to which it reduces man. (Viktor E. Frankl, *Trpiaci človek*, 1., Libri Europaei (Bratislava: Lúč, 2007), 11.). See also Frankl, 12.

16 Zuzana Sitarčíková, *O šľachtení človeka* (Trnava: Veda, 2012), 177. See also Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future. Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, 1st ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 172.

17 FRANKL, Trpiaci človek, p. 12.

18 This is the position of Francis FUKUYAMA in *Our Posthuman Future*.

19 Patrik Prokop Maturkanič, *Pastoral practice in the light of the 21st century* (Morrisville: Lulu Publishing Company, 2021), 192.

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20 Suffering is something wider than sickness, more complex and at the same time still more deeply rooted in humanity itself. The distinction between physical suffering and moral suffering is based upon the double dimension of the human being and indicates the bodily and spiritual element as the immediate or direct subject of suffering. Insofar as the words „suffering" and „pain", can, up to a certain degree, be used as synonyms, physical suffering is present when „the body is hurting" in some way, whereas moral suffering is „pain of the soul". In fact, it is a question of pain of a spiritual nature, and not only of the „psychological" dimension of pain which accompanies both moral and physical suffering The vastness and the many forms of moral suffering are certainly no less in number than the forms of physical suffering. But at the same time, moral suffering seems as it were less identified and less reachable by therapy. (John Paul II, *Apostolic letter Salvifici doloris*, 1984, 5, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris.html.)

21 „What we fear the most, our being dead, the source of anguish, terror and fear. (…) We build our house on the crack, so to speak. We live to recover from the shocking awareness that this game is over even before it started. The proximity to death suspends life, not into transcendence, but rather into the radical immanence of ‚just a life', here and now, for as long as we can and as much as we can take." (Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 132.)

22 Bostrom, *The Transhumanist FAQ*, 36–37.

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versible. Irreversibility makes man responsible at any particular moment. If human life was not limited in time, we could postpone every action forever, no matter whether we did it now or at some other time, which is to say, ultimately, never. Confronted with the reality of death, whose exact arrival we do not know, we are under imperative of utilizing our lifetimes to the utmost. Life is actually made up of chained singular moments that form a whole. Therefore, finiteness must itself constitute something that gives meaning to human existence.[23]

The decisive moment in the search for the meaning of life is not its length, but its irreversible character. „It is not from the length of its span that we can ever draw conclusions as to a life's meaningfulness".[24] Either life has a meaning and retains this meaning whether it is long or short, or life has no meaning, in which case it takes on none, no matter how long it lasts. If the something is meaningless, it does not acquire meaning by being immortalized.[25]

On the other hand, nothing in the past is irretrievably lost; rather, it remains permanently preserved. The past is preserved and saved from impermanence. Whatever we have done and created, whatever we have lived and experienced - we have saved it as past, and nothing and no one can remove it from the world.[26]

By finiteness, however, we do not mean only the temporal limitation of human earthly life. It is not only a limiting factor, but the acceptance of finiteness is ultimately an opportunity for the growth and realization of humanity. For through his finiteness, man realizes that he needs others and thus develops his personal being, a being who needs to be in relationship. Relationality is a fundamental characteristic of human being.[27]

The difficulty in considering relationships as an essential property of the human being is determined by the difficulty in recognizing oneself as a „gift", that is, a gratuitously given, unnecessary being. The human being grows from the recognition that he has been generated (i.e., that he is someone's child) because symbolic dependence on the other is an intrinsic characteristic of our humanity. Generation and coexistence with others have to do with the temporality of the human being, capable of growth and fulfilment.[28]

In transhumanism there is a conflicting relationship with time. Since human life is no longer considered satisfactory, it would like to increase it indefinitely. However, it is not enough to increase longevity in order to give meaning to living, since temporality is linked not only to death and fragility, but also to the virtues that depend on it and, above all, to the self-giving.

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23 Victor E. Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy*, Third (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 72–73. See also Peter Tavel, *Zmysel života podľa V. E. Frankla* (Bratislava: IRIS, 2004), 71.

24 Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, 74.

25 Frankl, 82.

26 Victor E. Frankl, *Co v mých knihách není* (Brno: Cesta, 1997), 16.

27 In emphasizing relationship, we do not, of course, mean to suggest that relationship is a constitutive element of the human person. One functionalist conception of the ontological status of the human embryo sets the imaginary boundary of personhood at the moment of the embryo's nesting in the uterus. This conception places too much importance on relation. According to this theory, the stage of embryonic development in which nesting in the uterus occurs is characterized by the fact that a very close mutual relationship is established on a cellular basis between the two subjects – mother and embryo. Prior to nesting, the embryo is without any relationship, regarded as a mere clump of cells, a purely organic life that biologically belongs to the human species. It is only through nesting that the „relational" human being is created, that is, a being in whom we begin to perceive a reciprocal relationship between two subjects. From a philosophical point of view, the theory has a number of weaknesses. The most striking is precisely the necessity of relation as a constitutive element of the person. For relation (*relatio*) does not create being, but on the contrary, presupposes its existence. The existence of the subject is a *conditio sine qua non* for the emergence of the relation. Without a being capable of forming a relation with someone different from itself, a relation will not come into existence either at the physiological or the social level.

28 Malo, "Umano, non umano", 586.

Man is a being yearning for realization.[29] The transhumanist human conception exaggerates and deforms this desire. The consequence of its immanent, naturalistic anthropology, however, is the denial of the transcendent character of the human being, which implies that he considers the main goal of existence to be a kind of distorted self-realization, which is, of course, entirely egocentric.[30] Proper self-love means first accepting oneself as he is, accepting one's past, one's imperfections, one's limitations, and one's finiteness. Self-love and self-realization are not the same thing. Self-realization cannot be the man's ultimate end. If man make it an end in itself, it contradicts man's self-transcendence, his fundamental characteristic. Self-realization is not an end, on the contrary, it is the effect of finding the meaning of life. Only the existence that realizes a meaning outside itself can realize itself. If man were to aim at himself, rather than at meaning, self-realization would immediately lose its justification. Self-realization is the unintended effect of finding meaning in life.[31]

A response to the transhumanist lack of meaning of suffering and death from Viktor Frankl's perspective

Viktor Frankl, himself confronted with suffering and death in a concentration camp, generally distinguishes three types of values: creative, experiential and attitudinal.[32] Attitudinal values are the most crucial in terms of suffering.[33] The basic premise for the true realization of attitudinal values is that it is indeed something unchangeable. To take on suffering that is not fatefully necessary and that is not needed is not a true act, it is a provocation. If it were avoidable, the meaningful thing to do would be to remove its cause. To suffer unnecessarily is masochistic rather than heroic.[34]

Life can be given meaning not only through the creation that results from work activity (creative values), and not only through lived experience (experiential values). In life situations depleted of these two categories of values, man has the opportunity to realize attitudinal values, that is,

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29 Patrik Maturkanič et al., "HOMO CULTURALIS VERSUS CULTURA ANIMI", *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 12, n. 2 (25. september 2021): 55, https://doi.org/10.15503/jecs2021.2.51.58.

30 An egocentric person does not feel the joy of giving, only of taking. He looks at the surrounding world from the point of view of what he can get from it, he has no interest in the needs of others and no respect for them. He evaluates everyone from the point of view of usefulness for his own purposes; he is basically incapable of love. Selfishness and self-love are not identical, but are in fact opposites. A selfish person does not love himself too much, but too little; he actually hates himself. Lack of proper self-love leaves a person empty and frustrated. Selfish people are unable to love others, but they are also unable to love themselves. The lack of the ability to love oneself and others manifests itself in hostility to the life one lives in the here and now. (Erich Fromm, *Umenie milovať* (Bratislava: Citadella, 2014), 89–91.)

31 Victor E. Frankl, *Senso e valori per l'esistenza. La risposta della Logoterapia*, II. (Roma: Città Nuova Editrice, 1998), 52.

32 Creative values: realized in creative activity, especially in work activity. With regard to the question of the meaning and meaningfulness of life, it is not primarily a question of what kind of work one does, „what" one does, but „how" one works, how one approaches one's work, and whether one is actually conscientious about the job one holds. What is important is whether he fulfils the scope of his tasks. Experiential values: realized in experiencing, i.e. in taking in the world, for example in immersing oneself in the beauty of nature or art. Attitudinal values: realized in situations in which one has to cope with a certain fatality, with the limits that life brings. These values are based on how one deals with unchangeable fate, i.e., with a situation that one cannot change. (Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, 56–57.).

33 The very essence of these values lies in the attitude one adopts towards what he cannot change. It is about how a person bears the fate that has befallen him, how he bears his cross. Such values are, for example, bravery in suffering, preserving one's dignity in the wreck of life or in dying. A person's life is meaningful until the end, as long as he is conscious, he bears responsibility towards values. Frankl, 57.

34 Viktor E. Frankl, *The Man Searching for Meaning*, n.d., 102.

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the capacity to suffer. Creative values have priority, suffering has a higher value. „If life has any meaning at all, then suffering must also have meaning."[35]

For a person with a will to meaning, no situation in life is meaningless, a dead end. Just as the meaning of life does not lie in success or in an abundance of pleasure, so also failure and lack of pleasure cannot take away the meaning of life. Suffering, problems, fate and death belong to life, and none of these can be taken away from life without destroying its meaning. To do so would be to deprive life of its form and shape.[36] "Suffering is intended to guard man from apathy, from psychic *rigor mortis*. As long as we suffer, we remain psychically alive. In fact, we mature in suffering, grow because of it – it makes us richer and stronger."[37]

Frankl stresses, however, that it must be clear that in no way is suffering necessary to find meaning. He only insists that meaning is possible even in spite of suffering – provided, certainly, that the suffering is unavoidable.[38]

The transhumanists want to avoid death by stopping or at least slowing down aging. For Frankl, aging is not a threat. One cannot turn back the time that has passed. What once happened is now untouchable and invulnerable. The passage of time is not only a robber, but also a guardian of what has already happened. The transience of existence is no cause for pessimism for man. The fact that he's getting older does not have to bother him. He does not look at the possibilities and the future of the young with envy, for his reality is in the past he has lived, the love he has loved and the sufferings he has endured.[39]

It is not easy to find a correct view of suffering based on human experience only, because it is a transcendent reality. The key is to realize that suffering is a metaphysical evil, but not a moral evil. Thus, man has the hidden potential in himself to transform this metaphysical evil into a moral good. The suffering person's search for meaning consists in turning suffering into a means to achieve moral good. On the other hand, the search for meaning by the person who is confronted with the suffering of others consists in using this suffering as a means to love.

In the search for meaning in suffering, one arrives at two perhaps at first sight paradoxical but at the same time inseparable conclusions: the value of suffering experienced in love, and at the same time the task of struggling against it as much as possible. Both attitudes ultimately stem from the same motivation – love.

The first of these two tasks is for the sufferer to find the meaning of his suffering. According to Frankl, dealing with what is fate-given is the last task and the proper goal of suffering.[40] The inherent meaning of suffering is that it creates distance between the person and what makes him suffer. It creates a fruitful tension between what is and what ought to be. It makes for emotional awareness of what ought not to be. Only while in this state of tension man can continue to envision the ideal.[41]

Suffering in Frankl's conception has several meanings – performance, growth and maturation. To be able to create the attitudinal values that are formed in suffering, one needs the capacity to suffer. This capacity is not innate or otherwise given, it must be acquired, it must be learned to suffer. One who learns this, confronted with suffering, begins to create attitudinal values. This creation is the highest ethical performance. The formation of attitudinal values,

like the acquisition of the capacity to suffer, is an act of self-creation. Man grows in suffering. Something similar to metabolism takes place in him, when matter is transformed into energy. In this case, matter is supplied by fate and this is transformed into moral power. A man facing the suffering loses the ability to create his destiny externally, but through suffering he masters it internally. He transfers destiny from the factual level to a higher level – the existential level – and thus puts his own existence on a higher level. Through suffering one matures existentially, and this is the most important thing that happens in us under the influence of suffering. In spite of external limitations, man can acquire inner freedom. He becomes free from external conditions as soon as he begins to have an attitude towards an external situation which he cannot change. Although he is constrained, that is, dependent on external conditions in the sphere of creating (creative values) and experiencing (experiential values), he is free to take attitudinal values. This freedom is unconditional; it is a freedom "at all times." Extreme situations enable man to attain inner maturity; they become a test of maturity, an *experimentum crucis*.[42]

Through suffering, one also becomes richer inwardly. Paradoxically, he may lose everything in material terms due to external circumstances, but he gains wealth in existential terms. Growing through suffering also enriches a person in that he matures into truth. It is a well-known and much proven experience that people confronted with terminal illness and especially the nearness of death, re-evaluate their lives and radically change their hierarchy of values. Perhaps only at the end of life do they begin to realize more clearly what is really important in life and what of the things they have lived for and wasted energy on for many years were not worth it. It is better to know the existential truth of life at the end of it than not at all. So it's not just a psychological dimension of maturation, but an existential one. A person who has not given in to suffering but has accepted it and has thus matured can pass on his courage and determination to other people. He is also an example to other sufferers of how to take the right attitude in suffering.

Frankl takes the existential role of suffering in human life to an even greater depth – to the very essence of man. On a natural level, he expresses the conviction that the human being is passion, the essence of man is to be suffering: *homo patiens*.[43]

This clear and pure truth about oneself he attains outside all other categories, like good, evil, beauty, ugliness, without sentiment, he gets into an intimate relationship with it, he exists in it. This truth liberates him, because it is no longer merely his subjective truth, but truth as such, universal, common to all men. Truth is an essential element on the way to freedom.[44] The conjunction of truth and freedom is essential, as the history of mankind has repeatedly demonstrated. All totalitarian regimes, as one of the first things, have restricted access to truth, and have proclaimed the truth their own, "official", truncated, distorted and reduced "truth". But even by absolutizing the power of technology it is possible to establish a dictatorship – of perfection and success.

Reductionist conceptions of man, such as transhumanism, overlook the suffering man, seeing only the thinking and active man, bowing down to the deities of activity and rationality and

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35   Viktor E. Frankl, *Napriek všetkému povedať životu áno* (Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1998), 65.

36   Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, 114.

37   Frankl, 112.

38   Frankl, *The Man Searching for Meaning*, 102.

39   Tavel, *Zmysel života podľa V. E. Frankla*, 94.

40   Viktor E. Frankl, *Lékařská péče o duši* (Brno: Cesta, 1996), 108.

41   Frankl, 108.

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42   FRANKL, V.E. *Trpiaci človek*. Bratislava: Lúč, 2007, pp. 89-92. This Frankl's conclusion is reminiscent of the biblical statement, „We do see Jesus ‚crowned with glory and honour' because he suffered death, he who ‚for a little while' was made ‚lower than the angels,' that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering." (Hebrews 2:9-10). Suffering in this case is presented as the means of perfecting the Saviour, Jesus Christ. This meaning of perfection, of course, goes further than the view from the subject offered by Frankl. In this case it is primarily a perfect expression of obedience to the will of Father. But this shift in meaning is very important and applies not only to Jesus Christ, but to all who believe in him. It does, however, introduce a new essential element into the whole issue – the faith.

43   Frankl, 93.

44   „The truth will set you free." (John 8:32).

creating material values. There is a fear of suffering present in them and therefore the stance they take is one of escaping and marginalizing the sufferer.

However, enduring suffering is not an end in itself. The purpose of suffering is not in the suffering itself. It ceases to be suffering only when it is taken up with a purpose. Suffering, in order to have a purpose, must transcend, come out of the person of the sufferer, which means that it is only meaningful if it is suffered out of love for something or someone.

Accepted suffering is both filled with meaning and it transcends, that is, it moves towards something that is not identical with it. Meaningful suffering in this way becomes self-sacrifice.[45]

The deepest meaning of suffering can be found in the sacrifice of suffering or even of life for others.[46] The sacrifice of life is the highest degree of the realization of one's own freedom. There is no greater act of freedom than to voluntarily give up one's life in favour of something greater than one's own life. It is also the highest degree of transcendence, for one cannot come out of oneself more than when he renounces his own life in favour of something or someone else. If existential maturation is directly dependent on one's growth in freedom, then the sacrifice of suffering or life is the highest expression of a person's maturity.

Sacrifice for something greater than one's mere earthly existence gives meaning not only to suffering but also to death. Man feels in his deepest innermost being that the goal is not to survive life in the form of bodily vegetation, but that what he is really after is some spiritual essence of life. What man really desires is to experience life with meaning. Frankl says that if death didn't exist and life went on indefinitely, he would be deprived of meaning, because all the good he could do today he could postpone for tomorrow, he would lose the reason to be responsible for what he does, in a word, he would lose meaning.

Suffering can reach a person in one of these two ways: (on the part of the sufferer) to do good by suffering and to do good to the one who suffers. Doing good to those who suffer, according to Frankl, can be done by helping where possible and relieving where necessary.[47] Although he states it as a principle applicable to physicians, it can be applied figuratively to any human. Suffering, as a metaphysical evil, has great potential in itself to become an opportunity to do moral good, to approach the sufferer with love.

The suffering of others cries out for help and becomes an opportunity to show love. The suffering, which is present under so many different forms in human world, is also present in order to unleash love in the human person, that unselfish gift of one's "I" on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering calls for another world: the world of human love. In a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions. Love is also the richest source of the meaning of suffering, which always remains a mystery: we are conscious of the insufficiency and inadequacy of our explanations.

One of the negative phenomena that accompanies growing affluence in society is the developing culture of indifferentism. However, it is not difficult to imagine what would happen if the poor and the suffering did not exist at all. Gradually a space would be created for the development of unguided cynical egoism in which everyone could enjoy himself without anyone needing anyone. This imaginary paradise on earth would very quickly turn into hell, because the basic forms of solidarity and love would completely disappear among people.[48]

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45   Frankl, *Trpiaci človek*, 96.

46   „No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13)

47   Frankl distinguishes between necessary and pointless suffering. As we have seen, attitudinal values can only be exercised in relation to suffering that cannot be escaped. (Frankl, *Trpiaci človek*, 104.)

48   John Paul II, *Salvifici doloris*.

Enhancement may make one less sensitive to the needs of others and more demanding of oneself and others. The enhanced people may have a lesser sense of gratitude to the community or to those who raised and educated them, in the awareness that our abilities depend not only on ourselves, but also on the environment in which we live, and the people with whom we interact. The enhanced person will attribute merit to himself and to technologies, in the belief that he is self-sufficient and does not need others to improve.[49]

One of the main goals of transhumanism from an anthropological point of view is to emphasize self-determination, the power and rule of the individual over his own body and mind, the ambition to be the creator of his own identity. Obviously, this is a goal achievable in a society of the "powerful". Any such effort, even if it takes place on a strictly individual level, ultimately has the flip side of marginalizing the weak. A society that adores people who are successful and happy, young and beautiful, a society that is focused on performance and physical perfection, ignores those who are not valuable in a sense of usefulness. This narrows the space for concrete expressions of serving love among people. Such a society is ultimately dehumanizing.

Conclusion

The first task of anthropology with respect to technoscience is to distinguish between limits that are passable and impassable from the point of view of human nature. Impassable are those limits that protect man and really help him to grow. The most important impassable limit for science is our corporeity. Every person is his/her body, not just has a body. Man is "*corpore et anima unus*"[50]. The body is the constitutive part of human nature. It gives each person a precise and irreplaceable identity. It is also the seat of subjectivity, with all its emotions, experiences and limitations. We violate the limitation of the body when we see it as matter entirely at the disposal of science. If this limit is missing, the difference between the human body, the animal body and the machine falls. Without limits, everything is possible. And if everything is possible, man loses his identity. The final result is that man becomes a "thing", deprived of the richness of his subjectivity. The power of human actions must be at the service of man, otherwise man is manipulated, thus destroying his essence and artificially multiplying variants of the "post-human". The only way to protect humanity is to repeatedly emphasize the importance of human nature and to treat it as an impassable limit to the invasiveness of technology. The redefinition or negation of human nature leads to thinking of life as an animal process which ends up considering robots as thinking machines endowed with the same human capabilities, mechanically replicable. In this sense, human dignity is the "essential human quality" that distinguishes human beings in their specificity qualitatively, and not only quantitatively, from other beings. The presence or absence of capacities, enhanced or diminished, is irrelevant. Suffering and death are parts of human life, nothing that would diminish his dignity. To remove them would dehumanize the human being and deprive man of an important opportunity to give meaning to his life.

There are limits that can be crossed-over: physical, psychic and even spiritual, those that derive from diseases or from the actualization of some of our mental or relational abilities. Technoscience can help to overcome them, but without destroying them, because they are not simply a fact to be erased, but also a resource to grow and give meaning to life. The search for the improvement of some non-essential characteristics of the human should not, therefore, induce man to pay such a high price, and renounce our very humanity. When science and technology are imposed on people, these lose their humanity, are transformed into an instrument at the service

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49   Palazzani, "Le tecnologie emergenti", 93.

50   Concilium Vaticanum II, *Constitutio pastoralis Gaudium et spes* (Città del Vaticano, 1965), 14.

of the interests of a few, which brings with it a new kind of slavery, more dangerous because it is hidden.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF LIFE, NEUROTICISM AND LIFE MEANINGFULNESS IN CANCER SURVIVORS IN CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGI-
CAL COUNSELING | Mária Dědová, Vanesa Jakabová, Patricia Dobríková, Gabriel Baník

SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF LIFE, NEUROTICISM AND LIFE MEANINGFULNESS IN CANCER SURVIVORS IN CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING*

❖

Mária Dědová [1] ✉, Vanesa Jakabová [2], Patricia Dobríková [3], Gabriel Baník [4]

[1] Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, Trnava University in Trnava (SK)
[2] CPPPaP, Hlohovec (SK)
[3] Faculty of Health Care and Social Work, Trnava University in Trnava (SK)
[4] Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Arts, Presov University in Prešov (SK)

Abstract

Background: Cancer presents a major change in the life situation of an individual and significantly affects the subjective perception of the quality of life. There are many psychosocial and personality factors in cancer survivors that influence the quality of their lives. Aim of the present study is to search for the links between the quality of life domains (physical health, mental health, social relationships, environment), overall quality of life, satisfaction with health and the personality trait of neuroticism, and experiencing of the life meaningfulness in cancer survivors. We are interested in the extent to which neuroticism and the meaning in life explain the variance of quality of life in cancer survivors.

Methods: The participants were 334 respondents, 19 to 83 years of age. The average age of the participants was 51.4 (SD = 12.73); 277 (82.9 %) were female and 57 (17.1 %) were male. Data were collected using the Big Five Inventory-2-S [BFI-2-S, Soto, John, 2017, Slovak version by Halama, et al., 2020]; The World Health Organization Quality of Life. Division of Mental Health [WHOQOL-BREF, 1996]; Life Satisfaction Scale [ŠŽZ, Halama, 2002]. The data were collected with support of various healthcare institutions.

Results: The results of the study indicate a moderately strong negative correlation between subjectively perceived mental health and the personality trait of neuroticism, as well as between the environment and the level of neuroticism. Analysis of the results showed strong positive correlation between experiencing of mental health and the overall level of life meaningfulness, as well as between the overall quality of life and life meaningfulness. A weak positive correlation was found between experiencing of satisfaction with life and experiencing of life meaningfulness. The multiple regression analysis showed that the variables of neuroticism and overall level of life meaningfulness were significant predictors of quality of life and its domains.

Conclusion: Quality of life plays an important role in the treatment of cancer and is associated with the willingness of patients to cooperate. The results of the study show that experiencing of the quality of life is associated with personality traits, namely neuroticism. A significant link was found between the quality of life and experiencing of life meaningfulness. Social support presents an important source of life meaningfulness, and special attention should be paid to their support. The results of the study suggest a need to focus on the support of experiencing of life meaningfulness, thus improving the quality of life of cancer survivors with help of qualified counsellors and psychotherapists.

Keywords: Quality of life – Neuroticism – Cancer survivors – Life meaningfulness.

Introduction

Cancer represents a serious impact on person's health and one of the most frequent causes of death. Patients must overcome a shock caused by the diagnosis and undergo a difficult treatment. Since cancer especially affects patients, it is necessary to focus on their quality of life and life meaningfulness.

Psychological understanding of quality of life is subjective[2][3][4], based on what a person experiences, their thinking and assessment of the quality they experience in their life, and how their expectations correspond to their assessment of life reality[5]. Quality of life is multidimensional and is determined by multiple factors[6]. It can be considered a result of the effect of various factors that influence one another, such as economic, health, social factors, environmental conditions, a feeling of usefulness and a meaning in life and satisfaction with life. One experiences their quality of life based on their current health condition[7], and the overall impact of the illness on the quality of life depends on the duration of treatment, course of illness and prognosis[8]. Cancer results in many stressful circumstances; sometimes to worthlessness of one's being arising from inability to care for oneself from a materialistic point of view[9]. On the other side active coping with stress from oncological disease negative associated with subjective feeling of physical and mental discomfort (e.g. isolation, anxiety, depression, sadness, loss of meaning in life). [10] Pa-

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3   Elena Gurková, *Hodnocení kvality života pro klinickou praxi a ošetřovatelský výzkum* (Praha: Grada, 2011)
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tient's personality is significantly associated with somatic and mental symptoms of cancer[11], is a strong predictor of quality of life[12]. People with higher levels of neuroticism tend to experience negative emotions and assess their own health condition as bad[13] . In breast cancer patients, higher levels of neuroticism were associated with decreased quality of life[14] , whereas optimism proved to correlate positively with quality of life in cancer patients[15]. Results of study on patients with colorectal carcinoma showed that neuroticism was associated with all domains of quality of life and predicts quality of patients' lives.[16]

Quality of life correlates significantly with experiencing of the meaning in life. Reker and Wong consider the meaning of life to be a multidimensional construct which includes three components: cognitive, motivational and affective. Several studies[17][18][19][20] have confirmed a positive relationship between the experience of meaning in life and subjectively experienced quality of life in cancer patients. Breast cancer patients reported that experiencing of existentialist meaning helped them to experience their lives as high-quality[21]. Experiencing the meaningfulness in life culminates in relation to time following the completion of treatment. It correlated positively with physical, social and emotional functioning of the patients, with experienced meaningfulness in life accounting for 31 % of the emotional component, which included the quality of life[22]. Positive relationship was confirmed in cancer patients between social relationships forming a part of quality of life and the

cognitive component of life meaningfulness[23]. Social relationships represent an important source of life meaningfulness. Social support correlates significantly with life meaningfulness[24] supports self-respect of people and helps them resist to cancer.

Aim of the present study is to search for links between the domains of quality of life (physical health; mental health; social relationships; environment), overall quality of life, satisfaction with health and the personal trait of neuroticism and experiencing of life meaningfulness in cancer survivors. We are also interested in the extent to which neuroticism and life meaningfulness account for the variance in the quality of life in patients.

Methods

Participants and Data Collection
334 respondents from 19 to 83 years of age participated in the study. The average age of participants was 51.4 years (SD = 12.73). 277 (82.9 %) of participants were females and 57 (17.1 %) were males. Data were collected with support of the National Oncology Institute; League for Mental Health; Oncological Institute of St. Elizabeth; Faculty Hospital in Nitra – Institute of Clinical Psychology; OZ Venuše (citizens' association), Faculty Hospital and Policlinic in Žilina; Dobrý Anjel (Good Angel); EBMT and several oncological departments. The questionnaires were administered from July 2019 to September 2020. Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary, which was confirmed by the patients in the informed consent. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Trnava University and by the National Oncology Institute. The data were collected in a combined way – personally by the researchers and online. Inclusion criteria were being 18 or older, being diagnosed with cancer, without a severe mental health or physical condition, and not being terminally ill – data collection was not carried out in the palliative care unit.

Methods Used
Several questionnaires were used in the study: Sociodemographic and clinical marker questionnaire, Neuroticism Scale, The World Health Organization Quality of Life. Division of Mental Health (WHOQOL-BREF, 1996), Life Meaningfulness Scale.

Neuroticism Scale.[25] The Scale is a part of The Big Five Inventory-2-S (BFI-2-S) and comprises 6 items. Neuroticism is assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree).

The World Health Organization Quality of Life. Division of Mental Health (WHOQOL-BREF, 1996). WHOQOL-BREF consists of 26 items pooled into 4 subscales. The individual items are assessed on the scale from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating higher quality of life in the specific areas. WHOQOL-BREF comprises 4 subscales: 1) Physical Health; 2) Mental Health; 3) Social Relationships; 4) Environment. Apart from these 4 domains, the questionnaire also included two separate questions related to the overall quality of life ("*How would you rate your quality of life?*") and satisfaction with health ("*How satisfied are you with your health?*").

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Life Meaningfulness Scale[26] consists of 18 items; it comprises three dimensions: cognitive (general orientation in life, understanding of one's mission in life); affective (related to satisfaction in life, fulness, optimism); motivational (objectives, plans, engagement). Respondents indicate their views for each statement on the scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Research Design
The statistical data analysis was conducted using SPSS. The quantitative research consisted of comparative and correlation analysis.

Results
Table 1 shows descriptive data related to the quality of life, life meaningfulness, neuroticism in cancer survivors.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis (N = 334)

	AVERAGE	SD	MIN	MAX
DOM 1 (physical health)	13.32	3.17	4	20
DOM 2 (mental health)	14.32	3.01	5.33	20
DOM 3 (social relationships)	13.82	3.41	5.33	20
DOM 4 (environment)	14.21	2.78	5.50	20
Q1 (overall quality of life)	3.50	0.94	1	5
Q2 (satisfaction with health)	2.99	1.03	1	5
Life meaningfulness (total score)	67.10	12.79	32	90
Z1 (cognitive component of life meaningfulness)	22.58	4.57	7	30
Z2 (affective component of life meaningfulness)	22.99	5.17	6	30
Z3 (motivational component of life meaningfulness)	21.52	4.50	12	30
Neuroticism (negative emotionality)	3.01	0.78	1	5

One of the objectives of the study was to analyse the individual domains of quality of life in the context of the level of neuroticism. The results of the analysis are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson's correlation coefficients between the various domains of quality of life and neuroticism

	DOM1	DOM2	DOM3	DOM4	Q1	Q2
Neuroticism	-0.330**	-0.481**	-0.277**	-0.365**	- 0.280**	-0.233**

*p<0.05; **p < 0.01   1-way

Notes: DOM1 (physical health), DOM2 (mental health), DOM3 (social relationships), DOM4 (environment), Q1 (overall quality of life), Q2 (satisfaction with health).

The results of the analysis show medium negative correlation between subjectively perceived mental health (r = -0.481; p < 0.01); environment (r = -0.365; p < 0.01) and the level of neuroticism.

Another objective of the study was to analyse the overall quality of life in the context of the level of life meaningfulness and its dimensions. Table 3 shows the results of the analysis.

Table 3: Pearson's correlation coefficients between quality of life and its domains and life meaningfulness

	DOM1	DOM2	DOM3	DOM4	Q1	Q2
Life meaningfulness (total score)	0.408**	0.690**	0.454 **	0.500**	0.505**	0.266**
Life meaningfulness Cognitive component	0.314**	0.577**	0.411**	0.414**	0.435**	0.253**
Life meaningfulness Motivational component	0.365**	0.588**	0.344**	0.414**	0.419**	0.181**
Life meaningfulness Affective component	0.414**	0.684**	0.459**	0.509**	0.498**	0.276**

*p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01 1-way

Legend: DOM1 (physical health), DOM2 (mental health), DOM3 (social relationships), DOM4 (environment), Q1 (overall quality of life), Q2 (satisfaction with health).

A multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the extent to which neuroticism and the overall level of life meaningfulness predict the quality of life and its domains in cancer survivors (Table 4).

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Table 4: Results of multiple regression analysis: dependent variable of quality of life and predictors (neuroticism, life meaningfulness)

Criterion	Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Standard Errors
DOM 1 (physical health)	Neuroticism, life meaningfulness	0.446	0.199	0.194	2.851
DOM 2 (mental health)	Neuroticism, life meaningfulness	0.725	0.525	0.523	2.081
DOM 3 (social relationships)	Neuroticism, life meaningfulness	0.465	0.216	0.212	3.032
DOM 4 (environment)	Neuroticism, life meaningfulness	0.531	0.282	0.277	2.368
Q1 (overall quality of life)	Neuroticism, life meaningfulness	0.511	0.262	0.257	0.817
Q2 (satisfaction with health)	Neuroticism, life meaningfulness	0.299	0.09	0.084	0.9936

The results of the analysis show that neuroticism and the overall level of life meaningfulness are significant predictors of all domains as well as the overall quality of life and satisfaction with health ($p < 0.001$).

Discussion

The theoretical background shows that cancer is influenced by various factors, such as quality of life, life meaningfulness, personality traits, etc. The aim of the present study was to identify the relationships between the constructs of neuroticism, life meaningfulness and quality of life.

The results of the present study show negative relationships between the quality of life, individual domains of the quality of life and the levels of neuroticism in cancer survivors. Negative emotions and emotional distress are usually manifested in people with cancer[27]. Researchs[28] found that neuroticism in people with cancer at advanced stage correlates significantly with various sources of distress, such as depression, anxiety, ability to concentrate, and also correlates negatively with quality of life. In testicular cancer survivors, a significant relationship was found between neuroticism and the presence of somatic problems, reduced physical functionality, neurotoxic side effects, such as tinnitus, hearing defects, peripheral neuropathy, and self-esteem, concerns of being unable to be a father, sexual problems, dangerous alcohol abuse, daily use of medicaments, sedatives and hypnotics, subjective assessment of health condition as bad, high-

er number of negative life events, financial problems[29]. Numerous studies have also confirmed negative relationship between personality trait of neuroticism and quality of life[30][31][32].

Our findings suggest a negative correlation between neuroticism and experiencing of physical and mental health. The illness causes one to re-evaluate one's life, one behaves timidly, with mistrust, feels ignored[33]. A term C-type personality is also associated with cancer; according to some sources, it leads to the development of cancer, which has been supported by various authors[34][35]. C-type personality is characterized by the features like a need to rescue, avoiding conflicts, suppression of negative emotions, cooperation, doubts, submitting to others, higher level of anxiety[36]. C-type personality individuals are sensitive, altruistic, diligent, creative; due to their negative emotions, they tend to be unhappy and dissatisfied with their jobs[37].

Higher level of neuroticism is associated with worse social relationships in cancer survivors. The illness isolates patients; therefore, they need somebody to talk to[38]. A connection was found between the perceived social support from families and friends, and the emotional aspects of quality of life, as well as between the perceived support from families and friends, and somatic aspects of quality of life[39]. Most cancer survivors mainly looked for support in their families and friends[40]. It was found that most patients who wanted supported from their doctors or friends/families, were provided with it. Other sources of social support (psychologist, social worker) were less demanded, and the support from these sources was rarely provided. The most effective sources of social support were friends, families and doctors[41].

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33 Ivica Gulášová, *Telesné, psychické, sociálne a duchovné aspekty onkologických ochorení*. (Martin: Osveta, 2009).

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36 Asbjorn O. Faleide, Lilleba B. Lian, and Eyolf K. Faleide, *Vliv psychiky na zdraví-soudobá psychosomatika*. (Praha: Grada, 2010).

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The results of our analyses pointed to significant relationships between experiencing of quality of life and life meaningfulness. The authors dealing with cancer patients have also pointed out a positive significant relationship between the domains of quality of life and mental health and the total score on the life meaningfulness scale. Equally important findings have been confirmed in relation to the domain of quality of life – social relationships – and the cognitive component of life meaningfulness scale, as well as the overall life meaningfulness[42]. In relation to patients with various forms of cancer, it was found that there was very strong positive relationship between meaningfulness and the overall quality of life[43].

The last part of the present study was focused on whether it was possible to explain the variance of quality-of-life-related values and its domains by neuroticism and the overall level of life meaningfulness in cancer survivors. The results of the analysis confirmed that neuroticism and life meaningfulness were important predictors in relation to experiencing of quality of life. Up to 52.5% of variance in quality of life (the domain of mental health) were explained by neuroticism and the overall level of life meaningfulness, which were also significant predictors. The analysis of personality dimensions in patients with colorectal carcinoma showed that neuroticism was the only significant predictor of the overall quality of life[44]. Neuroticism predicts a decreased level of quality of life in cancer patients[45]. In relation to the research of meaningfulness, the results of the study on 39 breast cancer survivors from 34 to 68 years of age, where factors predicting the quality of life in the first year after the surgery were explored, showed that meaningfulness was the strongest predictor[46]. The results of another study showed that pain and meaningfulness predicted the overall quality of life in cancer patients[47].

Conclusion

The findings of the present study showed that experiencing of life meaningfulness correlated positively with experiencing of quality of life in cancer patients. The results also showed that the personality trait of neuroticism and life meaningfulness predicted the level of quality of life in cancer survivors. The future research should focus on other existential topics, such as experiencing of hope in the context of quality of life in patients undergoing treatment or in remission. Psychological interventions should reflect on the current research findings with respect to strengthening of social support and choice of adaptive coping strategies.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF LIFE, NEUROTICISM AND LIFE MEANINGFULNESS IN CANCER SURVIVORS IN CONTEXT OF PSYCHOLOGI-
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FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS A FACTOR INFLUENCING THE BURDEN OF THE CAREGIVER ON A CANCER PATIENT | Václav Tomiczek, Jaroslav Slaný

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AS A FACTOR INFLUENCING THE BURDEN OF THE CAREGIVER ON A CANCER PATIENT

Václav Tomiczek[✉][1], Jaroslav Slaný[2]

1   University Hospital Ostrava, Outpatient support and palliative care unit, Ostrava – Poruba (CZ)
1   Faculty of Social Studies, University of Ostrava, Department of Health and Social Studies (CZ)
2   Faculty of Health Care and Social Work, University of Trnava (SK)

Abstract
Background: The aim of the article is to submit, how family relationships affect the burden of a caregiver caring on his relative in the terminal stage of cancer. Our presentation is based on the conclusions of a qualitative research carried out with 14 respondents between 2018 and 2020 in the Hospice of St. Lucas in Ostrava – Výškovice (Czech Republic). Results of this research were processed into the chart of the paradigmatic model of Grounded theory, where in the set of intervening conditions the issue of family relations came to the fore most clearly.
Conclusion: In the presented text we try to describe the subcategory „Family" and point out its connection to the central category „Caregiver burden", point out the importance of marital / partnership relations and intergenerational belonging, but knowing that relationships can be both a source and a limit in crisis situation care for a terminally ill loved one.
Keywords: Palliative – Caregiver burden – Family – Relationships – Grounded theory.

Introduction
When we consider the fact, that a person is not literally „individual", it means the person irrelevant and isolated from others, but lives his life in relationships, that have different depth and intensity, but some of them are dominant, then the end of a person's life is concerns the whole network of relationships at the center of which the socialized „individual" is located. Tournier states that „each of us dies at the death of the person we love"[2]. This experience is part of life and is a reminder to us, how what we try and do, can be an unfinished work due to death. The death of a loved one becomes an unpleasant reminder of our own mortality.

For this reason, we see as important to address not only the needs of patients, but also of their relatives, who very often remain on the margins. They are required to have a number of activities and an intense interest in a dying relative, rather than to examine how they themselves perceive the impending loss of a loved one. In the case of acute conditions (sudden deaths, post-traumatic conditions, accidents, etc.), the situation of relatives is so exacerbated, that it is quite obvious,

✉   **Contact on all authors/Correspondence author: ThLic. Václav Tomiczek, Ph.D.**
     email: vaclav.zom iczek@fno.cz
✉   **Contact on author: Prof. MUDr. Jaroslav Slaný, CSc. – email: jaroslav.slany@truni.sk**

2   Paul Tournier. in Jaro Křivohlavý, *Psychologie nemoci* (Praha: Grada, 2002), 156.

how urgently they need professional help, for example in the form of crisis intervention. However, in the case of lingering diseases, especially oncological diseases, relatives are expected to „handle" the situation, that they may have „got used to" it. However, as research and observations from practice show, the opposite is often true. Numerous studies confirm the fact that Stajduhar precisely expressed, when she describes family caregivers as „hidden patients", who are often overlooked by health professionals[3]. Unusual demands are placed on these people in the care of a dying relative, with more than 50% of them suffering from some type of chronic illness, to which are added not only psycho-social but also economic difficulties, which are identified as a direct consequence of the caring role. Family members find themselves in a unique double role, providing support and requiring it at the same time. They can experience psychological distress and feelings of guilt, but at the same time look for adequate resources for managing the care role[4].

Aim and method of research
All the above presented reasons led us to decide to start deal with the needs of relatives with a member in the terminal stage more intensively, especially in the context of social work. All research and most of the literature in the Czech Republic and Slovakia are conceived from the point of view of medicine, psychology[5] or nursing[6]. However, as Kuzníková[7] confirms, patient and his family, as a result of a serious illness, also gets into a specific situation in the social field, in which psycho-social support and social networks and their mediation are necessary. For this reason, it is necessary to diagnose the psycho-social determinants of health and respond to them adequately. The social worker in health care and especially in palliative care has the unique and irreplaceable task of using the contribution of the psycho-social sphere to the disease to better adapt, overcome difficulties, motivation for treatment and cooperation, not only for the patient but also for his family members.

The main goal of our research was to identify the needs of families with a member in the terminal stage in the context of social work. From this goal, the basic research question arose as follows: „What types of needs are experienced and how are they expressed by relatives of terminally ill cancer patients?" For own research, we defined phenomenological paradigm[8]. During the research survey, we used in-depth semi-structured interviews with a deliberate research group of respondents, which were performed and analyzed using the method of grounded theory.

For structuring the results of the research, we used a paradigmatic model of grounded theory[9], which provides a framework diagram and concept that continuously refers to previous developments in the disease and relationships. Furthermore, through comparison with previous care, the current situation can be better analyzed and the right procedures can be chosen for the future, aware of the further development of the situation.

The paradigmatic model of grounded theory gives the opportunity to see the needs of caregivers in a broader context. It is therefore not just a linear list of items, which are often identified

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n the social survey only through an enumeration. The paradigmatic model provides, in contrast to a mere linear enumeration of needs, an outline and a framework, and the whole constructed, framework diagram or concept subsequently refers in its structure to the previous development of the disease and mutual relations. Furthermore, through comparison with previous care, the current situation can be better analyzed and the right procedures chosen for the future, aware of the further development of the situation. For a deeper understanding of family relationships, we have therefore moved from static-descriptive procedures to interpretive procedures[10]. As Berger and Luckmann[11] argue, research into the sociology of knowledge must be focused on ordinary „knowledge" rather than on „ideas," since it is from this „knowledge", that a network of meanings is intertwined without which society could not exist.

The diagram presented below is based on a general paradigmatic model of grounded theory[12] and presents the setting of the obtained categories so, that they correspond to the structure and at the same time are based on the reality arising from the conducted interviews. For the purposes of the presented article, this version is simplified for the sake of clarity (secondary links and references to codes are missing).

Family history

The research, which we carried out as part of the elaboration of our dissertation, clearly showed that the strongest intervening condition that comes to the fore during a human crisis, in our case the burden of the caregiver, is family and relationships. The human individual is a social being, who forms relationships and often perceives belonging to others and their support during difficult times. At this time, the relations are purified, issues related to primary relationships come

10   Hendl, *Kvalitativní výzkum*, 248.

11   Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *Sociální konstrukce reality*. (Brno: CDK, 1999): 22.

12   Hendl, *Kvalitativní výzkum*, 255.

to the fore[13], but, however, various previous family and relationship situations can influence these primary relationships to varying degrees.

In interviews with respondents of our research, they very often returned to memories of their childhood and youth and focused their attention quite spontaneously on a return to the past, which may at first glance seem nostalgic and romantic, but in fact was a strong source for reflection on the present situation. Respondents mentioned the modest conditions in which they grew up, which, however, were not at the expense of relationships and upbringing, often talked about the care and diligence of parents and how the value ladder helped them in current relationships with siblings and finding their own life partner.

Life stories of the respondents and their relationships were of course not as linear as they would have imagined, yet many of them described their marriages as harmonious and their own families as cohesive, but they were aware of the need to invest a lot of energy in relationships. Some respondents living in the second marriage perceived that it is of a higher quality than the first, and highly appreciated that their half-descendants, even though they are already living their lives, are interested and contact not only the patient in the hospice, but also the supportive. Only one respondent perceived her previous relationship life quite negatively, as breakups with her partners led her to have to move back to her mother after many years, but now she perceives in a positive sense, how close she can be at her and help her.

In the connection with the oncological illness of their loved ones, relatives commented on their previous experiences with illnesses in the family and how family cohesion and background helped them to overcome various difficulties. One respondent mentioned a genetic burden in the family, which creates a predisposition for the possibility of cancer. To another respondent became ill his sister with oncology illness some time ago, whom the family took care of until her death. This previous experience now helps to the respondent to better manage his mother's departure. Another participant also described in an interview the misfortune that happened to her first husband when he died in a car accident and she was left alone with her small children. At that time, she felt the intense support of her family, which helped her overcome this very difficult period of her life.

The interviews revealed the importance of family history for the current situation and also the fact, that, as family interactions were set up through various life situations (early and later), this was reflected in strengthened or weakened relationships during the current crisis caused by caring for the ill belowed-one.

Current family relationships

When respondents were asked about their current family relationships, they spoke mostly about their children. We were pleasantly surprised, that they confirm, that for most of them relationships with children are the greatest support in the current difficult situation. Some said that their children helped on a general level, others were more precise and stated, how the offspring came and supported the carers with visits but also with very specific help. Since most of the descendants were already adults, had their own families and lived far from their parents, they tried to provide a support, at least by telephone or by arranging services that could be arranged remotely.

In several cases, however, the respondents also confided us with the difficulties they have with their offspring and are limiting for them on varying degrees. One participant in the interview talked about her stepchildren, when the son communicates very well and perceives strong sup-

13   Naďa Špatenková et al., *Krizová intervence pro praxi*. (Praha: Grada, 2011): 83.

port, but the stepdaughter is completely estranged, communicates only with the father (patient) and burdens the respondent with unsolicited and inappropriate comments and advice. Another interviewee spoke very evasively about her son, who is currently in prison. On the other hand, she is more pleased with the help and support of his fiancee. One of the respondents complained about how her adult children use the home as a „mama-hotel" and, although they are sufficiently materially secure themselves, they still use the mother's financial support. The respondent also spoke about the genetic burden of the family due to oncological diseases, which is negatively tolerated mainly by her daughter. The respondent also spoke about the burden of serious illness, when, during his wife's stay in the hospice, their son suffered a cerebral vascular accident with severe consequences.

When our respondents were asked, what role a husband or partner plays in supporting their current situation, we learned in three cases that they have a great background and help in their husband (wife). On the contrary, one respondent stated, that her partner blocked her in long-term contact with her family and even in helping a sick mother, when she was at home-care, to the extent that the respondent decided to end this partnership.

What the interviewers agreed on, were the positive connections between them and their grandchildren. Those who commented on this issue, confirmed, that these relationships are charging them and are an important source for their own lives and grasping the difficulties associated with caring for the patient. Just because they are happy, when their grandchildren are doing well, they can visit them when they are sad or watch over them. Two respondents described nice and intense relationships with their step-grandchildren and also perceived their families as cohesive in this way, even though there were complications caused by the breakdown of some relationships.

When we spoke with respondents about the role of their siblings in the current stress period, some confirmed to us that they have a support in them. They were often close to carers even in the previous period, when their parent was still in home care and they are now visiting the patient. Two respondents confirmed, that they and their siblings also considered placing their patient in a hospice, including visiting the facility to make sure their decision was correct. One respondent stated that, she has a very good relationship with her sister, but does not want to overburden her, because the she helps to take care of her disabled granddaughter. For this reason, the respondent took a larger share in the care of her sick mother. Only in one case did the respondent tell us, that she became estranged with her sister, who „rejected" her mother when she changed her health and mental condition, refuses to visit her mother, she is already „dead" to her.

Therefore, if we can discuss more generally about communication in the families of our respondents, they mainly described its improvement, one respondent claimed that family relationships have always been good and therefore communication currently remains essentially at the same level. In two cases, there was a critique, that communication between the nearest family members had deteriorated.

Conclusion

Based on the above facts, which growth from our qualitative research, we believe that the issue of family relationships plays an important role in managing the burden, that carers experience with their family member, who is in the terminal stage of cancer.

We believe that for many respondents, as we have seen in our research survey, it is difficult to formulate specific types of needs, so the grounded theory, from which categories very often emerge „between the lines" of conversations, can be helpful. For this reason, we believe that the results, we found, and the way, they are presented through a paradigmatic model of grounded

theory, despite the limits of the sample of respondents, can help by better conducting interviews with clients in palliative care.

A social worker, who is an integral and essential part of the hospice's interdisciplinary team, can make a significant contribution to the overall positive view of palliative care[14] expressed by one of our respondents in these strong words: "*I said, what impresses me the most here (at the Hospice), it is the interest in the client, the interest in the patient. And I completely forgot about that magic word, and that magic word is "respect". Respect for the patient, respect for the sick, respect for the client, and this is really what I would like to emphasize.*"

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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CYBERCRIME AND THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE CRIMES OF THIS ENVIRONMENT

Saeed Mardani[1], Mahmoud Bavi[2✉], Seyed Bassem Mavalizadeh[3]

[1] PhD Student in Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, UAE Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

[2] Assistant Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran

[3] Assistant Professor of Public Law, Faculty of Law, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran

Abstract

Background: Criminalizing crimes in cyberspace, in addition to highlighting the strengths of the case, also puts gaps and weaknesses before the legislature to establish criminal titles. The aim of this study was to investigate the criminalization of crimes in cyberspace and the role of criminals in crimes in this environment. According to the obtained results, fornication or sexual mediation and pornography with its sub-categories, i.e. preparation, publication and trade of ugly images, and insulting, defamation and spreading lies according to Articles 242, 742 and 743 BC are considered crimes. By examining sociological theories, the possibility of committing cybercrime due to the nature and nature of cyberspace has been easier compared to the difficulty of committing traditional crimes. So that the offender does not need special measures, but by providing crime tools such as computers or mobile phones and having an Internet environment, crime will be possible. The role of the individual in such crimes was also found to be very important, so that in this regard, people with the changes that occur over time, in their living environment and living conditions, and by freeing themselves from conventional forms of social control, can be driven to delinquency.

Conclusion: Since committing a crime, in addition to violating the official laws of the country, is an attack on social values and norms, by adopting integrated preventive measures based on situational, developmental and social control strategies, and in parallel with the implementation of adequate education and information, it is possible to deal with cyber behavioral aberrations.

Keywords: Criminalization – Cybercrime – Delinquent.

✉ **Contact on all authors/Correspondence author: Mahmoud Bavi - Assistant Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran**
   email: mbavi6309@gmail.com
   Saeed Mardani – PhD Student in Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, UAE Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran
   Seyed Bassem Mavalizadeh - Assistant Professor of Public Law, Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran

Introduction

Cyberspace is the product of new developments that bring together an interconnected set of human beings through mass communication tools, regardless of physical and cultural geography, and facilitate interpersonal or group communication interactions through the exchange of digital information. But along with the growth and development of this area, new forms of crime have also emerged. Crimes with a new nature and hidden identity of the offender are different from traditional forms of crime. Age, gender, place and time is unknown, along with speed and ease of crime. For this reason, criminal policymakers see a new chapter open for cybercrime. In cybercrime, crime against public morality and decency is of particular importance, because „public conscience and morality have always considered the commission of a crime as immoral and disgraceful, so that this is one of the main principles of criminology. In the meantime, some crimes, which are known as „crimes against chastity" or „crimes against good morals", hurt the public conscience and morality more than others. Therefore, legislators, jurists and criminologists, due to the wide range of these crimes, pay special attention to legal and sociological causes and solutions to deal with it."[2] At the same time, the proliferation of cyberspace has greatly expanded crimes against public morality and decency. The areas of these crimes are: fornication, pornography, production, publication and trade of ugly images, insult and defamation and spreading computer lies, however, in the Computer Crimes Law, a section is dedicated to crimes against public decency and morality, and according to Articles (742) and (743) of the Penal Code. Have been identified, but no necessary research has been done on criminology. Identifying the causes of these crimes is important and can develop crime prevention strategies against chastity and public morality in cyberspace. It is obvious that in the occurrence of crimes against chastity, certain factors are involved that are separate from other crimes and include cultural factors, the vulnerability of its victims, ... which can have more destructive effects in cyberspace due to the characteristics of cyberspace. For this reason, dealing with and investigating crimes against public morality and decency in the field of cyberspace has significant features and characteristics. However, it seems that „in the law of cybercrime, the cases of crimes against chastity and morality are less considered and it is necessary to pay more attention in this regard to identify the existing gaps and the legislator seeks to eliminate them".[3]

Technical concepts and functions of cyberspace

„Information technology" or „information and communication technology" is the translation of „information technology communication", which consists of the two words „information" and „technology" and are: technologies that record, store, process, retrieve, Transmit and receive information in the form of audio, images, graphics, text, numbers, etc. using computer and telecommunication tools.[4] The technical aspects of this phenomenon also include two aspects of hardware and software such as: types of computers and their necessities, satellites, types of mobile phones, ... and types of networks, virtual social media and Internet software that aim to speed up human communication and Exchange the required information and create the well-being and comfort of daily life and make useful the process of life are used. Virtual social

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media, such as Facebook, YouTube, Alexa, Instagram, Telegram, Viber, etc., have something in common. This commonality can be attributed to their audience-orientation and the production of content on these virtual networks by users. The phenomenon of information technology, like other phenomena of development, left „obvious" and „hidden" functions immediately after its emergence. Cyberspace eliminated the exchange of information and communication restrictions and caused various activities such as virtual economy, virtual commerce, virtual education, etc. and other services to expand in this space and new exchanges with a new nature were formed. As a result, today we are developing at an indescribable rate, based on the „information socie- ty". On the other hand, the hidden functions of cyberspace have indirectly created negative and harmful effects. Some of these hidden negative functions include cybercrime such as money laundering, pornography, forgery, fraud, forgery, and so on. In fact, there are virtual users who, by using this phenomenon, are able to provide a positive or negative definition of cyberspace.

Cases of cyber crimes

In the field of cybercrime against public morality and decency, the two pillars of prostitution and pornography are more important, and other crimes against public morality and decency are under their subordination.

Prostitution or sexual mediation

Prostitution is one of the main and most important sexual crimes that has created a great crisis for governments due to the anomalies of today's societies. According to Article (242) of the Penal Code: „Prostitution is the bringing together of two or more people for adultery or sodomy".[5] Today, with the advent of Internet technologies, a new form of it has emerged called „Internet pimping" and in contrast to „traditional pimping" has the behavioral complexities of cyberspace. Using tools and cyberspace, the prostitute identifies, introduces, establishes communication, gathers, and in a word, meddles between the perpetrators of prostitution. The virtual environ- ment has created modern ways for many sex dealers to seduce women, girls, men and even teenagers.

Pornography

Pornography in Iranian law is one of the crimes related to content, which is among the crimes against morality and public decency in the division of subject law, but in the Iranian legal litera- ture, the term pornography is not explicitly mentioned.[6] Rather, it has been referred to in several legal texts as „contrary to public decency", „insulting public decency and morality", „vulgar" and „obscene". Since every crime begins with the „intention" of committing a crime, then the publica- tion of sexual content in cyberspace with the intention of committing a sexual crime, which here is the publication of the „tool" of the crime, to deceive the victim, in the „crime scene" Which is „cyberspace" here, is a sexual offense.

Production, publication and trade of ugly images

One of the sub-categories of the crime of pornography is the crime of producing, publishing and trading ugly images, which is defined in Note (1) of Article (742) of crimes against public de- cency and morality as vulgar: „And the images are ugly." „Ugly forms" in the texts of criminal law do not have an independent, clear and transparent definition and have not been identified from

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the point of view of the criminal legislator alone and have been mentioned only in this note. How- ever, if we pay attention to Note (4) of this legal article, it can be seen that during the definition of obscene contents, ugly images have also been defined. Note (4) Article (742) of the Penal Code. „Pornographic content refers to a real or unreal image, sound or text that indicates the complete nudity of a man or woman or sexual intercourse or sexual intercourse".[7]

Insulting, slandering and spreading computer lies

Another example against public morality and decency in cyberspace is insulting, slandering and spreading computer lies. Its root comes from „lie" in the sense of false and untrue and is specified in Article 698 of the Penal Code. This crime occurs by publishing, disseminating, spreading the word, sentence, subject and unrealistic and unreasonable event about a person or persons or groups whose intention is to rumor, destroy, insult and destroy their spiritual char- acter (5).

Legal function of ethics

Man is by nature moralistic and avoids immorality. Today, the discussion of moral values has undergone many changes due to human developmental developments and the necessity of its existence has become more apparent. Laws are formulated with the aim of maintaining order and peace in society. Legal rules aim at establishing order and justice in social relations. The scope of application of legal rules, unlike moral rules, which has its own scope, is limited to social ties and their external interactions. The purpose and scope of legal rules require that a codified military guarantee material and social enforcement for it. In this regard, one of the highest goals of ethics is to regulate social relations and interactions, but not all the vast realm of ethical rules is subject to legal requirements. Also, the guarantee of the implementation of moral rules in Islamic law has been criminalized, but has not been punished.

The function of ethics in cyberspace

It can be clearly stated that environmental factors have a significant impact on changing the individual and collective behavior of individuals, and ultimately their social structure. It can be seen that with the transition of societies from the context of tradition to the context of modernity, the traditional divisions of societies have also changed. One of the most important transforma- tional phenomena that has led to structural changes and the introduction of new concepts of modernization is cyberspace. These developments are closely related to the type of structure and shape of the nature of this space and have covered a virtual mask on human identities and relationships. Virtual social networks have brought about serious fundamental changes in iden- tity-building institutions. In these networks, with the hidden identity and the lack of judgment of the audience, the possibility of abnormal social performance increases and gives them a sense of social immunity and the absence of a deterrent.

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7   (5) Habibzadeh M J, Rahmanian, H. Pornography in Iranian criminal law.

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The role of criminals in cybercrime against public morality and decency

Various theories have been proposed in this regard:

Social pressure theory: According to this view, people in the lower classes are more likely to engage in perversion, because society encourages them to have the goal of achieving great success, but does not provide them with the means to achieve those goals.[8] When the aspirations of the lower classes for status in the middle-class environment are dashed, the youth of the lower classes are encouraged to seek status by participating in wrongdoing among themselves.

Developmental Criminology Theory: The hallmark of developmental criminology is the focus on delinquency in relation to changes that occur over time, in individuals and their living conditions. Childhood and adolescence are the most central topics of developmental criminology, and the largest volume of research in practice has been devoted to them. The most important issues for developmental criminologists are the continuation and change in behavior throughout the course of life, such as the beginning and end of delinquency, the criminal profession, and patterns of delinquency over time.[9]

Weakness or lack of social control: From Salimi's point of view and arbitration (8), the rules related to traditional crimes are either generally rooted in the moral culture of society or have become part of the culture of society over time. Therefore, in addition to violating the official laws of the country, committing a crime is also considered an attack on social values and norms. These norms have two types of functions. On the one hand, with the internalization of social values, a person feels a kind of internal pressure when confronted with crime. This „self-control" mechanism is a practical way to prevent crime. On the other hand, the fear of the stigma resulting from the arrest, conviction and punishment of the potential offender is deeply troubling. That is, many people are not delinquent because either their inner beliefs control them or their fear of being misjudged by others prevents them from breaking the law. The situation is different for many behaviors in cyberspace. Some of the harmful behaviors in this area have not yet been criminalized. Some have not penetrated social culture due to lack of necessary background, and committing these behaviors does not provoke public opinion.

Theory of Neutralization Techniques: In this theory, the offender is an individual from society and is not much different from others and respects social values like other members of society, but he tends to violate values more than others. Thus, the most important step is to free oneself from the conventional forms of social control that allow one to drift into delinquency. During this stage, one must interpret the commands of this normative system in such a way that while accepting and accepting them, one can ignore and violate these commands, so the offender does not show fundamental opposition to a law-abiding society, but in the opinion itself is something like a forgivable offense. Adults occasionally take on the role of delinquent, but do not become a perpetual perpetrator.[10] In this theory, there are several main methods, such as „denial of harm", „denial of the victim", „denial of responsibility", „condemnation of the convicts" and „resorting to a higher level of loyalty" to neutralize the inner conscience and ignore the norms. One of these methods helps the offender to escape from the blame of conscience as much as possible.[11]

Theory of self-control: According to this view, all types of crime can be explained by „low self-control" with opportunities. Self-control is considered as an internal factor towards the indi-

vidual. There are several elements involved in self-control that influence delinquent behavior. In their view, the first element states that delinquent behavior creates a sense of well-being. A person with poor inner self-control cannot ignore that feeling of pleasure. As a result, he performs activities that easily and effortlessly provide him with momentary satisfaction, even if this activity ultimately leads to long-term loss and damage to him.[12] This element is consistent with cybercrime because, given the inherent nature of cyberspace; there is room for behavioral diversity for this group of offenders who commit crimes without fear of being exposed. The second element of delinquent behavior is the excitement of the outcome. As a result, a person with poor inner self-control likes the excitement of high-risk behavior and satisfies such inner weakness. The excitement of ignorance in cyberspace, the necessary speed, the multiplicity of the target community, the many escape routes, etc., creates an atmosphere full of excitement for the offender that doubles his desire to commit a crime.

Crime prevention in cyberspace

As cyberspace has been defined as a new state of criminal environment, the strategies needed to monitor crime opportunities are to attract, increase the risk of crime, and make crime more difficult. The situational or situational prevention approach is a relatively new approach in which measures are taken to influence the environmental and underlying conditions of the crime. This approach tries to neutralize the intent and will of the offender. Here, control and initiative take the place of punishment and inaction, and by relying on the target of the crime (the victim), an attempt is made to prevent rape. In preventing a situation without addressing the offender, an attempt is made to increase the security of the target of the crime and to make it difficult to achieve it and to increase the cost of the crime. This strategy is one of the ways to prevent victimization. The five techniques of this strategy include: 1. Increasing the difficulty of committing 2. Increasing the risk of committing 3. Decreasing the benefits 4. Reducing the incentives 5. Eliminating excuses. Considering this strategy and considering the theories of „lifestyle" and „theory of rational choice", and according to the theory of „neutralization techniques" in relation to crime control, it can be said that situational prevention is an effective and efficient approach to crime prevention. Public morality and chastity seem to exist in cyberspace, because in these crimes, due to the very negative consequences, anxiety and feelings of insecurity that are evident in its potential victims, especially in women and adolescents, can be more and better than the potential victim. Get help and people in the community to play a more active role in this regard.

Conclusion

According to the studies, with the advent of information technology tools and space, a new form of crime has emerged that has revealed the nature and hidden identity of criminals in cyberspace, so that traditional forms of crime such as age, gender , Has changed place, time and has changed the speed and ease of committing a crime. The aim of this study was to investigate cyber crimes against public morality and decency in cyberspace and the role of criminals in crimes in this environment. In this regard, crimes such as Internet prostitution, Internet pornography, production and publication and trade of ugly Internet images, insult and defamation and spreading computer lies, etc. have been criminalized by the Iranian criminal legislature. Given that certain factors such as sociological and psychological factors can be involved and effective in committing cybercrime and according to the causal relationships in the world, just as the Internet has direct and indirect effects on human societies, human factors also affect the use of the Internet. In addition to the useful and necessary use of cyberspace, these human factors have created the

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Expert articles

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grounds for the emergence of a new form of these crimes, such as the concealment of the identity of the offender. Given the current state of communication in the global community and the urgent need to use information technology, it is not possible to filter and prevent the use of cyberspace, and according to researchers, the use of information exchange and communication by social networks is necessary. . Therefore, the lack of preventive control of this space, as analyzed in this study, the victimization of individuals, especially vulnerable groups of women and children by criminal gangs in cyberspace, will cause irreparable damage to governments and civil society, the least of which, Endangering the civil security of society and the family. On the other hand, according to legal criminologies, in order to prevent cybercrime, the criminal policymaker needs to identify the nature and characteristics of cyberspace and its users in order to prevent the occurrence of crime before the crime occurs by using the tools of law and sociological strategies. The role of the offender was found to be very important in such crimes. In this regard, people with the changes that occur over time, in their living environment and living conditions, and also by being free from conventional forms of social control, are able to tend to delinquency. Since committing a crime, in addition to violating the official laws of the country, is an attack on social values and norms, in this regard, one of the useful and necessary solutions is education and public awareness at the community level, because education and awareness in order to self-control Internet users along with other strategies. The protection of cyberspace can ensure the social security of the citizens of the society to an effective extent. Also, considering that the environment has a tremendous impact on human behavior and choice, environments such as schools are the best centers for education and development of morality, and this leads to the relevant authorities using ethics to help prevent and guide society towards ethics. Because morality in this day and age is like a lost link whose existence opens the way to cure many problems and social anomalies. Finally, it can be said that the acceptance of the phenomenon of cyberspace as an undeniable necessity and the identification of the harms, disadvantages and harms of cyberspace in full, by the relevant authorities will lead to the development, with full nobility, high accuracy and a more comprehensive view. Planned, designed, and implemented the necessary community-based strategies to protect the privacy of individuals in cyberspace. Since cyberspace has become an integral part of human life and has rapidly affected all aspects of human life; therefore, the nature of this space and recognizing the conditions and requirements to become a powerful actor in this field, is the first step to correct and legal social control, and any neglect and neglect of this phenomenon will cause dangerous damage to society.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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Expert articles

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Asadollah Nasseri Karimvand, Seyed Yazdollah Taheri Nasab, Mohsen Shekarchi Zadeh

CRITERIA OF FAIR TRIAL WITH A CASE LAW OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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Asadollah Nasseri Karimvand [1], Seyed Yazdollah Taheri Nasab [2✉], Mohsen Shekarchi Zadeh [2]

[1]   Ph.D. Candidate in Criminal Law and Criminology, Department of Law, Najafabad branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, (Iran)
[2]   Assistant Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology, Department of Law, Najafabad branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, (Iran)

Abstract

Background: One of the fundamental issues for the rule of law is justice and human rights because justice is a right and should not be actted against it; justice is closely linked to the concept of respect for rights. In fact, justice is law-abiding behavior, so injustice is anti-law and human rights abuses. In fact, fair trial is a personal trial in the light of the law with respect for citizenship and a ground for promoting the rule of law. This right is systematically regulated by national and international norms, in accordance with some principles. Courts are formed to ensure justice and dispute resolution, so they must be sensitive in their actions and the foundation of their formation. Courts have the most important role to play in achieving the goals of the judiciary, and in order to achieve these goals in advance they must adhere to certain principles that guarantee the correctness of the proceedings and the fairness of decisions. Following these principles and criteria, the development of criminal justice in any society will be closely linked to the fair trial in that society that requires the rights and freedoms of the actors in the criminal process.

Conclusion: Promoting criminal justice also promotes public development and community excellence. Because when citizens see that their rights are respected and supported by the government board, they feel a sense of judicial security and are more likely to participate in the development of their community.

Keywords: Criteria of justice – Fair trial – Criminal justice – Human rights – European Court of Human Rights.

✉   **Contact on all authors/Correspondence author: Seyed Yazdollah Taheri Nasab - Assistant Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology, Department of Law, Najafabad branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran – e-mail: sy.taherinasab@yahoo.com**
Asadollah Nasseri Karimvand - Ph.D. Candidate in Criminal Law and Criminology, Department of Law, Najafabad branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran
Mohsen Shekarchi Zadeh - Assistant Professor of Criminal Law and Criminology, Department of Law, Najafabad branch, Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran

Introduction

The right to trial - the fair judgement and protection of the rights of suspects and defendants in the criminal process has had the focus of all advanced legal systems in the world.

All legal systems in the world recognize certain standards and guarantees as the rights of suspects and defendants. These standards prevent any harmful and unjustified harm to the suspect and the accused, and undermine their rights in the criminal process and guarantee a fair hearing.

The requirement of a fair hearing covers the whole criminal process, not just oral hearing or first-instance hearings. Therefore, in assessing the fairness or non-fairness of a proceeding, one should consider the whole process of adjudication, not a single fact, because infringement of the principle of fairness (synonym of justice) may at one stage be remedial or compensatory.[2] Fair trial in the European Convention on Human Rights is at the heart of the procedure, and in particular the criminal procedure[3] From a conceptual and temporal point of view, fair trial covers all stages of the criminal procedure from the discovery of the crime to the execution of the sentence. Accordingly, the principle of freedom and security of the judiciary is regarded as part of a fair trial that has been virtually excluded from its jurisdiction because of its particular character. The commonalities of judicial and legal freedom and security (Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights) and fair trial (Article 6 of the Convention) also underpin this alliance. It is believed that fair trial in the Convention on Human Rights - and consequently in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights - in the sense of including judicial freedom and security by guaranteeing fair trial standards, and therefore it is impossible to make a clear distinction between two issues. The European Court of Justice has also taken advantage of this to some extent with the guarantees set out in Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights in monitoring the implementation of the guarantees set out in Article 5 of this Convention. Accordingly, and with a view to guaranteeing the standards and principles governing the guarantee and fair trial, in accordance with Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, „Everyone has the right to full equality in a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, and Such a court will decide on their rights and obligations or any criminal charges against them." Also, under Article 14 (paragraph 1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, „... everyone has the right to a fair and ... hearing ...". The right to a fair and fair hearing in Article 1 (paragraph 6) of the European. The cases cited and some similar legal documents imply several important principles for a fair trial. The principle of equality in court, the principle of independence and impartiality of the court, the principle of openness of hearings, the principle of expediting the proceedings, and some other rules of law, are all principles outlined in these articles. But the important point here is the intention of the creators of these crucial human rights documents to use the common phrase „fairness of the hearing" which certainly embodies the concept of „fairness" within itself. Regarding the word equity, it is said that "in the literal sense, most dictionaries have considered equality with justice to be equivocal or considered a duty of non-harm to another. In the French glossary, fairness means giving equal share to every person and impartial recognition of right. Americans have also considered fairness as due process of law. „Other jurists have also interpreted equity as „equality of weapons". They believe that the opportunities available to the parties should be equally divided, with the status of one party not endangering the other."[4] So it may be easier to define a fair trial as one in which neither party is

2   Aref Ahmadi, Mohammad, Fair Hearing, First Edition, Tehran, Magazine Legal Foundation Publications (2017),

3   Ghorbani, Ali, Fair Hearing in European Court of Human Rights Procedure, First Edition, Tehran, Today's Legal Publication. (2011).

4   Massoud Raei Dehghi, Kaveh Mousavi, Human Rights Practitioners and Human Rights, with Special Emphasis on European Court of Human Rights. International Law 33 Autumn & Winter 2016. (2016).

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in a different position than the other, and this definition may also be a synonym for the equality of rights of litigants in court. A close look at the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case statistics also shows that „more than half of the ECtHR's cases today concern complaints about Article 6 and breaches of fair trial conditions and guarantees, of course, each of them wants separate segments. But what can ultimately be said is the importance of: Firstly, the Convention and, secondly, the European Court of Human Rights has given a fair hearing. The large volume of cases in this regard confirms the recent claim. Statistical examination of cases referred to the European Court of Human Rights, alleging violations of more than twenty cases in violation of the provisions of Article 1 (paragraph 6) of the European Convention and violations of the right to a fair hearing within the first 40 days of the 2015 (from January 1st to February 10th). In any case, the author intends to answer the fundamental question of how the criminal justice system in Iran should comply with the European Court of Human Rights case law: First: the criteria for a fair trial are properly implemented, guaranteed and secured. Secondly: In the current practice of Iranian courts (criminal courts), in view of the European Court of Human Rights - are the rights and freedoms of individuals and, in particular, „judicial security" ensured? thirdly, what measures has the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran taken with regard to judicial review and protection of individuals with regard to citizenship and legal security in order to ensure fair trial in the judiciary? and finally, what is the guarantee of enforcement of breaches of the standards of fair trial in Iranian domestic law in conformity with international law (European Court of Human Rights procedure)?.

Previous studies

Aghaei Janet Makan (2017) has examined the rights of justice. He considered judicial rights to be just and fair trials and does not differentiate between this type of legal entity (fair and just).

Aref Ahmadi has studied and examined the principles of fair trial, its principles, the criteria for establishing and ultimately the criminal justice system in Iranian and Afghan law in the light of Hanafi religion. Appealing to the criminal law of the two countries based on international criminal law standards - in accordance with international standards - has been discussed in the second legal system, while his approach to the Hanafi religion (one of Sunni's religion) was this religion superiority and its decrees on formulation, and the introduction of laws and regulations (especially criminal law) in Afghanistan.[5]

Raei Dehghi and Mousavi have examined human rights defenders from the perspective of human rights with particular emphasis on the European Court of Human Rights. Contrary to the legal title that seems to encompass civil litigation, most of the warrants are aimed at the quasi-criminal nature of the conflict between civil law and criminal law.[6]

Omidi examines the right of fair hearing under the light of human rights documents based on Iran's rights (laws and regulations). It should be said that the right is a privilege and not a performance. In principle, justice cannot be expected, the author is more capable of explaining and analyzing justice and litigation based on a fair (just) judicial system. Every human being has the right to have the facilities and tools of the criminal justice system to respond to their charge in the competent judicial authorities, so these facilities and tools will be considered the right to a fair hearing.[7]

Ashrafi has examined the developments of the Criminal Procedure Code of 2013 in the field of fair trial. It can be deduced from the study that human rights standards in the field of international law are nowadays considered as a reliable criterion for evaluating the legal systems of different countries and that most governments try to make their laws and regulations comply with international human rights standards. Among these standards, which are considered to be a prominent feature of human rights law in the field of criminal law, may be the international standards of fair trial, which have been amended by recent changes in Iran's criminal justice system following the adoption of the Criminal Procedure Code. To strengthen the stability of this system and the justice within it.[8]

Thematic Goals

1. Structural and fundamental review of the European Court of Human Rights in order to clarify the legal role and status of this body in dealing with cases and referral cases as well as explaining its jurisdiction.
2. The principles of fair trial and the interpretation of each (in completing the main objective).
3. Expressing and interpreting the guarantees of law enforcement for violating the principles of fair trial in Iranian domestic law and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (this may, at the same time, be our objective in compiling the present study).

Thematic research literature
The concept of fair trial

Fair trial is a combination which its every component analyzes is useful. Hearing means „Judging and adjudicating matters between litigants, whether litigants or matter in a competent court, or litigants in litigation, criminal or civil cases in a competent court".

Fair trial means the general guarantees provided the judicial process by a competent, independent, impartial and foreseeable tribunal to observe the rights of the parties. When implemented, these guarantees limit the authority of the state over individuals and thus protect the rights of individuals more effectively.

Divine religions, especially Islam, have throughout history heralded the principles of fair trial, including the independence and impartiality of the judge, the right to a fair hearing, the principle of legality of offenses and penalties, the principle of equality, the principle of openness of justice, the principle of innocence. However, the term „fair trial" as a human right has come into being since two centuries ago.

International and regional human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1911 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 14) have recognized the right to a fair hearing and have committed States to enforcing and guaranteeing this right to all persons.

It should be said: In general, a fair trial contains a set of criteria and guarantees that are envisaged in the judicial mechanism to ensure that the rights of the parties in the process of litigation are met by a competent, independent, impartial and foreseeable court

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5   Aref Ahmadi, Mohammad, Fair Hearing, First Edition, Tehran, Magazine Legal Foundation Publications. (2017).
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Fair hearing in a New Era
Paragraph 1: Fair trial in the national system

In the thirteenth century under the influence of Aristotle's ideas that had just been recognized in the West, divine interpretation of natural law replaced rational interpretation. In this period, the annotators on classical texts have explored the principle of equality from the point of view of ancient Roman law. The promotion of the idea of equality, with its new scope, provided the basis for the emergence and strengthening of the rule of law. It was in this context that a document like the Great Britain Charter emerged.

This charter is the historical origin of the emergence of the rule of law. The rule that sought to restrict kings to law was not consistent with the theory of absolute sovereignty. This theory held that the essence of sovereignty is such that the ruler should not be bound by laws. But many scholars believed that the principle of the king's superiority over the law does not mean the right to act contrary to the law. Even Jean Bode - the proponent of the theory of absolute sovereignty - himself believed that the king should do as much as he could to the rules, not his own will. The principle of the rule of law was introduced in the form of new interpretations in a famous confrontation in 1612 between the King of England and Cook (the Supreme Court judge), Cook addressed the king: „.... It is true that God bestowed on His Excellency the supreme science, but His Highness is not acquainted with the laws of his sovereignty, England, and matters relating to the life, inheritance, property or property of nationals. Things that are not settled by natural reason but by educated and law-based reasoning ... the law is the benchmark and scale for dealing with nationals ... „.

The struggle continued to restrict the king's power and to establish the rule of law in England, leading to the issuance of the Great King's Declaration, or British King's Charter, in 1688. But during the period of absolutist rule in most parts of Europe until the nineteenth century, the king of the country was still the highest judicial authority. He had the power to acquit, reduce or increase the punishment, and sentence. Abolitionist kings used criminal jurisdiction as a means of suppressing disobedient people. There was no support for nationals against the arbitrariness of their rulers.

A: From the Constitutional Revolution to the Islamic Revolution

In the wake of developments in the Western world, in our country, even though we are experiencing critical but reformist thinking about the criminal system, the intellectual attitudes of the Constitutional Revolution were the basis for the hidden campaigns that eventually became law. The basic dated 14 dated 1324 Lunar. The law, which consisted of 51 articles, was solely dedicated to the formation of the parliament and the rights of the members of the House of Representatives, and was insufficient for lack of other constitutional principles. Thus, after much scrutiny on September 29, 1925, one hundred and seven other principles were approved by the Majlis, and thus, the Iranian constitution was fully incorporated with one hundred and fifty-eight constitutions. Although the constitution did not mention the word fair trial, it could even be said that it did not pay any attention to the various elements of fair trial. But the constitutional amendment has referred to fair trial in many cases. According to the Ninth Amendment, people are protected against all forms of interference with life and property except as provided by the laws of the country. Also, Article 10 of the Amendment refers to the legality of the arrest warrant, in which case the guilty person must be notified within twenty-four hours.

Also, the Eleventh and Twelfth Amendment states, respectively, the principle of the right of access to court and the principle of legality of punishment. Article 71 of the Amendment establishes a legal basis for official courts in the country and, by adopting the principle of independence of the judiciary, places the judiciary in the hands of the judiciary, and the „Supreme Court of Justice" and „Courts of Justice" are the only official source of public protests in the country. Also, Principles (76) and (77) of the Supplement have stated the principle of publicity of the trials and the exceptions thereto. Article 78 also emphasized the necessity of documenting and reasoning the judgments of the courts and Article 79 of the Amendment emphasizes the need for a jury to investigate political and press allegations, and Principles (80), (81), (82) and (85) determined the judges' job independence. Article 86 also referred to the issue of appeals.

B: Since the Islamic Revolution

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, we are witnessing a major change in the criminal justice system of the country in order to bring the criminal system into conformity with the Shari'a law and jurisprudential principles, which has been emphasized in Article 4 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this regard, it has insisted on the need to comply with all laws and regulations, including criminal laws and regulations, with the supreme law of Islam. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has the following principles of fair and equitable justice:

„Article 19 of the Constitution refers to the equality of rights of the Iranian people and the non-discrimination between them. Article 20 also considers this equality to include all human, political, economic, social, cultural rights. From these two principles, we derive the principle of equality, namely that all people have the same rights and duties and that all people of the nation ... are equally protected by the law. „One example of equality is equality in the courts. The purpose of equality in courts is that we should not discriminate (whether religious, sexual, financial, status, etc.) or discriminate against one party to another. Also, Article 32 of the Constitution refers to the principle of legality of arrest and detention, as well as the right of the accused to initiate prosecution. Other constitutional principles refer to other principles governing the fair trial as follows:

- Article 34, the right to access a competent court and the right to seek and have recourse to a court have been identified.
- Article 35 emphasizes the right to have a lawyer in trials (especially criminal trials).
- Article 36, emphasizing that the enforcement and punishment of the punishment should only be taken place through the courts and competent judicial authorities.
- Article 37 has stated the principle of absurdity.
- Article 159 requires the observance and formation of courts based on the rule of law and the ineffectiveness of the order of any unlawful authority, even of the authorities.
- Article 164 has identified the principle of judges' independence.
- Article 165 stated the principle of openness of trials in both legal and criminal cases.
- Article 166 has taken into account the principle of the reasoning and reasonableness of court rulings.
- Article 167 guarantees the principle of predictability of the judicial system so that the judges' hands are not closed for judgment (resolving disputes, disputes, and disputes of persons in any legal manner).

Paragraph 2: Fair Trial in the International System

The 20th century, and most of the second half of it, is a period of dramatic development and expansion of international human rights instruments, humanitarian law, as well as institutions overseeing and enforcing these rights. This era can be called the era of internationalization of human rights. The rights to a fair trial, also found in this series of global support, can be examined in terms of the emergence and evolution of international human rights, international humanitarian law and international criminal law.

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Paragraph 3: Fair Trial in International and Regional Documents
A.A fair hearing in world documents

There are several types of fair trial criteria, each of which or some of these criteria have been highlighted in one or more of the international legal instruments. For example, one of the most important principles governing fair trial is the principle of absurdity. This principle has been recognized in Article 4 (Paragraph 11) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Hereby anyone charged with a criminal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. According to the law, the principle of innocence is one of the fundamental Islamic principles. The result of this principle is the necessity of presenting a reason for the claimant.

Other principles of fair trial, which have been emphasized in international documents, are the "principle of prohibition of arbitrary detention", which is enshrined in Article 2 (Paragraph 2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Further to this clause, the defendant is immediately expected to appear in a judicial authority for trial (Article 3, paragraph 3), to hold a trial without delay (paragraph 4 of Article 9) and, ultimately, to provide for the right to compensation for innocent defendants (paragraph 9 of Article 5). The other covenant in the International Covenant has already discussed the criteria for ensuring fair trial - which, of course, will be the subject of Chapter Two of this article - however, it must be stated in which one. International documents have talked about the criteria for a fair trial.

In addition to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - which addresses several principles of fair trial - the UN Charter can also be cited as a statute of the international community at the top of the pyramid.

It is noted that there is generally no position in the UN Charter to include human rights and freedoms - including fair trial - as stated in the Covenant. In addition, the following documents may be mentioned: Each of them applied some of the criteria of fair trial:

1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
2. International humanitarian law document (s);
3. Other international instruments such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners adopted 1998, the United Nations Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment adopted in 1987, the United Nations Basic Principles on the role of lawyers adopted in 1990, United Nations Convention against torture and fundamental principles on independence of the judiciary adopted in 1985 and UN strategic principles on prosecutors adopted in 1990.

B. Fair trial in regional documents

Without a doubt, fair trial should be considered one of the fundamental human rights. In this respect, the definition and concept of a fair hearing is often cited or provided in human rights documents.

Calling the principles of good and fair trial in the regional dimension can be found in the following documents:

1. The European Convention on Human Rights;
2. The American Convention on Human Rights;
3. The African Charter of Human Rights and Nations;
4. Islamic Declaration of Human Rights.

As stated earlier, the description of each of these documents is beyond the scope of this article and should be reviewed in its proper place.

Purposes of a fair hearing

There are various views on the purposes of criminal procedure, including, "It is said that criminal procedure is one of the branches of domestic public law which is a form of public order." This branch of criminal law focuses on how to handle a criminal case to determine the outcome.

In criminal law, criminal phenomena are spoken of and the reaction of the community to it, but the criminal procedure code discusses how to respond. Other aspects of the criminal procedure are how to detect the crime, prosecution of the accused, quality of the investigation of the accused, issuance of the criminal record, final comment, personal jurisdiction of the judge and judicial authorities, and enforcement of criminal sentences. In general, criminal procedure has two main objectives:

1. Restitution of a damaged criminal order through the organization of criminal justice institutions;
2. Safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals by regulating society's response to crime.

As such, ignoring the defendant's defense rights is not justified by the justification of securing public order and should not neglect the maintenance of public order as a defense of individual rights and freedoms.

According to some jurists, the purpose of criminal procedure is to "separate the right charges from harassment, prevent judicial wrongdoing, and ultimately secure the citizenry."

Others also argue that the purpose of criminal procedure is to establish a correct description of the charge, to prosecute the accused and to prosecute criminals under substantive criminal law, in other words, criminal law is a material crime. Criminal prosecution of those accused of committing crimes subject to criminal law.

Speech One: Protecting the interests of society

A "community" is a combination of families whose members are part of the tasks that propel society to perfection in proportion to their talent, experience and learning. All thinkers and thinkers have considered the four pillars of security, culture, health and justice necessary for the evolution of civil society. Justice, the highest purpose of life, requires the right standards of justice. Crime violates the rights of society and the rules set forth in the Rules of Procedure can serve the purpose of protecting society. Sometimes the harm caused by crime is not limited to the crime but it also affects the sense of security in the community, because the community is just like an individual, and the common interests of the community are related to each other, so restored order is damaged. As a result of committing the crime, the community is one of the other purposes of the criminal procedure. Accordingly, provision has been made for the granting of public relief in accordance with Articles 237 and 238 of the Rules of Procedure of the Provisional Arrest in certain cases.

Speech Two: Protecting and Defending the Accused's Interest

Since the emergence of social life, the disputes resulting from it have been a natural matter, and in every period of time, there has been a particular way of dealing with complaints, and in every period of pre-punishment history, criminal proceedings have been instituted. These customs gradually over time led to the formation of the rules of procedure of what is now known as the Code of Procedure. Criminal Procedure Code in its own sense is a set of rules and regulations that are used to detect crime, prosecution, preliminary investigations, mediation, peace between the parties, how to proceed, vote, contest votes, execute votes, assign duties and discretion. Judicial and judicial system and the protection of the rights of the accused, the victim and the

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community are established, have undergone many changes in the course of time and have been modified and amended at any time to the needs of the judicial community.

Since the emergence of social life, the disputes resulting from it have been a natural matter, and in every period of time, there has been a particular way of dealing with complaints, and in every period of pre-punishment history, criminal proceedings have been instituted. These customs gradually over time led to the formation of the rules of procedure of what is now known as the Code of Procedure. Criminal Procedure Code in its own sense is a set of rules and regulations that are used to detect crime, prosecution, preliminary investigations, mediation, peace between the parties, how to proceed, vote, contest votes, execute votes, assign duties and discretion. Judicial and judicial system and the protection of the rights of the accused, the victim and the community are established, have undergone many changes in the course of time and have been modified and amended at any time to the needs of the judicial community.

Accordingly, a person charged with a lawful offense in a lawful society must be certain that his or her right to a fair trial is protected and that the sovereignty of the prosecution will not be abused. His honor is not subject to aggression. Consequently, limiting society's reaction to the rules of criminal procedure reduces the power of the state and prevents judges from arbitrary use of inhumane methods. Criminal procedure rules are a guarantee of the implementation of the principle of innocence, according to Article 168 (a). The ADC has ruled that the interrogator should not summon a defendant without sufficient justification for the charge.

Although the ultimate goal of the justice system is to punish offenders and to provide security for citizens and the state, the legislature has adopted penalties based on law and order and obliged the judiciary to comply with the law and to respect rights. By examining past laws and periods, the defendant has always had a number of legal rights pending the execution of his sentence in order not to deprive them at various stages of legal proceedings and bring justice to its true meaning. The new law has a number of special privileges over the former, and the rights of the accused have been taken into account in the present circumstances.

Speech Three: Providing Victim Benefits

As the purpose of a fair trial in the process of criminal procedure is to provide the accused with the right to a fair trial (fair and just), the term is said: "The person who is being charged shall be free to defend himself. The victim of the crime must also meet the requirements for access to lost rights, and the criminal procedure has the responsibility of securing the rights of both. On this basis, the victim will have several rights that will be discussed in the speech.

Litigation in the European Court of Human Rights

The Tribunal generally has two types of jurisdiction: traffic jurisdiction and advisory jurisdiction. Pursuant to Article 47 of the European Convention, it may issue at the request of the Committee of Ministers legal questions concerning the interpretation of the Convention. So far, only one decision has been made on June 2, 2004, so this aspect of the Court's jurisdiction is very pale and the Court's jurisdiction is largely related to the Tribunal's jurisdiction. This aspect of the Court's jurisdiction whereby the Court deals with complaints by States Parties against each other as well as with those of individuals against States Parties is recognized by Articles 33 and 34 of the European Convention.

Explaining that by 1990, individual jurisdiction over the Tribunal had not been recognized, but since the adoption of the Ninth Protocol, individuals, non-governmental organizations or groups of individuals have found a right to appeal to the Tribunal, and one of the reasons has also been an increase in the number of cases. However, now member states of the Commission, individuals, NGOs or groups of individuals have the right to lodge a complaint with the Court in violation of one of the rights set forth in the European Convention on Human Rights.

Basic principles of fair trial

Strategic principles governing fair trial in numerous international human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, as well as regional human rights instruments such as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, The American Convention on Human Rights adopted in 1969, the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights adopted in 1986, and the Islamic Declaration on Human Rights enacted in 1990 are gradually being incorporated into national documents of various countries. So that today one criterion for estimating and measuring human rights compliance in countries around the world are these principles and their guarantees in the form of regulations.

The pursuit of justice and fairness is the ultimate goal of any proceeding, and fair and equitable hearing is one of the most important indicators of any community's social and judicial development. Evaluation of the fairness and fairness of a hearing is possible only by expressing standards and criteria as the minimum necessary for a fair and just process to be considered. Accordingly, the importance of the principles and guarantees of fair and equitable justice is at the forefront of international law and the international community, while recognizing and announcing the general principle of fair trial in the international human rights system, a fundamental human right has been detailed in terms of criteria and guarantees.

Speech One: The Necessity of Preserving Human Dignity in the Criminal Process

The need to preserve and respect human dignity (dignity, reputation) is one of the most important ethical, cultural and social principles of a human society. There is no doubt that this principle (human dignity) causes a judicial proceeding to be reckless, rude, and possibly beyond the bounds of morality, and to fit within the cultural, ethical, and decadent frameworks of a fair hearing.

Speech Two: The Rule of Law in the Criminal Process

The law is a set of general rules formulated by a competent authority that regulates the relations of individuals, society, and the state and creates equal rights and duties for all. More precisely, in our constitutional term, the law refers to rules that are either adopted by the Islamic Consultative Assembly or adopted directly by referendum during the formalities required by the constitution. Laws are general rules that apply to governors in the same way.

A: The principle of the legality of criminal prosecution authorities

According to the principle of judicial sovereignty or the lawfulness of the authorities dealing with the crime, no individual or group can punish the other, and the jurisdiction in the community that has accepted the rule of law rests with the state. Explaining that the offender is punished when he or she has previously been charged with a crime in accordance with specific principles and rules and, after proving his or her guilt, a definitive conviction has been issued for the said offender. Prosecution and punishment of criminals to prevent the imposition of arbitrary personal penalties, which is one of the fundamental principles of criminal law in recent centuries. Creating security and peace in the community by punishing criminals or applying protective and educational measures against them. It is the responsibility of the public power embodied in the criminal justice system.

B: The principle of legality of the prosecution body

Another consequence of the rule of law's acceptance in the territory of the criminal investigation process is the principle of the legality of the prosecution. This means that only the legislator

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has the power to designate a prosecution body, and no body other than the one designated by the legislator will have the right to prosecute citizens on the pretext of committing a crime. The fulfillment of the three objectives of achieving justice for the establishment of public order and the protection of individual rights continues to justify the sole legal entity being entitled to prosecute the accused. Since the beginning of the era of public justice for all offenses considered public, in the sense that any offense, without exception and regardless of its nature and severity, disturbs public order, the necessity of establishing a specialized technical institution, the lawsuit on behalf of the community against the alleged perpetrators is referred to as prosecution.

C: The principle of legality of the investigating institution

One of the most important steps in the criminal investigation process is the preliminary investigation phase, which requires a professional, specialized body to gather evidence and evidence of the crime, to enable the defendant to be tried and prosecuted, as well as to issue a ruling. Provide criminal convictions to ensure that the defendant has access during the criminal investigation process. Given the importance of the preliminary investigative stage and the responsibilities of the investigative body, it is necessary for the legislator to determine and specify the research institution in order to achieve the three goals of social justice, public order and protection of individual rights who with what characteristics are eligible to undertake this important task.

D: The principle of legality of a judicial entity

Although, in a general sense, criminal proceedings cover the whole process of criminal proceedings, but in a specific sense, criminal proceedings are purely judicial proceedings and, as a matter of law, other bodies competent to investigate. The different stages of the criminal process are specified by the legislator, with the former being solely the legislator designating the institution of the judiciary, and no other institution can be responsible. Otherwise, the three goals pursued by the rule of law in criminal law, including social justice, public order, and protection of individual rights, will not be achieved. One of the most important safeguards for the rights and freedoms of individuals is the existence of competent and lawful judicial authorities that promote justice and peace by accepting and enforcing the rights of petitioners and punishing abusers. In order to safeguard the rights of individuals to the public authorities, they cannot arbitrarily set up a court to summon individuals or arbitrarily dissolve the judicial authorities that exist under the law and deprive individuals of their legal right to petition and deprived of liberty, formation of judicial authorities and determination of their jurisdiction shall be subject to the rule of law.

E: The principle of legality of the institution of criminal enforcement

The final stage and end of any verdict is the enforcement process, the verdict that has gone through the prosecution and the verdict must be enforced and based on the principles of speed and non-delay in the verdict process and in accordance with the law of the legislator. All stages of the criminal investigation include the discovery of the crime, prosecution of the accused, preliminary investigations and the ruling that is required, in accordance with the rule of law in order to achieve the objectives of social justice, the establishment of public order and the protection of individual rights. The stage of the criminal proceedings is purely the will of the legislator, and the legislator himself determines the body competent to execute the criminal sentences.

The principle of the lawfulness of the criminal proceedings

The principle of the lawfulness of the criminal procedure means that the criminal process must be regulated in accordance with the law as a manifestation of the public will. Accordingly, all stages of the criminal investigation from the beginning to the end of the criminal process must

be fully specified by the legislator, and there should be no arbitrary and arbitrary action by the law enforcement agencies in order to enforce the arbitrariness of the officials dealing with the crime, on the one hand, causes injustice and discrimination between individuals and different social groups, and on the other hand, it causes disorder at the community level and ultimately undermines the individual rights and freedoms of citizens. Since the criminal process consists of five stages: 1- Detection of the crime, 2- Prosecution of the accused, 3- Preliminary investigation, 4- Procedure and 5- Implementation of the criminal sentences, so the principle of legality of the procedure and procedure of the criminal investigation also includes five sub-principle as follows:

A. The principle of legality of the discovery of crime

Considering the legislator's adherence to the rule of law on criminal law, it is observed that the legislator, after designating the institution responsible for the discovery of the crime, proceeds to determine the rules and regulations governing the discovery stage of the crime and in this regard the duties and responsibilities. The bailiffs of the judiciary as the institution of crime discovery in order to precisely determine the duties and powers and responsibilities of the crime discovery body, the legislator classifies the crimes into two categories of evident and non-visible crimes, and assigns specific duties and powers for each of the two categories of offenses in the judiciary. Whereas in criminal offenses under Article 46 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, they are only obliged to inform the prosecutor of the consequences of immediate action, and do not have the right to inspect and monitor the accused. However, for obvious offenses, due to the urgency of the urgent measures, special duties and powers have been delegated to the judiciary, in accordance with Article 44 of the said law: They shall notify the prosecutor and the prosecutor shall, after the necessary investigation, order the continuation of the investigation or make an appropriate judicial decision.

Judicial Officers shall take all necessary measures to preserve the instruments, works, signs and evidence of the crime and to prevent the escape or concealment of the accused or colluder, conduct the necessary investigations and immediately obtain the results and evidence. They will inform the prosecutor. They also obtain their name, address, telephone number and other details if any witness or witness is present at the scene of the crime. The Registrar of Justice in the implementation of this Article and under Article (1) of this Act may only detain the accused if there is strong evidence and evidence of the offense committed by him. "On the other hand, in order to ensure that the actions of the judicial registrar comply with the statutory requirements, it is observed that Article 61 of the Criminal Procedure Code correctly states that: "All judicial registrar actions in investigations must be in accordance with the rules and regulations which is required for preliminary investigations.

Finally, in order to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements of the judicial authorities, Article 63 of the Code of Criminal Procedure specifies the administrative enforcement guarantees for the violation of the judicial standards by the prescribed duties and regulations:''Violation of the provisions of Articles (30) (34) (35) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (49) (51) (52) (53) (55) (59) (141) sentenced to three months to one year separation from public service. "

B. The principle of the lawfulness of the accused prosecution

The prosecutor in charge of each county's jurisdiction is a public claimant and representative of the community and has no personal interest in litigation, pursuing defendants and instituting criminal proceedings solely in cases prescribed by the legislature to safeguard public rights against them. In this regard, in order to establish social justice, maintain public order and safeguard individual rights, the legislator must specify the prosecution's legal aspects as well as the prosecution agency's duties, powers, and responsibilities. In the context of the legal pursuit

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of prosecution, Article 64 of the Code of Criminal Procedure enacted in 2012 sets the cases in which the prosecution body may pursue prosecution of defendants:

The legal directions are to be pursued as follows: 1. The complaint of the plaintiff or private claimant 2. The announcement of the bailiff of the judiciary, the authorities or trusted persons 3. The occurrence of a visible crime against the prosecutor with the interrogator 4. The confession of the accused 5. Prosecutor's Notification of Crime by Other Legislation. Given that the law has begun to prosecute by the lawmaker, it can be said that the prosecution, except in specific cases, has no right to prosecute citizens under the pretext of committing crimes. It is also in line with the rule of law that the legislator has set out the various provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure to determine the duties and powers of the prosecution, which can be summarized in accordance with the law as follows: 1. Prosecution of crimes from the public aspect 2. Supervision of city prosecutors in the provincial capital city center 3. Supervision of police officers 4. Inspection of police officers and their training.

C: The principle of legality of preliminary investigations

According to the rule of law of criminal law, the process and procedure governing preliminary investigations must comply with statutory requirements, and the investigative body in performing its two important duties of collecting evidence and evidence of the crime as well as issuing penal securities must be bound solely within the framework statutory requirements and doing away with any personal tastes and wishes. Accordingly, it is noted that the legislator, in addition to specifying the legal directions for initiating the investigation, sets the precise rules and regulations regarding each of the preliminary investigative measures including interrogation of persons, inspection of premises and persons, expert examination, examination of the proceeding. The site and investigations are preliminary and require the investigating agency to collect evidence and evidence of the crime solely within the same criteria. Article 116 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in 2012 sets out the legal aspects that the investigator shall have the right to conduct preliminary investigations, stipulates, and if applicable, begins investigating as following:

(A) The offense is located within the jurisdiction of his or her mission.

(B) The offense is to be found in another jurisdiction and to be discovered or arrested in the jurisdiction of his or her mission.

(C) The offense is located in another jurisdiction but the accused or the suspect is charged with a crime within the jurisdiction of his or her mission. " Also, as described in Article 93, the legislator emphasizes the need for the investigator as a research institution to carry out various stages of the preliminary investigation, stating: "The investigator shall conduct impartial investigations and within the limits of his legal powers, and shall investigate the situation and the circumstances of the accused are in favor or loss."

D: The legal principle of the procedure in a specific sense

The legislator is obliged to adhere to the rule of law on criminal law while defining legal directions to initiate proceedings, to regulate the entire process of criminal proceedings in the criminal courts so as to pave the way for any personal and arbitrary application of judicial authority. Investigate crime can achieve the three goals of establishing social justice, maintaining public order and safeguarding the individual rights that form the existential philosophy of the rule of law over criminal law. In this regard, it is observed that Article 335 of the Code of Criminal Procedure enacted sets out the legal aspects of the proceedings and provides: The criminal courts shall proceed in the following cases: 1. The indictment of the prosecutor 2. The prosecution by the court 3. The oral claim of the prosecutor in the court. Subsequently, Article 335 specifies the specific rules governing the procedure in criminal courts.

E: The principle of legality of the criminal code of conduct

Criminal sentences shall enter into force as soon as they are finalized and shall be executed automatically without the need of the beneficiary, unless the judgments of retribution or diat are subject to the request of the private plaintiff or the plaintiff's progeny are required. The requirement for the legislator to adhere to the principle of the rule of law on criminal law is all actions taken by the judge until the enforcement of the sentences must be in accordance with the provisions of the law and in this respect not permit any arbitrary action by the penal authorities, in which case discrimination and social injustice will disrupt the public order, in particular the violation of individual rights and freedoms. Because of this reason that the legislator considers that any manner of enforcement, suspension, and suspension of sentences is subject to legal clarification.

Conclusion

In line with the new Criminal Procedure Code on Citizenship Rights, the legislator in Article (7) with a comprehensive view of the need to respect the personal and corporate rights of all persons in criminal proceedings. According to this article, in addition to protecting the rights of the accused, it is necessary to observe the rights of witnesses, informants, experts, defense lawyers, and in general, the personal and professional rights of all pepole in the criminal process. In addition to Article 7, it is observed that the Criminal Procedure Code of 2012 has various other materials, taken into account the rights of other persons in the process of criminal proceedings including the following legal materials:

Article 6 - The accused, the victim, the witness and other persons concerned shall be informed of their rights in the proceedings and the mechanisms for observing and ensuring those rights shall be provided.

Article 52 - Whenever the accused is being monitored, the court clerk shall be obliged to inform the accused person of the rights provided for in this Law and to provide him in writing and to receive and attach the file.

Article 49 - Parents, spouses, children, siblings of these persons may, through the said authorities, be informed of their supervision. It is necessary to respond to the above relatives about being monitored, to some extent not the social and family dignity of the persons under the disagreement.

Article 38 - The Registrar of Justice shall notify the complainant of the right to seek redress and benefit from existing counseling services and other legal assistance.

Note (2) Article 66, the Registrar of Justice and the judicial authorities are obliged to inform the victims of the crime under this article from the assistance of the relevant NGOs.

Article 99 - If the offense is found to be a crime that is prosecutable by the complainant's complaint, the prosecutor shall, as far as possible, be informed by the prosecutor as appropriate.

Article 101 - Investigation shall be required to prevent, where appropriate, access to personal information of the victim, such as name, surname, address and telephone number, the likelihood of a serious threat to the integrity and dignity of the victim from accessing this information. This is also applied at the trial court's discretion to the presiding judge and with respect to the materials of the victim.

Article 214 - Whenever there is a life-threatening or significant threat or financial loss to the witness or the informant or their family, but the hearing of their statements is necessary, the interrogator shall take the following measures in order to support the witness with an informed and reasoning in the case.

(A) Failure to meet in person between the witness or the informant with the plaintiff or the accused.

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(B) Failure to disclose information about identity, family profile and location of residence or witness or activity.

(C) Hearing out-of-court statements of witnesses or informants by means of telecommunications.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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Patrik Maturkanic [✉][1,2], Ivana Tomanova Cergetova [3], Peter Majda [4], Vladimír Thurzo [5], Peter Kondrla [6]

1   Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius, Bratislava (SK)
2   College of Applied Psychology, Terezín (CZ)
3   College of Applied Psychology, Terezín (CZ)
4   The Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Theology, Ružomberok (SK)
5   Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius, Bratislava (SK)
6   Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, Nitra (SK)

Abstract

Background: The present study focuses on clyrifying the differences between the inhabitants of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the perception of Jesus Christ as an important figure in the history of church history. At the same time, he tries to explain the influence of this personality on the value and moral aspects of people living in Central Europe in the states of former Czechoslovakia.

The research has been focused on the investigation and comparison of perception of Jesus Christ figure between two groups of citizens from the Czech Republic and the Slovakia.

Method: Our research sample consists of 1.754 research participants, of which 49% (N = 858) belonged to the population of the Czech Republic, and 51% (N = 896) to the population of Slovakia, 38.43% were men (N = 674) and 61.57% women (N = 1080). The target group of the research was composed of people whose highest level of education was from primary to tertiary. The age composition was divided into five age groups. In the research sample, 29.48% (N = 517) of participants who identified themselves as atheists within religious beliefs were identified.

Results: The research results point to significant differences in the perception of the personality of Jesus Christ and its significance between both countries inhabitants. In the research, we also showed differences between genders, between individual age categories and housing sizes.

Conclusion: Based on the results of our study, we can state that there are differences between the inhabitants of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the perception of the personality of Jesus Christ in connection with the connection to the church and tradition. We can already see the key

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✉   **Contact on all authors/Corespondence author: Doc. ThDr. Patrik Maturkanič, PhD.**
       e-mail: patrikmat@seznam.cz
       PhDr. Ivana Tomanová Čergeťová, PhD.; LL.M.; Doc. ThDr. Peter Majda, PhD.; ThDr. Ing. Vladimír Thurzo, PhD.; PhDr. PaedDr. Peter Kondrla, PhD.

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difference in the fact that most Slovaks in our research adhere to the Christian faith, which may be caused by the historical development of the countries, either during the period of Czechoslovakia or after its division.

Keywords: Jesus Christ – Religion – Faith – Czech Republic – Slovak Republic.

Theoretical background

Without much debate, we must agree with the claim that the personality of Jesus Christ, as a religious world phenomenon, has been exceptional for centuries and in many respects indispensable. Related to this is its influence on Central European man, when the perception of the contemporary Czechoslovak environment is more or less in the context of historical Christian events.[2] At the very beginning of this study, it is appropriate to ask the basic question, what was the uniqueness of the person of Jesus who set in motion the course of human history? First of all, it is an unusual fact that he came to this world, as biblical events are sensitive to us (cf. Mt 1:18-25; Lk 2:1-20). Subsequently, his hidden Nazareth life in the circle of his loved ones (cf. Lk 2:51-52), who gave the best precondition for a three-year public service in which humanity could find a touch of God's love in a near way (cf. Jn 3:16). If we were to point to the most important place in Christ's life from which faith in his teachings stems, we must first and foremost pick up his mysterious, yet glorious resurrection, which gave a credible impetus to all his saving doctrine. (cf. Mk 16:1-14; Lk 24:1-12).[3] This marked the beginning of a rich history of the Christian life and of its founder, Jesus Christ. He still has a number of sympathizers and followers, as our research data has shown. Of course, other circumstances are also related to this, such as our attitude towards the Christmas or Easter holidays, which have played an important role in our culture for centuries.[4]

In order to best understand Jesus' personality, it is right to first look for the roots of his person, which in the spirit of revelation we reveal in the deep essence of his divine life. (cf. Jn 1:14) In this contemplative plane of faith, hope and love, one can not only discover and be fascinated by the message of the Son of God in a balanced way, but completely identify with his life,[5] as we see in many of his followers.[6]

The perception of the personality of Jesus Christ is associated with the value of a person's orientation and often builds on his ongoing experience in the family and subsequently in the institutionalized forms of education.[7] Values serve as a blessing to man as something positive and important for his life. Each value and value system has a dual basis: for the individual as an object of self-esteem and for society as a socio-cultural system. The values reflect not only the deficit, the personal need for something, but also the process of social comparison. People not only feel their needs, but they are also aware of them and are aware that they are comparing themselves to others. Thus, in practice, values become not only the mechanism of an individual's behavior, but also the result of his social comparison and thus in a broader sense of the way of organizing elements of culture.[8] Human value orientation in connection with the educational permanent element [9] it is subsequently reflected in his behavior and way of life in the context of his complex existence.[10]

The scientific study of human values has a long tradition in the fields of psychology and sociology. Originally, the values were conceived as philosophical and inextricably linked to honest life and morals.[11] Budayova describes the differences in the perception of the faith and its real survival in the Roma minority.[12] Allport, Vernon and Lindsey[13] they were among the first social scientists to concretize the concept of values, give it earthly significance and connect values with everyday activities. Values are among the interdisciplinary concepts that are characterized as deep-rooted, Abstractly motivating, guiding, influencing and explaining people's norms and actions, their attitudes and opinions.[14] Values form the cornerstone of an individual's moral consciousness structure, and include norms of behavior. These are objective, including the relationship between the means and the goal, the individual motivating forces of a person and his value orientation. They also affect the ability to analyze individual situations and self-esteem.[15] Value is the enduring belief that a particular behavior or end state of existence is more socially or personally beneficial to the opposite or conversion behavior or end state of existence.[16]

In addition to the cultural context, we must also be aware of the religious context of values and moral behavior in Central Europe. Changes in belief and behavior in religiosity were investigated by L.A. Kirkpatrick.[17] This author was based on the theory of attachment, which he was the first to apply in the issue of religiosity. J. Bowlby applied this alternative in the psychoanalytic theory of

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object relations.[18] Based on the theory of attachment, we can say that God as close, righteous, loving, kind has all the advantages that a relationship character has for me. The accessibility and responsiveness of the attachment, which is one of the choices in danger and acts as a refuge, a port of safety, or a separation that causes negative stress, is, according to the authors, the basis of Christianity and other theistic religions. Religiosity should contribute to the positive development of a person's personality. However, we encounter different directions of religiosity. It can be based on knowledge of the issue of religion, on experiencing a religious experience and behavior that is motivated by outside, inside, fear or the fulfillment of meaning and certainty.[19] Perception of faith is closely linked to survival in a family that is a refuge, but nowadays many times instead of pathological phenomena.[20]

In our case, the context of relating to a physical place is also related to the cultural and religious context,[21] which can be characterized by the country in which one lives. The topic of understanding the relationship of man to the place, resp. environment, is dedicated to several experts.[22]

The main goal of this study was to clarify the differences between the inhabitants of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the perception of Jesus Christ as an important figure in the history of church history.[23] At the same time, he tries to explain the influence of this personality on the value and moral aspects of people living in Central Europe in the states of the former Czechoslovakia.

In our research study, we asked the research question: Are there differences in the perception of the personality of Jesus Christ between the inhabitants of the Czech Republic and Slovakia? Based on this question, we set the sub-objectives of a research study examined using the Pearson's chi-square test, focusing on differences between groups depending on gender and age of respondents and also on the size of the home from which the respondents come. We were also interested in looking at the traditions associated with the personality of Jesus Christ and the differences between groups. In our second research question, we asked: How current is the persona of Jesus Christ and his perception in the contemporary Czech-Slovak environment?

Method
Research design
The research design of the study was chosen to target and available measurement methods. We chose a non-experimental research plan – a comparative study – and analyzed the results obtained from the measurements using basic descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The research set was obtained by deliberate selection. We chose the inhabitants of two countries – the Czech Republic and Slovakia – as the target research groups we compared. The research

18 Peter Halama et al., *Religiozita, spiritualita a osobnosť. Vybrané kapitoly z psychológie náboženstva* (Bratislava: Ústav experimenálnej psychológie SAV, 2006).

19 Eva Naništová, "Dimenzie väzby na miesto a ich verifikácia 40 rokov po nútenej geografickej relokácii," *Sociológia* 30, no. 4, (1998): 377-394.

20 Zuzana Budayová, "Domestic violence against women". Dublin (Ireland): International scientific board of catholic researchers and teachers in Ireland, 2021. pp. 12-15.

21 Tewodros Tadesse, "Environmental concern and its implication to household waste separation and disposal: Evidence from Mekelle, Ethiopia," *Resources, Conservation and Recycling 53* (2009).

22 See Patricia Delhomme. et al., "Self-reported frequency and perceived difficulty of adopting eco-friendly driving behavior according to gender, age, and environmental concern," *Transportation Research* Part D 20, (2013): 55-58; Johan Martinsoon et al., "Energy saving in Swedish households. The (relative) importance of environmental attitudes," *Energy Policy* 39, (2011): 5182-5191.

23 Viliam Judák, "Religious Situation in Slovakia in the Years 1945-1989," in *Spiritual and Social Experience in the Context of Modernism and Postmodernism*, ed. Patrik Maturkanič and Ivana Tomanová Čergeťová, 313-340. (Morrisville: Lulu).

took place for three months from May to July 2021, online and thus by distributing access data to the research questionnaire.

Methods of statistical processing
The results were examined through descriptive statistics, contingency tables and a contingency table variability test. The variable independence test assumes that the random variables X and Y are independent, so the values of one variable do not affect the values of the other variable. The dependence between variables can be either one-sided (asymmetric) or mutual (symmetric), where both variables interact with each other. Pearson's chi-square test was used to test the independence of two categorical variables in the PivotTable, regardless of the direction of their dependence. The null hypothesis of this test assumes that both variables are independent of each other. We test this null hypothesis at the determined level of significance α, that the variables are independent, as opposed to the alternative that there is a dependence between the variables. We write the hypotheses as follows:

$$H_0: n_{ij} = \frac{n_{i\cdot} \cdot n_{\cdot j}}{n}$$

$$H_1: n_{ij} \neq \frac{n_{i\cdot} \cdot n_{\cdot j}}{n},$$

when n_{ij} indicates the frequencies in the PivotTable where i = 1, 2, …, r denotes the categories of the variable X and j = 1, 2,…, s denotes the categories of the variable Y.

The test criterion χ2 is defined as:
$$\chi2 = \sum_{i=1}^{r} \sum_{j=1}^{s} \frac{(n_{ij} - n'_{ij})^2}{n'_{ij}}$$
,

where χ2 ≈ χ2 [(r-1) (s-1)]. The larger the differences between the categories of the examined variables, the larger the test criterion χ2.

The prerequisite for using this test is that theoretical frequencies where there are less than 5 observations make up less than 20% of the PivotTable fields. Individual categories of variables can be combined to meet this assumption. The data were processed using the statistical program SPSS (version 23) and MS Office Excel.

Research file
1,754 participants took part in the research, of which 49% (N = 858) belonged to the population of the Czech Republic and 51% (N = 896) from Slovakia. Based on the identified gender, 38,43% were men (N = 674) and 61,57% were women (N = 1080). In the research sample, 29,48% (N = 517) of participants who identified themselves as atheists within the framework of religious beliefs were identified. Of the research participants from Slovakia, up to 97% identified themselves as Christian, while in the Czech Republic there were only 41%.

The target group of the research was composed of persons whose highest level of education was from primary to tertiary (Table 1). 9% (N = 152) persons had primary education, 7% (N = 116) had secondary education without a high school diploma, 27% (N = 465) had the second largest group with a high school diploma, 4% had a higher vocational education (N = 78) participants, up to 45% (N = 793) formed the largest group of university-educated persons and with a further 9% (N = 150) participants.

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Table 1: Educational composition of the number of research participants

Legend: základní – basic, středoškolské bez maturity – high school without graduation, středoškolské s maturitou – high school graduate, VOŠ (vyšší odborná škola) – higher vocational school, vysokoškolské – university graduate, vysokoškolské postgraduální – university graduate.

The age composition was divided into five age groups (Table 2). 8% (N = 147) of participants were identified in the first group under 18 years of age, 14% (N = 240) of participants belonged to the second group from 18 to 25 years of age, 20% (N = 147) belonged to the third group from 26 to 40 years of age. 353), at the age of 41-59 we had the most participants in the range of 38% (N = 666) and also over 60 years, where there were 20% (N = 348) people.

Table 2: Age structure of the number of research participants
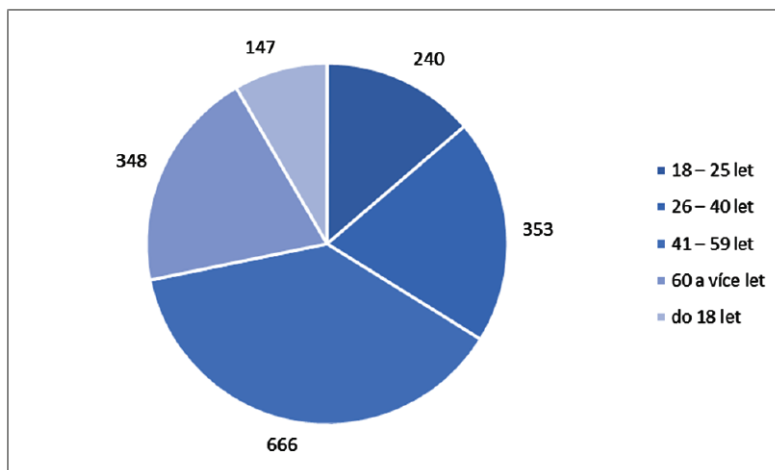
Legend: let – years, 60 a více let – 60 and older, do 18 let – up to 18 years.

Measuring tools

We did not use standardized questionnaires in our research. We created a sociometric questionnaire, which also included requirements for basic demographic data. The participants answered eight questions, five of which concerned the perception of the person of Jesus Christ and three related to questions related to the personality of Jesus Christ and his connection with the church, religious values and traditions in the respondents' lives.

Results

In the first step, we divided the evaluation of research data into two groups: research participants from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. We described the research set from the point of view of descriptive statistics. In the following section, we present data in frequency tables in the form of bar graphs.

In the first question, we asked the participants: Who is Jesus Christ for you? The researchers answered according to the chosen answers (Chart 1). In the Czech Republic, 45% of participants perceive the personality of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and this answer was chosen by up to 87% of Slovaks. 31% of Czechs and only 4% of Slovaks perceive Jesus Christ as a historical figure and thinker. Another possibility of perceiving the personality of Jesus Christ as a man - a prophet who preached the kingdom of God, was mentioned by 12% of Czechs and 4% of Slovaks. Other answers were more related to a neutral or negative perception of the personality of Jesus Christ, where 4% of the Czech population denied its existence, 5% said they could not answer and 3% indicated another option. From the point of view of Slovaks, no participant denied the existence of the personality of Jesus Christ, 1% said that they could not assess the answer to this question and, as with the Czechs, 3% indicated another option.

Graph 1: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (I)
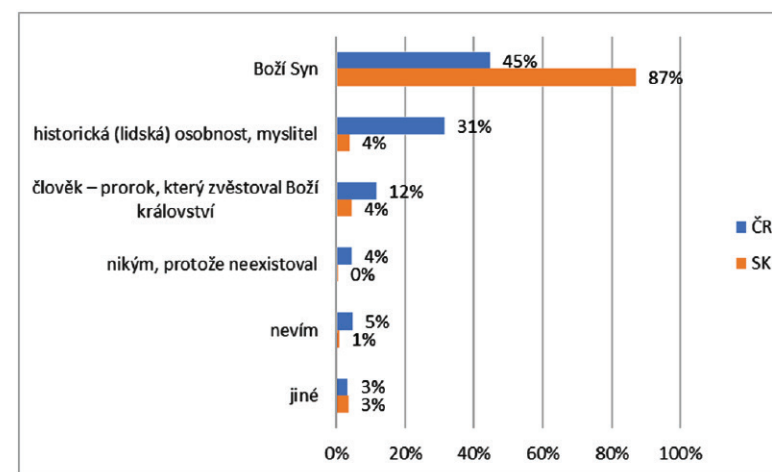
Legend: Boží syn – Son of God, historická (lidská) osobnost, myslitel – historical (human) personality, thinker, člověk – prorok, který zvěstoval Boží království – man – a prophet who preached the kingdom of God, nikým – protože neexistoval – no one – because he didn't exist, nevím – I don't know, jiné – other.

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The following question was about the personal history of the participants and we asked: Did you have the opportunity to become acquainted with the biblical figure of Jesus? The participants had the opportunity to choose one of the answers on the basis of which they expressed their personal experience and knowledge of the personality of Jesus Christ (Chart 2). Of the participants, 38% of Czechs and 90% of Slovaks marked the answer „he had and I subscribe to his teachings". The second option „I only recorded it in a passive way" was chosen by 43% of the Czech population and 8% of the Slovaks. 8% Czechs and 1% Slovaks answered the answer „he was not, but I am interested in these things". 11% of Czechs and 1% of Slovaks chose the last option „did not have and I am not interested in this character".

Graph 2: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (II)
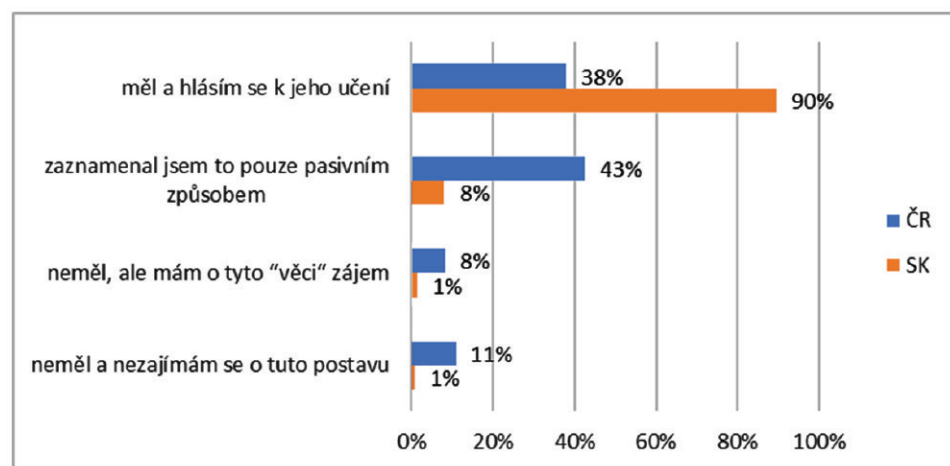
Legend: měl a hlásím se k jeho učení – he had and I subscribe to his teachings, zaznamenal jsem to pouze pasívním způsobem – I only noticed it passively, neměl, ale mám o tyto věci zájem – but he was interested in these things, neměl, a nezajímám se o tuto postavu – he didn't, and I'm not interested in this character.

The third question we asked was this: What do you see as the main benefit of Jesus' life? Research participants were able to answer by choosing one of the answers (Chart 3). The most frequently chosen answer was „save the world" and was chosen by 51% of Czechs and 87% of Slovaks. The second most common answer was „founding a church", which was marked by 16% of Czechs and 7% of Slovaks. 10% of the Czech population and 2% of the Slovak population chose the option of „renewal of the Jewish nation". A total of 22% of Czechs and 4% of Slovaks chose vague and negative answers („none", „other", „I don't know").

Graph 3: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (III)
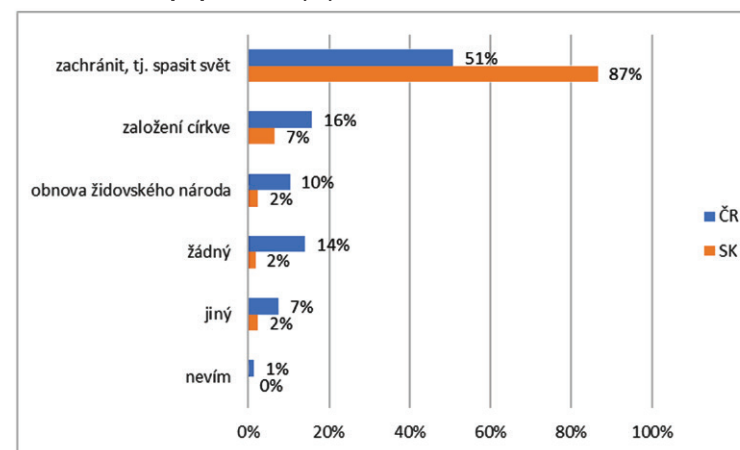
Legend: zachránil, tj. spasil svět – saved, i.e. saved the world, založení církve – foundation of the church, obnova židovského národa – restoration of the Jewish nation, žádný – none, jiné – other, nevím – I don't know.

In the following question, we asked: In your opinion, what was the life motto of Jesus Christ that he preached to his followers? The research participants answered several options (Chart 4), with 57% of Czechs and 90% of Slovaks choosing the answer „the message of love leading to material life". The second most common answer was „being a good person", which was chosen by 33% of the Czech population and 7% of the Slovak population. 9% of Czechs and 3% of Slovaks perceive „self-discipline to improve life" as the motto of the message of Jesus Christ. Of the Czech participants, 1% could not answer.

Graph 4: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (IV)

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Legend: poselství lásky, vedoucí k věčnému životu – a message of love leading to eternal life, být dobrým člověkem – be a good person, sebedisciplina ke zlepšení života – self-discipline to improve life, nevím – I don't know.

In the last fifth question, the respondents were asked to answer freely to the following request: Try to list the three most popular apostles of Jesus. Table 3 below shows the percentage of respondents who remembered the apostles. So in the Czech Republic most people remembered Peter (50%), Jan (48%) and Jakub (23%), in Slovakia Peter (84%), Jan (80%) and Jakub (40%). Furthermore, the participants often mentioned Matthew and Paul.

Table 3: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (V)

	ČR (%)	SK (%)
Petr	50	86
Simon	11	9
Jakub	23	40
Jan	48	80

The following three questions related to a topic related to the church and religious traditions in the respondents' lives. We asked them the following question: Which church (religion) and its teachings do you think most closely characterizes the personality of Jesus? Of the research participants, 51% of Czechs and 85% of Slovaks responded to the Catholic Church. The Evangelical Church was marked by 11% of the Czech population and 4% of the Slovak population. The Orthodox Church was elected by 5% of Czechs and 3% of Slovaks. The answer "other" was chosen by 7% of the population from the Czech Republic and 2% from Slovakia. 26% of Czechs and 7% of Slovaks could not answer this question.

Graph 5: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (VI)
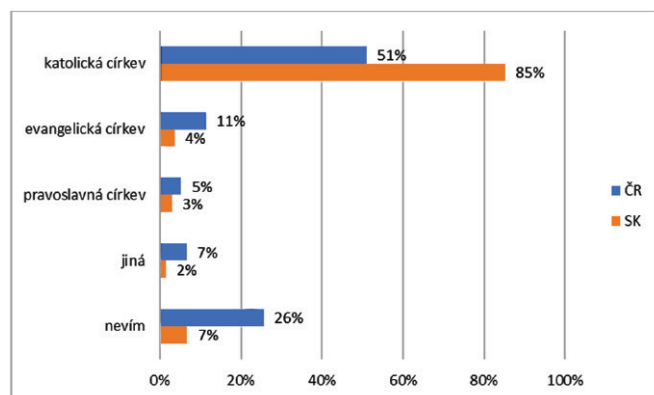
Legend: katolická církev – Catholic Church, evangelická církev – evangelical church, pravoslavná církev – orthodox church, jiná – other, nevím – I don't know.

In the last two questions, we asked about the area of connecting our participants in Christian traditions. In the first of these questions, we asked: What does the Christmas holidays mean to you, or what do you see as their priority? Most participants in the research chose the answer "birth of Jesus Christ", namely 40% of Czechs and 89% of Slovaks. The second most common answer was "traditional winter holidays in the circle of their loved ones" marked in 40% of Czechs and 7% of Slovaks. Other answers are given in Chart 6.

Graph 6: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (VII)
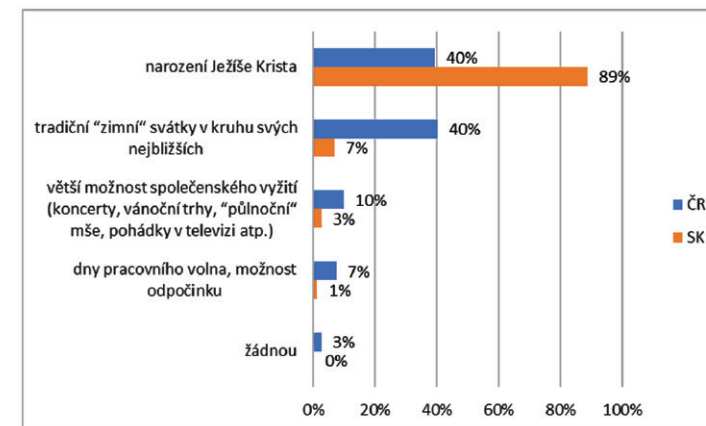
Legend: narození Ježíše Krista – the birth of Jesus Christ, tradiční zimní svátky v kruhu svých nejbližších – traditional winter holidays in the circle of their loved ones, větší možnost společenského vyžití (koncerty, vánoční trhy, "pulnoční" mše, pohádky v televizi a podobně) – greater social opportunities (concerts, Christmas markets, "midnight" masses, fairy tales on TV, etc.), dny pracovního volna, možnost odpočinku – days off, possibility of rest.

The second of the last two questions concerning traditions was as follows: What do the Easter holidays mean to you, or what do you see as their priority? The answers were most often related to the designation "Jesus' resurrection" in 42% of Czechs and 90% of Slovaks. Other answers among Slovaks had a very low percentage. Among Czechs, 22% chose the "tradition" option, 17% chose "traditional spring holidays in the circle of their loved ones", 10% perceive these holidays as "days off and rest" and 6% as "more social opportunities".

Expert articles

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Graph 7: Perception of the person of Jesus Christ by research participants - comparison of the Czech and Slovak population (VIII)
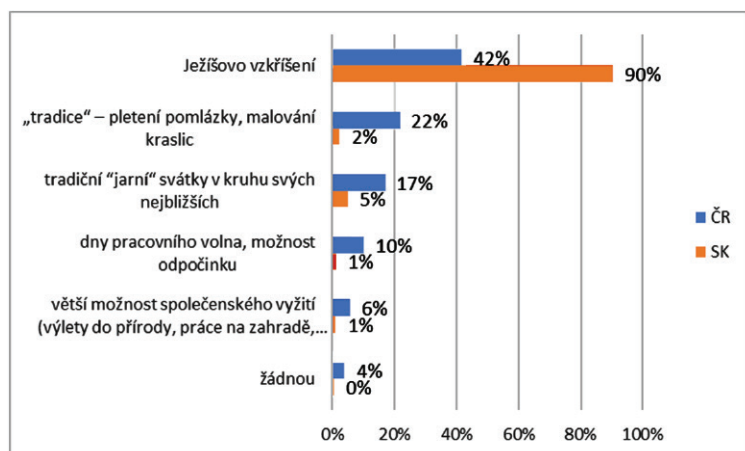
Legend: Ježíšovo vzkříšení – The resurrection of Jesus, "tradice" – pletení pomlázky, malování kraslic – "tradition" – pomlázky, painting Easter eggs, tradiční "jarní" svátky v kruhu svých nejbližších – traditional "spring" holidays in the circle of their loved ones, dny pracovního volna, možnost odpočinku – days off, possibility of rest, větší možnost společenského vyžití (výlety do přírody, práce na zahradě) – greater possibility of social activities (nature trips, garden work), žádnou – none.

The following section of our study presents statistically significant differences calculated using Pearson's chi-square test of the independence of variables in the contingency table.

Comparison of the Czech Republic and Slovakia

There was a significant difference between the two countries at the 1% level of significance in all areas surveyed as to who Jesus Christ was for them, whether they had the opportunity to learn about the biblical figure of Jesus Christ, what they see as the main benefit of Jesus' life. motto of Jesus Christ and which church most closely characterizes the personality of Jesus. All of these areas showed a statistically significant difference with the P-value of Pearson's chi-square test 0.000. They also differed in what the Christmas and Easter holidays meant to them.

Comparison by gender

It was also examined whether the responses of women and men differed significantly. Men were more likely than women to say that the Christmas holidays meant days off. Women, on the other hand, reported more social benefits than men (P-value of Perason's chi-square test: 0.000). Women were more likely than men to say that Easter was a resurrection and tradition for them. Again, men more often than women answered that they mean days off. (P-value of chi-square test: 0.012).

Comparison by age

Again, there was a 1% statistically significant dependence of the responses on all areas examined on the age of the respondents. People over the age of 60 are closest to spiritual issues of all ages. On the contrary, people under the age of 18, compared to other age groups, most

often stated that Jesus Christ is a historical figure, they are not interested in getting to know the biblical figure of Jesus Christ, and Christmas and Easter are traditional holidays when they are within their love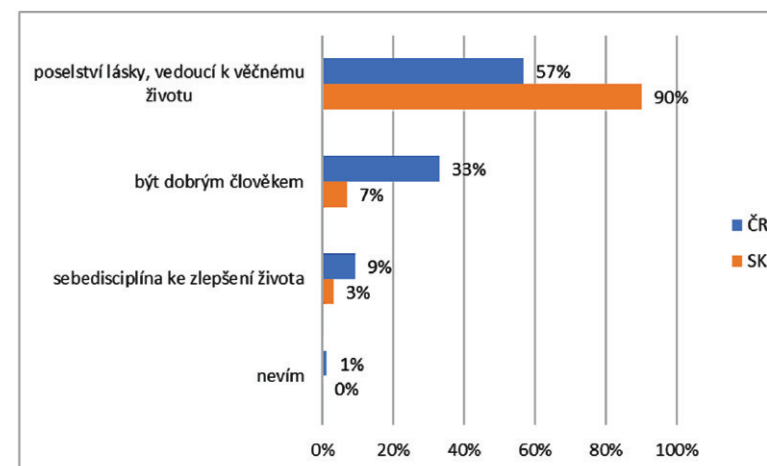d ones and are days when have time off (P-value of Pearson's chi-square test: 0.000). - noticeable intergenerational difference.

Comparison by city or village size

At the 1% level of significance, respondents found that the answers differed significantly depending on where people came from. Very close to the spiritual conception of Jesus Christ and to the celebrations of Christmas and Easter in the sense of celebrating the birth and resurrection of Jesus, respondents who live in the village, but also from big cities, stated. The answer is significantly out of the group of respondents who live in a small town of up to 10,000 inhabitants. These respondents most often stated that they did not know how to answer, perceiving Jesus as a historical figure rather than as a prophet or son of God (P-value of Pearson's chi-square test: 0.000). They also reported most often that Christmas and Easter holidays are traditional holidays when they are within their immediate area and when they are off (P-value of Pearson's chi-square test: 0.000). People from villages and larger cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants more often reported that during the Christmas and Easter holidays, it was primarily a celebration of the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ (P-value of Pearson's chi-square test: 0.000). However, the results do not show that respondents who come from villages more often state that they are closer to the clergy than people who live in big cities.

Discussion

In this study, we tried to clarify the differences between the inhabitants of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the perception of Jesus Christ as an important figure in the history of church history. At the same time, we tried to explain the influence of this personality on the value and moral aspects of people living in Central Europe in the states of the former Czechoslovakia, asking our respondents about the perception of the person of Jesus Christ and his connection with the church, religious values and traditions in life. From the results of our research study, we can state that despite the fact that our research sample was distributed evenly in terms of coverage of individual countries, in Slovakia we identified a much stronger Christian tradition rooted in culture. As many as 97% of Slovaks admitted their affiliation to the Christian faith, which was also shown in the results of our study. This predominance of the religious tradition in Slovakia compared to the Czech Republic is typical due to the historical and cultural characteristics of the affected area. The connection with faith in God and the perception of the personality of Jesus Christ as an important factor in Central European culture can also be deduced from the educational level of the research participants, where more than 51% were university-educated people. Also, looking at the age distribution of our research group, we can state that the perception of the personality of Jesus Christ identified by us is typical of middle-aged and older people. The results of the study clearly point to the differences between Slovaks and Czechs in the overall attitude towards church traditions and the phenomenon of Jesus Christ.

The results of the study point to the perception of the person of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and at the same time as a historical figure not only in Christian history. This personality is well known in the context of Central European culture and locality, as many as 81% of Czechs and 98% of Slovaks know Jesus Christ or are actively committed to his teachings.

The personality of Jesus Christ is largely perceived as the savior and savior of the world in 51% of Czechs and 87% of Slovaks. At the same time, it is perceived as dominant by its role in founding the church (16% for Czechs and 7% for Slovaks).

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The message of Jesus Christ is perceived by our research participants as a message of love that leads to eternal life. 57% of Czechs and 90% of Slovaks chose this characteristic. From the point of view of the Czech population examined by us, the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, among others, dominated the 33% representation of Jesus Christ's message to become and be a good person.

The most common disciples of Jesus Christ that people remembered were Peter, John, and James. The reason why people chose these personalities may be related to the perception of their dominant position in comparison with other apostles. (cf. Jn 21:15-19; Mt 17:1-6; Mk 14:33; Jn 19:26-27; Jn 20:3-4 ecc.).

The majority of participants (51% Czechs and 85% Slovaks) associate the personality of Jesus Christ with the Catholic Church. This can again be explained by the tradition of living faith mediated by the Thessalonian heralds, who, especially in Moravia and Slovakia, enjoy the cult of Cyril and Methodius in high esteem.[24]

The Christmas and Easter holidays in both groups are perceived primarily in connection with the person of Jesus Christ and secondly with cultural traditions. 40% of Czechs associate Christmas with the birth of Jesus Christ and 89% of Slovaks. In the case of the Easter holidays, these percentages are very similar and range from 42% for Czechs and 90% for Slovaks. In this case, the holidays are associated with the resurrection of Jesus.

If we look at the differences between Slovaks and Czechs, there are significant differences between them in all our questions. We also identified differences between men and women, where men were more likely than women to say that the Christmas holidays mean days off. Women, on the other hand, reported more social activities than men. At Easter, women were more likely than men to say that they meant Jesus' resurrection and tradition. Again, men were more likely than women to say that they mean days off. In this context, the theme of forgiveness often arises among Christians[25] and beliefs,[26] which are associated with holidays not only in thought but also in value. Thoughts associated with the birth and death of the person of Jesus Christ can be associated with the principles of redemption, faith, joy.[27]

From the point of view of age groups, we state that people over the age of 60 are closest to spiritual issues of all age groups.[28] We can think about how to bring this topic to younger groups as well,[29] especially in the pandemic period, when it is necessary to bring enlightenment in the context of critical thinking and topics of religious diversity and tolerance.[30]

Very close to the spiritual conception of Jesus Christ and to the celebrations of Christmas and Easter in the sense of celebrating the birth and resurrection of Jesus, respondents who live in the village, but also from big cities, stated. Ideas about Jesus' death and its significance can be heard not only from the point of view of historical but also ecclesiastical significance, or the significance of philosophical-theological.[31] At the headquarters of the celebrations there is definitely an opportunity to deal with the topic of joy and surviving happiness, and even more specifically in the pandemic period.[32]

Conclusion

Based on the results of our study, we can state that there are differences between the inhabitants of the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the perception of the personality of Jesus Christ in connection with the connection to the church and tradition. We can already see the key difference in the fact that most Slovaks in our research adhere to the Christian faith, which may be caused by the historical development of the countries, either during the period of Czechoslovakia or after its division. Among the key characteristics of the research sample, it should also be emphasized that almost half of them were university-educated people in middle and older age. Based on the questions asked and the answers of the research participants, we came to the conclusion that Slovaks perceive the personality of Jesus Christ more significantly and therefore the influence on this group of the Central European population is quite noticeable in comparison with the Czech population. In connection with the connection to standard Christian values, belonging to the church and Christian traditions, a group of participants from Slovakia is also perceived as more dominantly manifesting belonging to the personality of Jesus Christ. By limiting our research, we perceive the subjectivity of the participants in the survey, which may be conditioned by a cultural and geographical factor. We also see the selection of the research sample and its motivation to participate in the research as a limitation of the research. This may be influenced by the affiliation with the church and the subsequently perceived attractiveness of the research topic. In the future, it could be interesting to focus on research into the perception of the person of Jesus

24 Viliam Judák, "From Vita Monastica to Via Cyrillomethodiana Benedictine Foundations of Cyrillo-Methodian Spiritual Journey between Nitra and Skalka," *Konštantínové listy* 14, no. 2, (2021): 14-25; Ľubomír Hlad, "Homily of Monsignor Viliam Judak for Sts. Cyril and Methodius Pilgrimage Spoken on 5 July 2020 in Nitra and Its Contribution to the Development of Cyrillo-Methodian Tradition," *Konštantínové listy* 14, no. 2, (2021): 176-190.

25 Peter Majda, "Odpustenie z pohľadu viery a psychológie," in *Znaky časov v církvi a spoločnosti*, ed. Martin Majda et al., 93-104. (Ružomberok: Verbum); Igor Tavilla et al., "Abramo e la tartaruga: Ariazioni eleatiche su Timore e tremore," *XLinguae* 12, no. 4, (2019): 219-228.

26 Oľga Gavendová, "Verím, teda som: viera ako osobotvorný vzťah," *Studia Aloisiana* 5, no. 1, (2014): 5-15; Edward Jarmoch, "Religiosity of the Slovakian Roma," *Roczniki Teologiczne Teologia Pastoralna* 68, no. 6, (2021): 21-45.

27 Joachim Nowak, "The christological nature of death in the light of contemporary theological literature," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 8, no. 3, (2018): 31-50; Peter Majda, *Strategie przekazu wiary przy pomocy madiów v Słowacji* (Łodź: Wydawnnnctwo uczelni Nauk Społecznych, 2016); Ľubomír Hlad, "Princíp spoluvykúpenia ako esencia fatimsky inšpirovanej mariológie Pavla M. Hnilicu: Historicko-teologická štúdia," *Studia theologica* 23, no. 2, (2021): 125-150.

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Expert articles

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Christ in relation to the values or personality characteristics of the research participants, or the process of building their relationship patterns. It would also be interesting for us to extend the comparison in relation to other European countries.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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Expert articles

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THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL BRIDGING IN RELATION TO POST-COVID SOCIETY POLARIZATION IN SLOVAKIA*

Viliam Judak[✉1], Amantius Akimjak[2], Jan Zimny[3], Viktoriya B. Kurilenko[4], Miroslav Tvrdon[5]

[1] Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius, Bratislava (SK)
[2] The Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Theology, Ružomberok (SK)
[3] Akademia Wojsk Lądowych imienia generała Tadeusza Kościuszki we Wrocławiu General Tadeusz Kościuszko Military University of Land Forces in Wrocław (PL)
[4] Medical Institute Peoples' Friendship University of Russia -RUDN University, Moscow (RF)
[5] Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, Nitra (SK)

Abstract

Background: The situation with the third wave of the pandemic revealed the problem of frontal atomization of Slovak society, which is considered to be one of the main reasons why Slovakia currently achieves significantly negative quantification parameters in vaccination and overall pandemic management. Here, we are of the opinion that activities that create social bridges between entities in an antagonistic environment contribute to the healing of the social atmosphere. Therefore, the call for coherence in social policy, economics and ethics presupposes, on the one hand, the weakening of the fragmentation of society and the strengthening of functional communication and cooperation schemes in which the human factor precedes the technological and organizational factor. The need for such bridging in the Slovak context brings challenges in terms of values, ethics and soft skills not only on the part of professionals in the field of social work, but also on the basis of civic responsibility, to which the authors point their arguments.

Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic affected society as a whole. We note that some of the negative trends present before the pandemic intensified and required that they be properly understood and adequately addressed quickly and competently. The results of our study are a contribution to the interdisciplinary discourse on the causes of the growing social atomization and value fragmentation of society.

Keywords: Social bridge – Coherence – Ethics – Post-Covid symptoms – Social atomization.

Introduction

The current COVID-19 pandemic has a major impact on society as a whole worldwide. Many people have lost their lives, the health and social systems of individual countries have experienced a stress test, in some cases it has collapsed. Statistical surveys[2] of the impact of the pandemic on quality of life for different age and social groups have seen an increase in post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, burnout and other symptoms of distress. The society-wide situation has enabled the rise of a number of conspiracy theories which, in a nationalist spirit, deepen the polarization of society. People's economic insecurity and the ever-changing parameters of pandemic measures have a clear negative impact on the mental world of individuals, families and social entities. Despite the rapid development of digital technologies and the use of social networks, loneliness and abandonment of man is a serious problem that devastates interpersonal relationships and breaks established social mechanisms, which in the recent past have more or less reliably guaranteed some social security. The psychosomatic dynamics known from medicine are reflected in social relations in the form of intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges that we must address.

In the case of the introduction of the lockdown regime into the life of society, the importance of social networks has strengthened.[3] On the one hand, in a positive sense, the state used them to communicate with the population, and so did health, educational or social institutions. On the other side a significant obstacle in the use of social networking tools was the poor technical equipment of households and, in particular, the insufficient internet coverage of some areas of Slovakia. This was especially evident in online education.[4] The disadvantage is that even the educational institutions themselves in the period before the pandemic were not sufficiently prepared for e-learning and according to Jozef Hvorecký „neither teachers nor students had mastered the skills of online education."[5] In some households, they had only one computer but more children. So not all children could undergo e-learning and major problems also arose during the exams. Such a situation did not contribute to mental well-being in such families.[6] When the feeling of disappointment with the institution and frustration are combined with the urgency to fulfil one's obligations, a suitable psycho-cultural environment is created for the birth of radicalism and sensitivity to conspiracy theories.

2   Valeria Saladino et al., "The Psychological and Social Impact of Covid-19: New Perspectives of Well-Being," *Frontiers in Psychology*. Retrieved from: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.577684/full

3   Hedviga Tkáčová et al., "Social Media and Students' Wellbeing: An Empirical Analysis during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Sustainability* 13, (2021): 10442.

4   Tibor Reimer, *Katechéza v súčasnej dobe. Podnety a výzvy nového Direktória pre katechézu* (Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo Don Bosco, 2021); Cyril Hišem, *Teologické vzdelávanie a výchova v Košiciach* (Prešov: VMV, 2009); Tibor Reimer, *Náboženská výchova ako rozvoj náboženských kompetencií* (Bratislava: Don Bosco, 2020); Ján Knapík and Martina Kosturková, "The activity of the university in relation to pastoral care of university students," *Ad Alta* 9, no. 1, (2019): 120-124; Michal Vivoda, "L educazione morale a la formazione religiosa," in *Pedagogika religii w kontekście edukacyjnym*, 157-168. (Włocławek: Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczno-Ekonomiczna); Beáta Akimjaková and Antónia Tisovičová, "A man and values in historical and educational reflection," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 7, no. 3, (2017): 91-100.

5   Jozef Hvorecký el al., "Online education: Where is the World and where Slovakia," in *Zborník Inovačný process v e-learningu*. Retrieved from https://www.institutdusevnejprace.sk/2021/06/03/online-vzdelavanie-kde-je-svet-a-kde-slovensko/

6   Zuzana Budayová, *Family Problems of Today* (Dublin: International scientific board of catholic researchers and teachers in Ireland, 2020); Janka Bursová and Beáta Akimjaková, "The upbringing of romani children from socially disadvanteged families in Slovakia," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 11, no. 4, (2021): 161-186.

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The failure of national governments to manage the COVID-19 situation turned out to have a negative impact on intergroup relations coherence.[7] The fragmentation of society is deepening as a result of the pandemic. The social isolation of groups of the population but also of individuals, is the result of a weakening of their mental health and, consequently, their ability to interact positively. In an effort to find security and an area of trust, people are internally pushed out of public contexts and deepen their isolation by living in mental bubbles. „In building local communities, small community networks – that allow for diversity and break down ingroup/outgroup views – may be more helpful than the concept of 'support bubbles', which are exclusionary and less sustainable in the longer term."[8] For the school environment and education shares a similar opinion: „It is necessary to engage the education community and communicate with its representatives, even if only small groups of teachers and professionals. They may have opinions other than the ministry, they may not always speak publicly with the best of intentions, but they are willing to deal with school matters, and therefore they need to be listened to and respected and their views taken into account." The relatively intensive use of digital technologies with regard to the mental fear and vital feeling of insecurity of users opens a wide gate of risk effects for them, which they cannot defend against. „Fast and tenacious lifestyle, furious effort to succeed and overall media coverage of all aspects of everyday life produce the feelings of hopelessness and omnipresent insecurity."[9] Weakened defence is due to the fragmentation of society and artificial intelligence operating against the background of social networks, which uses social network metadata to supply one-sided opinion preferences. Aleksander Kobylarek says that: „although the Internet was created and disseminated by the academic community, it is often perceived as a source of stupidity and misinformation. This also affects practically every sphere of life."[10] The user therefore loses the ability to think critically and his beliefs deepen. The resulting effect is his inability for honest social interaction, and the spiral of social isolation of such a person subsequently facilitates the world of solitude, where serious mental problems are by no means exceptional. In their study Dominic Abrams et al. present how various theories of social identity are undergoing a pandemic test.[11] In our opinion, the social bridging approach offers interesting potential for dealing with the loss of coherence of social relations, provided that the leaders – social bridgers – themselves are ethically and value based in their existential foundations.[12]

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7   Patrik Maturkanič et al., "The Phenomenon of Social and Pastoral Service in Eastern Slovakia and Northwestern Czechia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Comparison of Two Selected Units of Former Czechoslovakia in the Context of the Perspective of Positive Solutions," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19, (2022): 2480.

8   Aleksander Kobylarek et al., "Educational priorities in a post pandemic world," *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 12, no. 2, (2021): 5-11.

9   Andrea Lesková and Tibor Máhrik, "Digital Dementia and Conspiracy Theories," *6th SWS International Scientific Conference on Social Sciences ISCSS 2019*, (2019): 137-142.

10 Aleksander Kobylarek, "Education in the post-scientific culture," *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 10, no. 1, (2019): 5-13.

11 Emily Long et al., "COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on social relationships and health," *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 76, no. 2, (2022): 128-132.

12 Mária Gažiová et al., "Healthy aging," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 8, no. 1, (2018): 9-18; Zuzana Budayová, *Domestic violence against women.* (Dublin: International scientific board of catholic researchers and teachers in Ireland, 2021); Radoslav Lojan, "Material and non-material poverty of seniors," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 9, no. 4, (2019): 19-25; José Garciá Martín et al., "The Kantian ethical perspective seen from the existential philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard's Victor Eremita," *Ethics and Bioethics (in Central Europe)* 11, no. 1-2, (2021): 48-57; José García Martín et al., "The problem of the 'individual' concept in Kierkegaard's journals," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 16, no. 3, (2020): 39-46; Patrik Maturkanič, *Pastoral practice in the light of the 21st century* (Morrisville: Lulu Publishing Company, 2021).

Methodology

Part of our research work was monitoring the media space in Slovakia during the pandemic, interviews and correspondence with 15 leaders of non-profit organizations that are actively involved in social work, charity and pastoral care. In our statements, comments and critical analysis, we base our conclusions on the findings of a questionnaire survey, the relevant results of which we present in the study. We focused on the use of digital technologies, conspiracies, feelings of loneliness, frustration from state institutions and opinions on possible solutions.

Results

According to available information sources, the situation in Slovakia is relatively difficult. According to „Fig. 1" the results of the vaccination prove that Slovakia is the worst of the V-4 countries.

Figure 1. COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people [8]
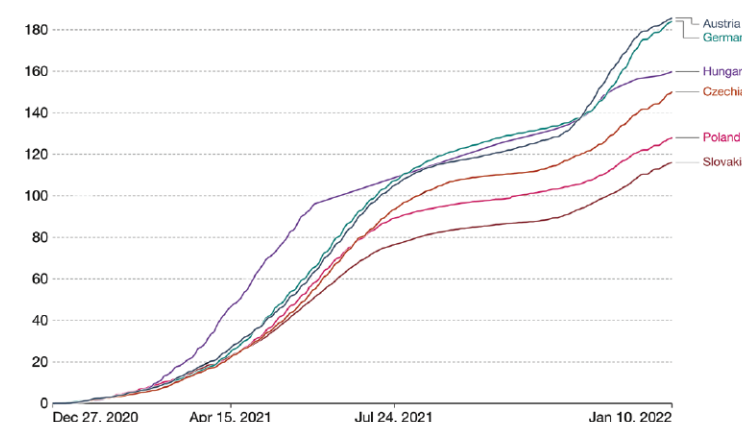
Slovakia is divided not only politically, in terms of values, religion but also geographically. Significantly more negative moods against vaccination and also sensitivity to conspiracy theories are recorded in eastern Slovakia. Eastern Slovakia is also economically weaker and more religiously based. Unlike the western dominance of the Roman Catholic faith, in the East, the Orthodox faith dominates. However, the fragmentation of society shows more or less the same parameters throughout Slovakia, regardless of the economic strength and portfolio of church institutions present. The situation is similar in the area of weakening social relations. There are several reasons why this is so.

Atomisation factors

We investigated the causes of the deepening fragmentation of society. By „disappointment" we will mean disappointing people from the failure of the national government, political structures and institutions from which they expected help. By „conspiracies" we mean people's interest in conspiracies in relation to the level of socialization. Some conspiracies are indifferent to the atomization of society, but some have an effect in a person's life that leads to social isolation. The theories reinforce distrust, suspicion, and phobic reactions to the initiative „from outside" by individuals or institutions. The end effect of such distrust is active self-isolation from society.

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Figure 2. **Factors related to the societal atomization**
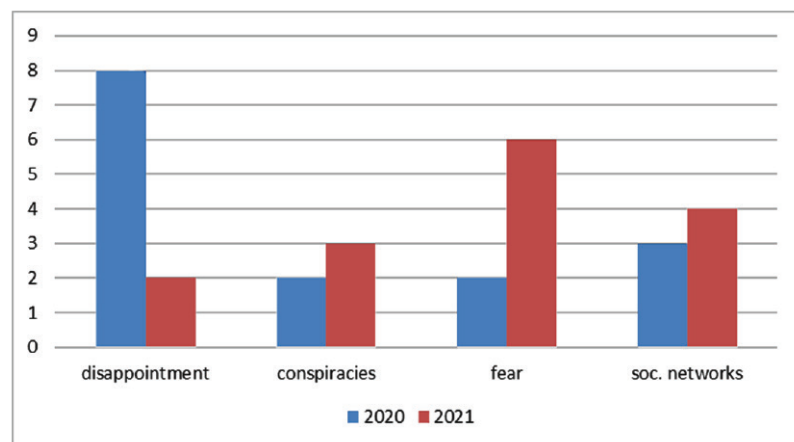
„Fig. 2" shows the simple dynamics of the four dissociative parameters. We see the biggest differences between 2020 and 2021 in disappointment and fear. At the onset of the pandemic, business and non-profit sector expectations were exceptionally high. The national government was expected to manage the situation and the leaders responsible for pandemic management would provide everything necessary to minimize damage and economic losses. It didn't happen. At that time, a new government took office in Slovakia, which won the elections mainly thanks to the anti-corruption agenda and promises to establish order in the field of justice and economic crime. The new opposition came under great pressure and launched a massive media campaign against all the steps the new government had taken. Even in the government's unpleasant lock-down decisions, which were standard in EU countries at the time, it did not maintain political loyalty but captured community wounds. People were disoriented and gradually absorbed their disappointment from the new political establishment into their mental world.

Part of the dynamics of the changing social atmosphere in the country is the growing interest in conspiracy theories and various internet sources of dubious content. The situation was not been helped by the public media, which has remained under the strong influence of financial groups and opinion leaders who profited from the activities of the previous government – the current political opposition. According to the survey, this shift has resulted in an increase in people's feelings of fear. The combination of conspiracies and the manipulative influence of social media over a period of almost two years has resulted in a sense of deep fear against state institutions, the EU and NATO. The ratification of the Defence Cooperation Agreement between Slovakia and the USA is currently underway.[13] The media image of this agreement is not positive, although it is the result of processes from the previous reign of the current opposition. People are also afraid of the institutions that come to their aid. This is due to previous years of fraud and corruption. During those years, it was mainly a pyramid financial game in which people lost big money and at the same time they witnessed a state crime, which was overlooked several times and faded over time.

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13   Dana Jelinkova Dudzíková, "Obranná zmluva s USA – preklad do ľudskej reči," *Denník N.* Retrieved from https://dennikn.sk/blog/2671757/obranna-zmluva-s-usa-preklad-do-ludskej-reci/

In addition to fear of institutions, people fear for the future. They liken a pandemic situation to a state of war in which they cannot estimate losses and in which everyone must protect their own affairs. In such a situation, it is difficult to rely on anyone and it is not possible to rely on a system administered by the state or higher territorial units. It's about bare life, it's about survival. With this view, several respondents also justified the increase in aggression in people.

Hope expectation factors

People are aware of the atomization of society growth. They perceive its accompanying features as a problem that should be solved. We focused our research on possible solutions to overcome the isolation and disintegration of society and also on ways to achieve them.

Figure 3. Belief about societal recovery
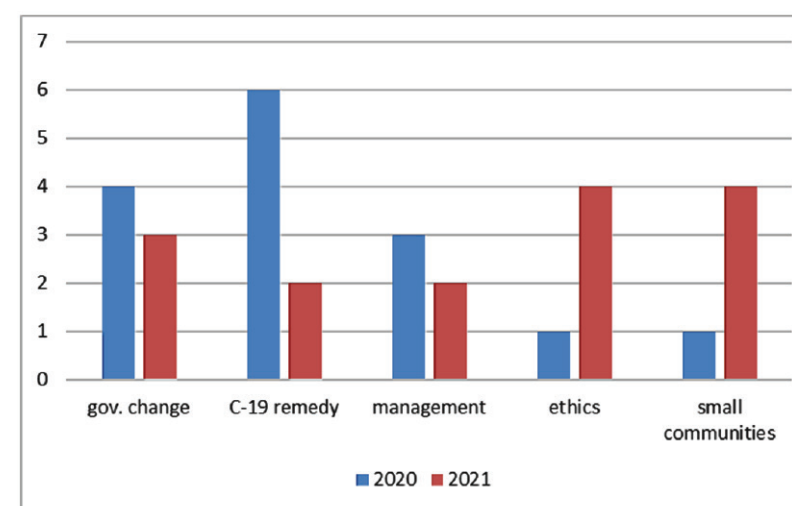
Opinions on how to cope with the growing fragmentation of society and the feeling of loneliness and helplessness of a person are constantly changing. The pandemic period catalyses an interesting change in people's thinking. According to „Fig. 3", the hope that a change in the political map will bring the expected change has dropped significantly. The most significant drop is in how people perceive COVID-19 itself. They no longer perceive COVID-19 as the main cause of the current state of society. Rather, it is a disease that we must learn to live with. This is one of the reasons why the belief that the unmanaged pandemic management is primarily responsible for the situation is declining. People's attention shifts more to the ethical dimension of society. They paid close attention to the fact that under the same pandemic conditions, different people and different organizations reacted differently. People are looking for answers, why is it so? Due to personal insecurity, there is a growing interest in the so-called „islands of positive deviation". It is an environment in which people can cultivate secure relationships of trust. Part of this is the longevity of such relationships. It is interesting that people enjoy such relationships, they want to invest in them. However, the dynamics of small groups stand and fall on the abilities of their leader.

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Leadership demands

By leadership, we do not mean key creators of state aid, but people who are in the field, often first contact people. The younger generation suffers less from loneliness but more older people, especially in retirement age. Therefore, the issue of lifelong learning needs to be reopened if we want to find solutions to overcome loneliness. Of course, the fragmentation of society affects all age groups. Regardless of the age of the respondents, the results of „Fig. 4" present a significant picture of leadership.

This picture corresponds with other findings that people do not trust the system or marketing promises. Marginalized groups and those who remain alone and defenceless in life's challenges expect, in particular, to be able to trust those who offer them help. This type of trust stems from a leader's ethical qualities and the time he or she is willing to invest in building trust relationships. At the same time, he is a leader who is transparent in his words and actions. He has the status of a family relative rather than an official in charge of „solving a problem".

Figure 4. Expected quality of the small group leader

A good illustration can be this true story from a retirement home. At the time of the lock-down, a visit came from the client's daughter with her family. Due to restrictive regulations, a face-to-face meeting in the visiting room was not possible as usual. The head of the retirement home decided to help beyond the agreed rules. She brought her client her own private i-pad and organized a video call, during which she was constantly available and present for the client.

To our surprise, the spiritual dimension of the leader received a high score. Spirituality here means the ability and competence of the person concerned to talk about the meaning of life, the origin of pain and evil and life after death.[14] For these reasons, too, Christian organizations and charities had a high rating in working with target groups.

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14   Vladimír Thurzo, Teologické východiská starostlivosti o zomierajúcich v Novej charte zdravotníckych pracovníkov. *Hospicová a paliatívní péče* 12, no. Suppl. A., (2018): 30-34; Oľga Gavendová, "Homo sperans - Existenciálny význam nádeje v živote človeka," *Studia Aloisiana* 7, no. 4, (2016): 47-61; Jozef Krupa, *Sviatosti kresťanskej iniciácie. Krst – Birmovanie – Eucharistia* (Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave vo Vydavateľstve UK, 2003); Radoslav Lojan, "The imperative of social responsibility for taking care of seriously ill and dying,"

The correlation between the emergence of trust between people and the ability to be humorous is interesting. People who come to the field with a nice face, joyfully and with honest communication gain trust and respect faster than those who are „serious", have a social distance and are more technical and concise in communication. Management skills are not high on the scale, as people in need are well aware that these leaders do not really decide on the systemic issues of dealing with pandemic aid or education or the country's cultural direction.[15]

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected society as a whole.[16] Some of the negative trends present before the pandemic have intensified and called for them to be properly understood and adequately addressed with speed and competence. The results of our study are a contribution to the interdisciplinary discourse on the issue of the causes of growing social atomization and value fragmentation of society.

Firstly, the phenomenon of societal fragmentation is related to the rapid technological development and cultural development in the country. The positive side of this is the effective application of the principle of the subsidiarity when the system works. Then the help is targeted in a concrete way, fast and effective. The individual subsystems are flexible and can act up-to-date and independently of higher structures.

Secondly, the negative aspect of fragmentation comes to the fore when an organizational metasystem fails and state institutions do not have the capacity or competence to solve emerging problems. In addition, there is a risk of loss of coherence between the individual fragments. As a result, chaos will come in larger territorial units, or the whole country may remain paralyzed.

Thirdly, during the pandemic, the fragmentation of society deepened. The survey identified the following causes: loss of confidence in state institutions, growing confidence in conspiracy theories, feelings of frustration and helplessness and fear of the future. In such an atmosphere, people seek help in their immediate environment, so the importance of small groups growing together based on a common goal and needs is growing.

Fourth, the current situation calls for new leadership. It is the inner qualities of a leader such as a high ethical standard, a spiritual dimension and transparent communication that give room

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Zarządzanie i edukacja, no. 108, (2016): 95-104; Vladimír Juhás, "Křesťanstvo ako rehabilitácia tela," *Verba Theologica* 21, no. 1, (2019): 94-100; Radoslav Lojan, *The art of being fully present to the dying patient in palliative care* (Brno: Tribun EU, 2015); Vladimír Thurzo, "The Moral-Theological View of the End-of-Life Care," in *Proceedings from the 7th International Conference of Hospice and Palliative Care,* ed. Patricia Dobríková, 28-38. (Trnava: Faculty of Health Sciences and Social Work); Peter Majda, "Odpustenie z pohľadu a psychológie," in *Znaky časov v církvi a spoločnosti*, ed. Martin Majda et al., 93-104. (Ružomberok: Verbum); Ľubomír Hlad, "Homily of Monsignor Viliam Judak for Sts. Cyril and Methodius Pilgrimage Spoken on 5 July 2020 in Nitra and Its Contribution to the Development of Cyrillo-Methodian Tradition," *Konštantínové listy* 14, no. 2, (2021): 176-190; Radoslav Lojan, "Svedomie ako norma morálky", in *Znaky časov v církvi a spoločnosti*, ed. Martin Majda et al., 84-92. (Ružomberok: Verbum).

15   Peter Majda, "Mercy and repentance in interpersonal communication," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 7, no. 4, (2017): 81-99; Emília Janigová and Ľubomír Pekarčík, "Case management as a tool for the inclusion disadvantaged people in society," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 11, no. 3, (2021): 17-25; Jozef Krupa, "The natural recognition of God in the post-modern period," in *University and Its Students,* 39-43. (Praha: Galén); Gabriela Genčúrová, "Telo ako ekonómia stvorenia," *Verba Theologica* 21, no. 1, (2019): 59-73.

16   František Petrovič, et al., "Happiness in Czechia during the COVID-19 pandemic," *Sustainability* 13, no. 19, (2021): 10826.

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for humour. The critical moment in leadership is the question of trust. Gaining trust is a key factor in the dialectic of an atomizing society.[17]

Fifth, we believe that trust in leaders is a decisive factor not only for the modus operandi of a given group of people, but also in view of the need to network subsystems into functional higher structures. Such leaders act as bridges between entities that do not communicate or cooperate with each other. Thanks to these bridges, not only can there be hope for a functioning system of cooperation but also the strengthening of a new quality of synergy.[18] The emergence of a higher level of synergy is based on the functional interconnection of subsystems and the mutual convergence of their own synergies.

Finally, the need for bridging through a new quality of leadership, creates a demand on state institutions, the education system and legislative frameworks. It is necessary to seek, educate, entrust and empower such people and create an institutional space for them to fulfil the mission.[19] Without such leaders, the disintegration of society – not only the deep polarization we are all witnessing today – will inevitably continue tomorrow.[20]

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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18 Khandakar Kamrul Hasan et al., "Learning Continuity during COVID-19 Pandemic using the Virtual Classroom – A Cross-border experimental Multi Case Approach," *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 12, no. 1, (2021): 335-354.

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WE DO NOT WALK ALONE ON THE PATH TO GOD'S KINGDOM:
THE SYNODAL PROCESS AS A CHALLENGE TO DEEPEN THE ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIP | Robert Svatoň

WE DO NOT WALK ALONE ON THE PATH TO GOD'S KINGDOM: THE SYNODAL PROCESS AS A CHALLENGE TO DEEPEN THE ECUMENICAL FELLOWSHIP*

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Robert Svatoň ✉

Abstract
Background: The text deals with the current topic of the sixteenth regular assembly of the Synod of Bishops of the Catholic Church, the first phase of which includes not only the active participation of all Catholic faithful, but is also open to Christians of other churches. The text first shows that the invitation addressed to non-Catholics to participate in the synodal process is based on the ecclesiological foundations established by the Second Vatican Council. In the second part, the article places the synodal process within the framework of Pope Francis' reform efforts, which includes the missionary renewal of the Church and have its important ecumenical impact. The third part deals with the analysis of the character of the synodal process in terms of ecumenical hermeneutics, focusing on its pastoral and spiritual dimension.
Conclusion: The text considers the church's renewal and support of spiritual ecumenism to be the main ecumenical potential of the Catholic Church's synodal process. The article underlines the pneumatological dimension of the synodal process, the development of which is crucial both for the ecumenically relevant reform of the Catholic Church and for finding valid and authentic impulses for the current efforts for Christian unity.
Keywords: Ecclesiology – Synodality – Ecumenism – Reform of the Church – Mission.

Introduction
Pope Francis opened the sixteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on October 10 last year, entitled: *For the Synodal Church: Fellowship, Participation, and Mission.* These three key words express the essence of the term "synod" and the words "synodal" or "synodality" which derive from it. If we take as a starting point the statement of John Chrysostom that "the name of the church is the synod"[2], then the mentioned words become a way of expressing what the church is. A community of people of God, all the baptized participate in and walking on the way to the kingdom of God with the mission to bear witness to the gospel. If Pope Francis convenes the Synod of Bishops on this very topic, he shows that it is close to his heart to think seriously about how we succeed in being a church of common journeying and how to continue on this path with new intensity.

✉   **Contact on author: doc. Robert Svatoň, Th.D. - e-mail: robert.svaton @seznam.cz**
2   John Chrysostom. Expositio in Psalmos, 149,1; PG 55,493.

By far the most significant change in comparison with the previous episcopal synods is its course, which takes place according to the apostolic constitution *Episcopalis communio*[3] issued by the Pope in 2018. This is not just an event in which representatives of the World Episcopate gather in Rome to deal together with the pope with a chosen topic. Nor is it the case, that only local episcopal conferences or pre-selected representatives from the ranks of presbyters, consecrated person and lay people comment on the issue. The Synod on synodality is a process, in which all Catholic believers are invited to participate as members of people of God in the first phase, which is currently taking place in all the dioceses and local churches in the world. To take their place in it should also those who usually find themselves in the church on the margins, whose voice is not audible or remains neglected.

In the preparatory texts prepared on this occasion by the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, we will also find the following statement: "The dialogue between Christians of different confessions, united by one baptism, has a special place in the synodal journey."[4] To understand this sentence, one must not only ask about practical ways, how to enrich the synodal process with an ecumenical dimension, but above all an opportunity to understand why the question of synodality, the synodal concept of the church and the synodal process itself play such an important role in the effort for the Christian unity.[5] In my text therefore, I will first deal with the ecclesiological reason of the connection between synodality and ecumenism. Subsequently I will present the synodal process in terms of its significance for the missionary and ecumenical renewal of the Church. And, finally I will add a reflection from the point of view of ecumenical hermeneutics, which will outline several remarks in terms of preconditions for an ecumenically fruitful course of the synodal process.

1.   One people of God: the ecclesiological premise of the synodal and ecumenically open Church
The document of the International Theological Commission from 2018 allows us to begin to think about the concept of "synodality" in the context of the understanding of the Church. According to the text synodality means "the specific *modus vivendi et operandi* of the Church,

3   Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Apostolic Constitution Episcopalis communio: On the Synod of Bishops.* accesed January 17, 2022
      https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzi-one-ap_20180915_episcopalis-communio.html

4   *Preparatory document: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission*, p. 36. accesed January 17, 2022
      https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/preparatory-document/pdf-21x21/en_prepa_book.pdf; *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality: Official Handbook for Listening and Discernment in Local Churches*, accesed January 17, 2022
      https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/document/common/vademecum/Vademecum-EN-A4.pdf

5   The importance and urgency of the issue of synodality in contemporary ecumenism is evidenced both by the documents that are the fruit of the dialogues between the churches and by texts written by ecumenical theologians. At the bilateral level, the current phase of the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox deals with synodality. Cf. *Synodality and Primacy During the First Millennium: Towards a Common Understanding in Service to the Unity of the Church.* accesed January 17, 2022
      http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-orientale/chiese-orto-dosse-di-tradizione-bizantina/commissione-mista-internazionale-per-il-dialogo-teologico-tra-la/documenti-di-dialogo/2016-sinodalita-e-primato-nel-primo-millennio--verso-una-comune-/testo-in-inglese.html
      The topic of synodality also permeates the latest document of the official world Catholic-Anglican Commission; cf. *Walking Together on the Way Learning to Be the Church – Local, Regional, Universal: An Agreed Statement of the Third Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III).* accesed January 17, 2022
      http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/comunione-anglica-na/dialogo/arcic-iii/arcic-iii---documents/2018-walking-together-on-the-way.html

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the People of God, which reveals and gives substance to her being as communion when all her members journey together, gather in assembly and take an active part in her evangelising mission"[6]. In the light of this definition, synodality can thus be perceived as a characteristic feature of the Church, which is the community of one people of God, whose mission in the midst of the world is to be a sign and an instrument of salvation. According to Pope Francis, in the case of synodality, it is even a "constitutive dimension of the church"[7], a dimension without which the church cannot be herself. From the point of view of the doctrine of the Church, it is clear that the concept of the Church as people of God, which can be considered as an original contribution of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, plays a key role in understanding synodality.[8] At the same time, understanding the church as people of God not only prompted the theological anchoring of synodality at the Council, but also helped to ecclesiologically formulate the basis of the council's decision in favour of Christian unity, thanks to which the Catholic Church irrevocably set off the path of ecumenism.[9]

1.1. The foundations of the synodality of people of God in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council

Although we would search in vain for the word "synodality" in the Council documents, the last Council opens the door to strengthening the synodal dimension of the Church in several ways. One of the most important is the doctrine of the collegiality of the episcopal office, which reminded us that each individual bishop exercises his ministry "only in a hierarchical communion"[10] with the college of all bishops associated with the head, which is the bishop of Rome. Just as Peter and the other apostles formed one apostolic college, so Peter's successors, the Roman bishops, and the successors of the apostles, the bishops are joined together. This emphasis on episcopal collegiality found its concrete expression in a specific way in the institution of the episcopal synod, which was established by Paul VI in the final phase of the Second Vatican Council.[11] According to the Council, the Synod of Bishops was to be not only a way to help the Pope in his care of the universal Church, but also a sign "that all the bishops in hierarchical communion partake of the solicitude for the universal Church"[12].

Another way to emphasize the collegial character of the episcopal ministry and the need for the cooperation of bishops in its practise within a certain territory or state was the requirement of the Council fathers to create episcopal conferences in individual countries.[13] The Council also supported the synodal aspect of the Catholic Church, which does not want to be a uniform "one-man church" (that of the supreme Pontiff), by "reviving" in the past tested institutions of synods,

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6   International Theological Commission. *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, 6. accesed January 17, 2022
     https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html

7   *Ceremony commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops: Address of His Hollines Pope Francis. Paul VI Audience Hall. Saturday, 17 October 2015.* accesed January 17, 2022
     https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151017_50-anniversario-sinodo.html

8   Cf. VITALI, D. Il popolo di Dio. In NOCETI, S. – REPOLE, R. (eds.). *Commentario ai Documenti del Vaticano II. 2: Lumen gentium.* Bologna: EDB, 2018, p. 151.

9   Cf. JOHN PAUL II. *Ut unum sint*, 3.

10   *Lumen gentium*, 21.

11   Cf. PAUL VI. Apostolica sollicitudo. In *AAS*, 57 (1956), p. 775–780.

12   *Christus Dominus*, 5.

13   Cf. *Ibid*, 37–38.

provincial or plenary councils. "In such a way faith will be deepened and discipline preserved more fittingly and efficaciously in the various churches, as the needs of the times require."[14] Even within the individual dioceses entrusted to him, the bishop does not exercises his pastoral ministry alone. The Second Vatican Council recalled the importance of an advisory council of priests, a cathedral chapter, or other bodies, such as diocesan curia, that work with the bishop to lead the diocese. At the same time, the Council considered the appointment of the pastoral council of the diocese, presided over by the diocesan bishop and whose members are not only clergy but also religious and lay faithful, to be very desirable.[15]

Although the Council's texts, as we have seen, paid particular attention primarily to the application of the aspect of synodality in the doctrine of the episcopate and the exercise of episcopal office, the Council in no way wanted to identify the Church and her hierarchy. On the contrary, we note that the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* speaks of the Church first as a mystery, which in the history of mankind carries out her mission as "a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race"[16]. In addition to this sacramental conception of the Church, the Council fathers brought to light another way of capturing what the Church is: it is the ecclesiology of the people of God journeying together. In the light of this basic model, synodality must be regarded not as some external organizational or functional element of the Church, but as what belongs to her very essence.

Let us not forget that the very use of the category people of God, which replaced the centuries-old model of the Church as a pyramidal *societas perfecta* at the Council, caused a truly "Copernican turnaround" in Catholic ecclesiology.[17] The reason is that if the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, before it begins to discuss the Pope, bishops, priests, lay and religious, dedicates an entire chapter to the Church as the people of God, it conveys a serious fact, namely that the Church is first and foremost a community of all baptized. It is precisely by the receiving the sacrament of baptism everyone becomes part of the new people of God, the Church, in which all share the same dignity of the redeemed children of God. Through baptism, all who are born again in Christ and have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, participate in the priestly, prophetic and royal mission of Jesus Christ,[18] who is the head of the Messianic people.[19] It is clear that the adoption of this basic ecclesiological perspective is decisive for the development of synodality in all its depth and breadth. The Church, which is synodal, is not a "perfect society of unequal ones", divided into "those who teach" (*ecclesia docens*) and "those who are taught" (*ecclesia discens*) or those who rule and those who serve.[20]

1.2. Ecumenical significance of the conciliar ecclesiology of people of God

Joseph Ratziger, present at the Second Vatican Council in the role of a theological adviser, recalls that, "the Council introduced the term 'people of God' primarily as an ecumenical bridge"[21]. How to understand it? In the pre-conciliar conception, the determining ecclesiological category was the image of the mystical body of Christ, which is fully identical with the Holy, Catholic,

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14   *Christus Dominus*, 36.

15   Cf. *Christus Dominus*, 27.

16   *Lumen gentium*, 1.

17   Cf. VITALI, D. *Lumen gentium: Storia. Commento. Recezione.* Roma: Studium, 2017, p. 57.

18   Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 10.

19   Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 9.

20   Cf. International Theological Commission. *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, 35.

21   RATZINGER, J. Die Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils. In *Joseph Ratzinger Gesammelte Schriften. Band 8/1: Kirche – Zeichen unter den Völkern.* Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2010, p. 270.

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Roman and Apostolic Church.[22] There was no doubt that this Church is (*est*) the true Church of Jesus Christ, and "everyone who separates himself from it, deviates from the will and command of Christ our Lord, forsakes the way of salvation and goes to destruction"[23]. Among the members of this mystical body, it was possible to count exclusively those who met the following three conditions: they recieved baptism, professed the true faith, and never "separated themselves from ecclesiastical authority as a result of excessive guilt"[24]. It is clear that if we understand the Church in this way, non-Catholic Christians are practically excluded from it. The image of the body only reinforces this idea, because one is either not a single member. For all who are outside the visible organism of the Church, it can be said at most that with "certain unconscious desires are directed to the Savior's mystical body, yet they do not receive so many heavenly gifts and help that can be enjoyed only in the Catholic Church"[25]. The logical outcome of the ecclesiology conceived in this way was, in relation to non-Catholics, a vision of the restoration of unity, which consists in their simple return to the one Church, which is their true father's home.

The Second Vatican Council significantly corrected this line when it first declared that the only Church of Christ "subsists in" the Catholic Church, but "many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure. These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity"[26]. This transition from *est* to *subsistit in* is not just a play on words, but allows an ecumenically fundamental claim that the one Church that Christ founded is concrete as historical subject in the Catholic Church, but that even outside the visible boundaries and structures of the Catholic Church, this one Church of Christ is present and active. This statement of the first chapter of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* can be fully understood in the context of the statements found in the second chapter, which deals with the Church as the people of God.[27] It is precisely the understanding of the Church as the new people of God that overturns the view by which the Church perceives herself in relation to humanity. In simply words, we could say that this is an optic in which exclusivism is replaced by inclusivism. From this point of view, the Church is not a community of the elect, separate from the rest of the world, in which nothing good and valuable can be found, and which is therefore dashing to perdition. Yes, the Church remains an instrument of salvation for all mankind, but in solidarity with the humanity she is walking a history that, in the power of God's grace, takes the form of the *historia salutis*. The interconnectedness of Church and humanity shows the unity of God's plan of creation and redemption. And the concept of the Church as the people of God properly expresses that in this community the whole human race is transformed into one family of God's daughters and sons.

Thus, when the Council Fathers chose to treat the church as God's people, they intended to capture the universal character of the Church. It consists in the fact that all people are called to the Church, and that it belongs to her or are related to her in different ways: "the Catholic faithful, all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind, for all men are called by the grace of God to salvation"[28]. As for non-Catholic Christians, the Council expressed the belief that the Catholic Church was "linked with" them for many reasons, primarily through the baptism

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22   Cf. PIO XII. Mystici corporis: Il corpo mystico di Gesù Cristo. In LORA, E. – SIMIONATI, R. (eds.). *Enchiridion delle encicliche. 6: Pio XII (1939–1958)*. Bologna: EDB, 1995, a. 163.

23   LEONE XIII. Satis cognitum: L'unità della Chiesa. In LORA, E. – SIMIONATI, R. (eds.). *Enchiridion delle encicliche. 3: Leone XIII (1878–1903)*. Bologna: EDB, 1997, a. 1243.

24   Cf. PIO XII. Mystici corporis, a. 171.

25   PIO XII. Mystici corporis, a. 251.

26   *Lumen gentium*, 8.

27   Cf. MAFFEIS, A. Il dibattito sul significato della formula „subsistit in" (*LG* 8) tra esegesi testuale e interpretazione teologica. *Teologia*, 38 (2013), p. 26–58.

28   *Lumen gentium*, 13.

that binds these believers to Christ. In addition to the many other ecclesial elements present in non-Catholic churches and ecclesial societies, such as the Holy Scriptures, faith, sacraments or episcopate, the dogmatic Constitution on the Church emphasizes that "they also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits". It even says, "that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit"[29].

We can say with Joseph Ratzinger, the ecclesiology of God's people has helped "define the diversity of forms of Church affiliation"[30], which makes it possible to find ecclesial reality even outside the precisely defined structures of the Catholic Church. As a result, and with regard to non-Catholic Christianity, we may, in the words of John Paul II discover that "there is no ecclesial vacuum around the Catholic community"[31]. Even beyond the Catholic Church, there are real churches and ecclesial communities, the only wandering people of God is united with. Therefore, whenever we speak of the Church as the people of God, also – or precisely – in the context of synodality, it is necessary not to lose sight of the ecumenical aspect and to remember that the joys and hopes of Christ's disciples are the joys and hopes of people of our times.[32] This means maintaining the Church's vigilant awareness that the journeying of the people of God is taking place in the paths of this world, in the relationship with it, and with special responsibility for its destiny. Not so randomly, the conciliar teaching on people of God depicted in Chapter 2 of the *Lumen Gentium* culminates in an emphasis on the missionary nature of the Church.[33]

2.   Synodal process as a way of missionary and ecumenical renewal of the church

From what has been said, it is clear that both the rediscovery of the synodal dimension of the Catholic Church and her ecumenical openness sprang from the same source as the renewed conception of the Church at the Second Vatican Council, which was reflected in a special way in understanding the Church as community of the one people of God. The use of the category of people of God in the conciliar teaching on the Church made it possible to introduce yet another topic, which is crucial for understanding the Council itself and for the question of conciliar hermeneutics. This is the idea of Church reform, which can be considered "one of the decisive elements of the concept of people of God"[34]. If the council ecclesiology refused to identify the Church with Christ and did not accept the idea of a perfect society, then it was possible to state that the Church is "at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, always follows the way of penance and renewal"[35]. As a human and earthly institution, the Church people of God, on her journey through history, is called by Christ to „continual reformation"[36].

From the beginning, the need to renew the Church has formed the axis of the entire pontificate of Pope Bergoglio, who on one occasion interpreted the content of the phrase *ecclesia semper reformanda* as follows: "[The reform of the Church] is not exhausted in the countless plans to change her structures. It instead means being implanted and rooted in Christ, allowing

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29   Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 15.

30   RATZINGER. Die Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils, p. 270.

31   JOHN PAUL II. *Ut unum sint*, 13.

32   Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 1.

33   Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 17.

34   RATZINGER. Die Ekklesiologie des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils, p. 271.

35   *Lumen gentium*, 8.

36   *Unitatis redintegratio*, 6.

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herself to be led by the Spirit."[37] In this sense, it is correct to understand Francis' impulses to develop the synodal dimension of the Church as concrete manifestations of his reform efforts.[38] In this context of Church renewal, we must also learn to understand the synodal process. When Pope Francis opened a synod on synodality that Saturday in October 2021, he mentioned that this would be "a great opportunity for a pastoral conversion in terms of mission and ecumenism"[39]. Why did the Pope choose these two characteristics of conversion (missionary and ecumenical) to express the desired fruit of the synodal process?

2.1. Synodal process within the missionary transformation of the Church

Pope Bergoglio presented his impetus for the reform of the Church in his first magisterial's text, which was the Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*. From a methodological point of view, it is important that he consciously based his suggestions on the conciliar doctrine of the Church contained in the Constitution *Lumen gentium*.[40] In terms of content, it is of capital importance that, according to the Pope, the way to reform the Church is to renew her missionary commitment. There is no doubt that Francis' vision of the synodal Church is part of his great "dream of a missionary option" that will be able to transform not only the pastoral work, but also the very life and structures of the Catholic Church.[41] Paradoxically, the basic features of such a contextualized question of synodality were outlined by the Pope without any analysis of the very concept of "synodality".[42] In its distinctive features, the synodal Church emerges from the Pope's text as if "by the way", while the author of the Exhortation pays the main attention to depicting essential aspects of the mission of evangelisation.[43]

In this program document, the Latin American Pope presented the proclamation of the Gospel to the contemporary world as a mean of urgent renewal of the Church. He formulated the core of this renewal, referring to the words of the Council Decree on Ecumenism, which states that "every renewal of the Church is essentially grounded in an increase of fidelity to her own calling"[44]. At the heart of this vocation, Francis considers it precisely the mission to preach the Gospel to all creation that the Church has received and continues to receive from the Risen Lord at all times and in every place.[45] According to the Pope, it is this missionary command that impresses the Church her form, because on its basis a community of people of God is formed, which finds itself in permanent exodus.[46] Every Christian and the whole Church at all levels is called to a new missionary "going forth": from parishes and church-based communities, through

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37 *Incontro con i rappresentanti del Convegno nazionale della Chiesa Italiana: Discorso del Santo Padre. Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore, Firenze Martedì, 10 novembre 2015.* accesed January 17, 2022 https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2015/november/documents/papa-francesco_20151110_firenze-convegno-chiesa-italiana.html

38 Cf. REPOLE, R. *Il sogno di una Chiesa evangelica: l'ecclesiologia di papa Francesco.* Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2017, p. 107–124.

39 *Momento di Riflessione per l'inizio del percorso sinodale: Discorso del Santo Padre Francesco. Aula Nuova del Sinodo, Sabato, 9 ottobre 2021.* accesed January 17, 2022 https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2021/october/documents/20211009-apertura-camminosinodale.html

40 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 17.

41 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 27.

42 In the text of the constitution, the term "synodality" is found *expressis verbis* in only one place, in n. 246.

43 Cf. VITALI, D. „Un popolo in cammino verso Dio": La sinodalità in Evangelii gaudium. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2018.

44 *Unitatis redintegratio*, 6.

45 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 19.

46 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 20–23.

particular and local churches, to the Pope and the central structures of the universal Church.[47] Pope Francis' reform program, the core of which is conversion-based pastoral care and the renewal of Church structures resulting from it, is formulated as a missionary imperative: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open.[48] The missionary decision is able to transform the Church by saving it from any misleading concentration on herself. For Pope Francis, the ideal of a mission-transformed Church is a community that is open to all and in which everyone can participate in life in some way. Francis's essentially synodal conception of the Church in the context of its missionary transformation becomes intensely clear when he argues that the subject of evangelization is not just some "organic and hierarchical institution" but the Church as a "people advancing on its pilgrim way towards God" and acting as the leaven of God in mankind.[49] In this people, who are in the service of the proclamation of the Gospel, each of its members, on the basis of the baptism received, becomes a disciple entrusted with the mission.[50] Evangelization is not the prerogative of only a certain group of "professionals", while the "rest" of the faithful would only play the role of onlookers or passive recipients.

In this way, Pope Francis gets to name one of the pillars of the synodal image of the Church captured in the perspective of missionary transformation. It is a pillar formed by the Council's doctrine of the supernatural discernment in matters of faith of all the baptized, as proposed by *Lumen gentium*. According to it, the Church, as people of God, has a share in Christ's prophetic mission by spreading his witness and offering a sacrifice of praise to God. A specific form of participation in the Savior's prophetic mission is the discernment in matters of faith (*sensus fidei*), which is awakened in believers and maintained by the Holy Spirit. According to the Council's teaching, this supernatural *sensus* manifests itself in an extraordinary way as a source of infallibility for people of God which, as the entire body of the faithful, is anointed by the Holy Spirit.[51] *Sensus fidei*, which Francis understands as the „instinct of faith" by which people of God intuitively recognize what comes from God, is „part of God's mystery of love for humanity" and the way in which the Holy Spirit guides people of God in truth and brings it to salvation.[52]

The missionary Church is a synodal Church. She is people of God who is constantly on the road and who are not afraid to leave the certainties of today. She is a Church open in her attitude of listening not only to others, but also to what the Holy Spirit wants to say to her here and now, as one community. Such a Church becomes a Church that lives in "constant discernment", through which it learns what is related to the core of the Gospel in her life and what it distracts from it.[53] On this basis, it is understandable why in the first document, Pope Francis urged every local church "to undertake a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform"[54]. The synodal process is a way to start implementing this challenge.

2.2. The ecumenical aspect of Church renewal in the perspective of synodality

Let us now ask ourselves what was the reason, why Pope Francis came to the conclusion, that the above-mentioned pastoral conversion of the Church, to which the synodal process en-

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47 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 27–33.

48 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 27.

49 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium,* 111–114.

50 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium,* 120.

51 *Lumen gentium*, 9.

52 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 119.

53 Cf. POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium,* 43.

54 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium,* 30.

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courages, should have an ecumenical impact in addition to missionary transformation.[55] Surely this is based on the Pope's initial assumption, which he made in the exhortation of *Evangelii gaudium* when he declared: "The credibility of the Christian message would be much greater if Christians could overcome their divisions."[56] In the Pope's primarily missionary perspective, with which he views the Church, Bergoglio's conception of ecumenism is also intrinsically linked to the Church's mission to preach the Gospel.[57] In this respect, the impuls for deepening Christian unity is both the scandal, that divided Christians arouse in mission areas and the shared responsibility for the many who have not yet heard the word about Christ. In this context, according to the Pope, "commitment to a unity which helps (…) to accept Jesus Christ can no longer be a matter of mere diplomacy or forced compliance, but rather an indispensable path to evangelization"[58]. For Francis, the Church, which is enlivened from its very center by the concern for the Gospel of Christ, is inevitably consumed by the desire for the unity of all who have already believed in Christ. For this reason, it is suitable to say that the Pope's reflections on Christian unity are based on "true contemplation of the world. In the midst of a divided world, ecumenism is a prophetic sign that not only Christians but also the nations and people of [the Earth] will be more united"[59].

In a mission-conceived Church, ecumenical openness is an almost natural part of journey of the people of God. According to Francis, as Christians, we are all "pilgrims journeying alongside one another"[60] behind the face of the one God who is our peace. The Pope teaches us that this fact of a shared path becomes a challenge to the transformation of mutual relations, which has its origin in the purification of the heart and consists in the fact that the attitude of suspicion and distrust will be replaced by the art of trusting each other. The "ecumenism of the common path" conceived in this way is most characteristic of Bergoglio's understanding of the pursuit of unity.[61] According to him, walking together already means creating unity, because it "will not come as a miracle at the very end. Rather, unity comes about in journeying; the Holy Spirit does this on the journey. If we do not walk together, if we do not pray for one another, if we do not collaborate in the many ways that we can in this world for the people of God, then unity will not come about!"[62]

In this Francis's vision of ecumenism as a shared path, in which Christians become creators of peace for the world, the main architect of the unity is the Holy Spirit. He leads Christians in the first place to realize that there are many important things, that unite us, and makes us realize that the unity between us is deeper than the wounds of division and as such prevails over a state of conflict. At the same time, Bergoglio's ecumenism anchored pnematologically emphasizes that

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55 We may have other words of Francis in mind: „The commitment to build a synodal Church — a mission to which we are all called, each with the role entrusted him by the Lord — has significant ecumenical implications." (*Ceremony commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops: Address of His Hollines Pope Francis*).

56 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 244.

57 With this emphasis on the interconnection of the mission and the effort for Christian unity, Francis reminds modern ecumenism of its roots, which go back to the efforts to restore authenticity to the Christian proclamation, which has been discredited by division.

58 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 246.

59 Spadaro, A. Ecumenismo e ,governance' globale. *La Civiltà cattolica*, 4033 (2018), p. 79.

60 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 119.

61 Cf. SVATOŇ, R. „Společně kráčet již znamená vytvářet jednotu": Ekumenismus v pojetí papeže Františka. *Studia theologica*, 4 (2019), p. 149–173.

62 *Celebration of the Vespers on the Solemnity of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle: Homily of the Pope Francis, Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls Saturday, 25 January 2014*. accesed January 17, 2022 http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140125_vespri-conversione-san-paolo.html

we willingly accept that the Spirit of God works freely and generously in brothers and sisters in other Christian churches. Discovering and accepting "what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us"[63] is, according to Pope Francis, a genuine ecumenical task, which John Paul II has already called for when he called ecumenism an "exchange of gifts"[64].

According to the already mentioned document of the International Theological Commission, there are concretizing in the topic of synodality the burning questions of ecumenical dialogue concerning ecclesiology, which are still waiting for their answer. The common denominator of these issues is the problem of authority in the Church. It articulates mainly in two areas: 1) the relationship between the participation of believers in the synodal life of the Church and the authority of pastors; 2) the nature of communion between the local churches and the universal Church, which implies the issue of relations between bishops and the Bishop of Rome.[65] Also in these two areas, the synodal process could lead to ecumenically relevant consequences.

First of all, this process makes it possible to open and develop in the Church the dynamics of synodality, which Pope Francis understands as the common journey of all members of people of God: the laity, pastors and bishop of Rome. They together form one spiritual temple and one holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices and preach the works of God to the world.[66] Indeed, the Church manifests itself in the synodal process as one body, the *universitas fidelium*, which wants to listen to the Spirit of God. Within the process and in its individual phases, of course, everyone will be engaged according to the hierarchical and charismatic gifts he/she has received. However, the renewed concept of the synod as such is based precisely on the cooperation and active participation of all the baptized, be they the laity, the religious, the priests, the bishops or the Pope. The synodal process that has begun reaches three levels, reflecting the dynamism of the communion, which, according to Pope Francis, is to inspire all decisions in the Church, namely the level of the particular, the regional and the universal Church. Harmony (*conspiratio*) between believers and shepherds is to be applied at all these levels. Within the synodal Church, whose formation is to be stimulated by the whole process, we will finally be able to understand the specific mission of the bishop of Rome. "The Pope is not, by himself, above the Church; but within it as one of the baptized, and within the College of Bishops as a Bishop among bishops, called at the same time — as Successor of Peter — to lead the Church of Rome which presides in charity over all the Churches."[67] In this sense, the synodal process can be seen as a concrete step towards the "conversion of the papacy"[68], which is part of the search for a form of Roman bishop's service that is ecumenically open.[69] The decentralization and valorisation of the individual local churches, which is associated with this step, is moving towards an ecumenically significant deepening of the concept of the Church as a *communio ecclesiarum*.

3.   Experience of synodal dynamics in ecumenical perspective

The importance of the subject of synodality for Christian unity is very well illustrated in the document of the International Theological Commission. It states: "Synodality is at the heart of the ecumenical commitment of Christians: because it represents an invitation to walk together on the

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63 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 246.

64 Cf. JOHN PAUL II. *Ut unum sint*, 28.

65 Cf. International Theological Commission. *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, 117.

66 Cf. *Ceremony commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Institution of the Synod of Bishops: Address of His Hollines Pope Francis.*

67 *Ibid.*

68 POPE FRANCIS. *Evangelii gaudium*, 32.

69 Cf. JOHN PAUL II. *Ut unum sint*, 28.

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path towards full communion and because – when it is understood correctly – it offers a way of understanding and experiencing the Church where legitimate differences find room in the logic of a reciprocal exchange of gifts in the light of truth."[70]

Based on this statement, the synodal process represents an extraordinary opportunity for ecumenism. The reason can be seen primarily in the fact that the process focuses our attention directly on the subject of the Church, which has always belonged and still belongs to the most ecumenically burning. At the end of the synodal process, we should have a deeper understanding of what the Church is and what her mission is. In the synodal journey, this understanding of the Church is linked to the experience of the Church, and we can even say that it is the experience that becomes the source of knowledge and understanding of the Church. What kind of experience is this? Based on the teachings of the Council Constitution *Dei Verbum*, which concerns the relationship between God's Revelation and the Church, the Church can be seen as a people of God who is heading for the fulness of God's truth and on which the words of God's promise are fulfilled. The Church, which is in the midst of the world in the service of the saving Revelation of which she bears witness, is increasingly penetrating its contents with the help of the Holy Spirit, who "leads unto all truth those who believe and makes the word of Christ dwell abundantly in them"[71]. This help of the Holy Spirit takes several forms. The Council Constitution names three: contemplation and study made by believers; the preaching of bishops endowed with the gift of truth and a deeper understanding of spiritual realities from personal experience. Among the interpreters of this text, there is agreement that when the Council Fathers spoke of understanding from experience, they meant the same as they expressed in Chapter 12 of the Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, when they explained the doctrine of *sensus fidei*, supernatural discernment in matters of faith.[72] It is this gift of the Holy Spirit that springs from participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, which enables everyone who is baptized to experience and know through the Spirit what belongs to the reality of faith.

The synodal process, especially in its first phase, which takes place at the level of dioceses and local churches, consists in listening to all the baptized, who are "the main subjects of this synodal experience"[73]. What opens up to all believers an active and irreplaceable participation in the synodal process is the fact that they are endowed with a supernatural sense of faith that mediates interior understanding and spiritual experience of faith. The synodal process thus creates a completely unique opportunity to apply the conciliar doctrine of *sensus fidelium* in the life of the Church and presents it as a key dimension of synodality in the Church. From an ecumenical point of view, the crucial question is whether non-Catholic Christians are also involved in the *sensus fidei*. The document of the International Theological Commission, which deals with the subject of the sense of faith and which must be given due attention in the context of synodality, answers this question "unequivocally positively"[74]. This is due to the fact that among the elements of Church of Christ, which we find beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church, is first of all baptism, which unites non-Catholic Christians with Christ[75] and creates a "sacramental bond of

unity among all those born again by baptism"[76]. The already existing union through baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit, which descends to all the baptized at the baptismal font, is the deepest reason why the Catholic Church also invites sisters and brothers from other Christian churches to participate actively in synodal process.

One of the many pitfalls that people of God faces during the synodal process is the "temptation not to look beyond the visible boundaries of the Church"[77]. On the other hand, this process may represent "an opportunity to deepen the ecumenical path with other Christian denominations"[78]. The premise is that we will not understand the ecumenical dimension of the process only as a courtesy gesture, but as a sign of fraternal Christian belonging, which, moreover, is based on solid theological foundations. The invitation of non-Catholic Christians to participate in the synodal process, which is expected mainly in the work of synodal groups and during the pre-Synodian diocesan assembly, is a concrete expression of the Catholic Church as an open community that realizes to be journeying with others to the Kingdom of God.[79] Non-Catholic participation can also be seen as an expression of recognition at the ecclesial level, as the Catholic Church expressed by John Paul II that in some non-Catholic communities "certain features of the Christian mystery have at times been more effectively emphasized"[80]. If we take this statement seriously, then we admit that in the synodal process, with the participation of non-Catholic Christians, the Catholic Church enriches itself with authentic Christian experiences and knowledge concerning the faith. The opposite is also true: even a non-Catholic can be enriched by this experience. In this sense, the synodal process can truly be seen as a way to understand and experience the Church as one people of God and as a true ecumenical "learning process". Let us not forget that synodal dynamics and structures have a firm place in non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities, and the experience of synodality there can be a stimulus for reflection and inspiration for a renewed synodal understanding of the Catholic Church.[81]

The whole synodal process can be thought of as an act of listening of people of God to what the Holy Spirit communicates to the Church. This listening happens as we open our ears to God's word in the Scriptures, in the living tradition, but also by listening to each other, because God's Spirit can speak decisively through our sister or brother. Synodal *listening*, which requires *participation* — even those who have different views than us — does not have an end in itself, but results in a common *discernment* that allows participants to recognize what is God's will. In this synodal process, all efforts should be made to seek what God's will is for the synodal nature of his people. This is aptly characterized by the fundamental question: "How does this 'journeying together' take place today on different levels (from the local level to the universal one), allowing

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70   International Theological Commission. *Synodality in the life and mission of the Church*, 9.

71   *Dei Verbum*, 8.

72   Cf. International Theological Commission. "*Sensus Fidei*" in the Life of the Church, 46. accesed January 17, 2022 https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html

73   *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 2.1.

74   International Theological Commission. "*Sensus Fidei*" in the Life of the Church, 86b).

75   Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 15.

76   *Unitatis redintegratio*, 22.

77   *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 2.4.

78   *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 2.4.

79   Cardinals Kurt Koch and Mario Grech, who head the Vatican authorities responsible for Christian unity and the Synod of Bishops, drew attention to this importance in a joint letter of 28 October 2021. Cf. *To the Bishops responsible for ecumenism in the Episcopal conferences and Synods*. accesed January 17, 2022 http://www.christianunity.va/content/dam/unitacristiani/Altri/Processo_sinodale/2021%2010%2028%20%20EN%20Letter%20to%20Ecumenical%20officers%20of%20Episcopal%20Conferences.pdf

80   JOHN PAUL II. *Ut unum sint*, 14.

81   From the latest contributions, which arose from the desire to seek mutual enrichment in the field of synodality, cf. ANAPLIOTIS, A. Synodalität in der Kirchenvervassung der Orthodoxen Kirche. *Una Sancta*, 2 (2020), p. 104–109; HAVIK, R.G. Die synodale Praxis der Armenischen Apostolischen Kirche. *Ibid.*, p. 122–127; KLAIBER, W. Die Konferenz entscheidet – Synodalität im Methodismus. *Ibid.*, s. 138–144; HAUSCHILD, F. Synodalität nach evangelischem Verständnis und im Hinblick auf die Debatte in der römisch-katholischen Kirche. *Catholica*, 74 (2020), p. 112–129; IFF, M. Synodalität aus evangelisch-freikirchlicher Sicht. *Ibid.*, p. 130–140.

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the Church to proclaim the Gospel? And what steps is the Spirit inviting us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?"[82]

The answer to this question can only be found in an attitude of openness to the Spirit of God. Only with his contribution can be recognized the pure manifestations of synodality that are already present in the Church today and make a decision to develop those elements of the synodal Church that prove to be particularly fruitful for the future. In this way, our common synodal discernment takes the form of a real pastoral urgency: "What God expects at this moment, in this place and under these circumstances, from the Church and her activities."[83] Seeing the true signs of God's presence, judging things in light of God's purpose, and then acting and transforming reality in accordance with God's will is not possible without the assistance of the Holy Spirit.[84] It is with his help that an authentic "pastoral decision"[85] can be reached that reflects both God's will and the voice of God's people. The Church, which begins to act on such a decision, will become a more effective sign of God's gracious inclination toward this world, the sacrament of salvation, a space where the triune life of God is shared with the people.

Conclusion

"The Synodal Process is first and foremost a spiritual process."[86] And only as such can it become a source of true reform of the Church, which will have both a missionary and ecumenical impact. Let us keep in mind the words of the Council that the very reform of the Catholic Church has "notable ecumenical importance"[87]. It follows that whenever the Catholic Church seeks her own reform, that is, when it deepens her authentic vocation, it already pursues ecumenism and acts in favour of restoring the unity of all Christians. Ecumenism from the Catholic conception is certainly not a passive wait for the return of the lost, but it requires from all participants a constant inclination to the Gospel, which is associated with a permanent willingness to conversion, both personal and church-wide.[88] Thus, if the synodal process of the Catholic Church is indeed accepted as a call "to renew our mentalities and our ecclesial structures in order to live out God's call for the Church amid the present signs of the times"[89], then the Synod itself will play an important role in the ecumenical authenticity and efforts of this Church.

The reality of the spiritual process then leads us in thinking about the synod and ecumenism to another important fact, namely, to realize the very nature of the movement for Christian unity. This is entirely spiritual at its core, because it is a movement that arose from the impulses of the Holy Spirit, finds its vitality in him, and only thanks to him will it be able to continue. As a spiritual reality, ecumenism relies primarily on spiritual dynamics, which alone make it possible to open new perspectives in terms of the development and practical applications of spiritual ecumenism.[90] Then the search for deeper unity becomes the path we learn to walk according to the Spirit, who leads us to a true knowledge of the quality of our relationships, to realize what

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82   *Preparatory document: For a Synodal Church:*, p. 2; *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 1.3.
83   AMBROS, P. Pastorální teologie a kontinuita křesťanské tradice. In *Krása jako východisko: Nové cesty pastorální teologie*. Olomouc: Refugium, 2008, p. 42.
84   Cf. *Gaudium et spes*, 11 and 44.
85   *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 1.3.
86   *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 2.2.
87   *Unitatis redintegratio*, 6.
88   Cf. *Unitatis redintegratio*, 6 a 7.
89   *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 1.3.
90   Cf. KASPER, W. *A Handbook of Spiritual Ecumenism*. Hyde Park: New City Press, 2007.

unites us, and to discover the direction for the next steps to be taken in our common journey.[91] The ecumenical challenge of the synodal process is precisely that it does not intentionally aim to create dogmatic consensus, nor does it support "ecumenical diplomacy" or ideologically colored ecumenism of pressure groups, but clearly favours its spiritual dimension. In this way, at the level of the shared life of fraternal relations and the Christian faith, it creates an environment in which it will be possible to experience the depth of the already existing communion, realize the urgency of Christ's request for the unity of his disciples, and thus to become a truly prophetic sign for humanity.

The synodal process and the ecumenical movement thus refer us to a common denominator, which is the divine Paraclete himself, who leads us into the truth of the only Master (cf. Mt 23:10). He causes diversity calling it to the unity (cf. 1Cor 12:4) and rejuvenates, beautifies and restores the Church by the power of the Gospel, while leading her to perfect union with her Spouse.[92]

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The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

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The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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Dei Verbum.

Gaudium et spes.

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91   For questions to help open the topic of ecumenism in the synodal consultative group, cf. *Vademecum for the Synod on synodality*, 5.3.
92   Cf. *Lumen gentium*, 4.

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COMPASSION AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR IN TANAKH AND RABBINIC JUDAISM |
Roman Kralik, Marie Roubalova, Lubomir Hlad, Viliam Judak, Amantius Akimjak

COMPASSION AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR IN TANAKH AND RABBINIC JUDAISM

Roman Kralik [1,2], Marie Roubalova [3], Lubomir Hlad [4], Viliam Judak [5], Amantius Akimjak [6]

1   The Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Theology, Ružomberok (SK)
2   RUDN University, Moscow, (RU)
3   Charles University in Prague, Hussite Theological Faculty, Prague (CZ)
4   Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, Nitra (SK)
5   Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius, Bratislava (SK)
6   The Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Theology, Ružomberok (SK)

„God stands at the door with the poor man, so one should consider who he is facing."

(Vayikra Rabbah 34,9)

Abstract

Background: In Rabbinic Judaism, he adopted the term „poor", or humble. Thus, a poor person is one who is often humiliated, humiliated, tormented and oppressed in his life. Four groups of the population are most often mentioned in Tanach as the prototype of the socially weak: widows, orphans, the homeless and slaves. The law remembered them in many provisions that significantly alleviated their plight. The present contribution points to nine defined areas of this solidarity.

Conclusion: The model of social justice and mutual support for members of God's people included many „mitzvoth" (God's commands) of the Torah, which in Israel's society served as a protective and redistributive function. Caring for the poor and rich, giving each of them what they need most, is based on compassion for every living creature.

Keywords: Compassion – solidarity – God´s people – poor – Rabbinic Judaism.

Introduction

Midrash revealed eight Hebrew terms in Tanakh that refer to a poor man,[2] the most important of them are: „ani" and „ebion". „Ani" refers to a person who has lost his property and is as if he were dead. According to some rabbis, poverty is even worse than death; according to them, only a childless person, a sick person afflicted with leprosy and a blind man find themselves in a similarly desperate life situation.[3]

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✉   **Contact on all authors/ Correspondence author: Prof. ThDr. PaedDr. Roman Králik, ThD. – e-mail: Roman.kralik73@gmail.com**
     ThDr. Marie Roubalová, ThD.; Doc. ThDr. Ľubomír Hlad, PhD.; Prof. ThDr. Viliam Judák, PhD.; Prof. ThDr. PhDr. Amantius Akimjak, PhD.
2   Vajikra raba 34,6.
3   The Babylonian Talmud (BT), Avoda zara 5a,b.

Etymology of the Hebrew term „poor" man

The Hebrew word „ani" („poor") is pronounced similarly to the personal pronoun „ani" („I"). The difference in the original pronunciation was that ‚ani' (‚I') was pronounced only with emphasis at the beginning, because its first letter is ‚alef', while in the word ‚ani' (‚poor') the first letter was pronounced (and in some areas still is) guttural because the word begins with the letter „ajin," which most ancient grammarians called „rumble in the throat." Today, the difference between „alef" and „ajin" is often almost blurred and both words are pronounced the same (their combination of „ani ani" creates the phrase „I am poor").

The sound form of words has always been as important to the rabbinic tradition as the etymological closeness of words. By saying the word „poor," everyone was aware of how close this situation was to them because „ani" („poor") is or can be, „ani" („I"), as the text of Dt 15,7 testifies: *„The testimony about the believer's affiliation with a poor man, which literally reads," the poor man is in you" (Dt 15,7)… expresses that the believer feels (knows) his needs from within, so there is no difference between a believer and a poor man. The poor man is not outside the believer (so that he can be ignored), and therefore any supremacy over the poor man or contempt for him (ignoring him) is out of the question. The testimony states that the believer is completely identified with the poor man as if he were a poor man himself".*[4] One person can be extremely rich one day, and the next day everything will pass away, and he has nothing at all, as the book of Job describe in Tanakh, where the protagonist lost his children, property and health in a short time.[5]

The term „ani" („poor") is derived from the verb a-n-h meaning „he was humble/prostrated." Thus, a poor person is one who is often humiliated, prostrated, tormented and oppressed in his life. However, the verb a-n-h also has other meanings: „to wander" and „to answer." A poor person really usually wanders and does not see the benefits of his wanderings. According to Tanakh and rabbinic Judaism, a rich man cannot be indifferent to the suffering and futile wandering of a poor neighbour („brother"), must have compassion for him and must be able to respond to his difficult life situation (answer): *„Just as a river flows from a source down. Man naturally lives only for the other: he is only a particle in a mutual connection… In contrast, a man who lives only for himself acts against his nature like water that would like to flow against the current (Jerucham Leibovitz)."*[6] Man has his reaction (mercy[7]) to the poor acting like God.[8]

One is expected to be responsible not only for oneself but also for others.[9] The warning against avoiding this duty is already at the very beginning of Torat Moshe: *„Adam refused per-*

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4   Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012).
5   Jozef Jančovič, "The diabolization of Elihu in the Testament of Job," in *In mari via tua. Philological Studies in Honour of Antonio Piñero*, ed. Israel M. Gallarte and Jesús Peláez, 55-76. (Córdoba: Ediciones El Almendro, 2016).
6   Leo Pavlát, "O mravnosti," *Židovská ročenka* (1983/1984): 5744, p. 24.
7   Cf. Jiří Beneš, *Pláč Jeremjášův* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2020).
8   Vladimír Thurzo, "Čnosť epikéje ako nástroj milosrdenstva," in *Aký je Boh Starého a Nového zákona?* 380-402. (Prešov: Michal Vaško - Vydavateľstvo).
9   Janka Bursová, "Social networks within the recipient of social services and its expectations," in *Sieci społecznościowe w zarządzaniu zasobami ludzkimi*, ed. Zuzana Budayová and Janka Bursová, 37-53. (Łodz: Wydawnictwo UNS); Zuzana Budayová, *Family Problems of Today* (Dublin: International scientific board of catholic researchers and teachers in Ireland, 2020); Iurii Shcherbiak, "Inclusive education in general educational institution: theoretical and methodical aspects," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 8, no. 2, (2018): 9-20; Janka Bursová and Beáta Akimjaková, "The upbringing of romani children from socially disadvanteged families in Slovakia," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 11, no. 4, (2021): 161-186; Ana Thea Filipovič and Tibor Reimer, "Space as an instrument to interpret the role of religion and churches in Central and Eastern European societies," in *Reforming practical: The politics of body and space*, 105-112. (Tübingen: International Academy of Practical Theology); Miroslav Tvrdoň et al., "Behavioural disor-

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COMPASSION AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR IN TANAKH AND RABBINIC JUDAISM |
Roman Kralik, Marie Roubalova, Lubomir Hlad, Viliam Judak, Amantius Akimjak

sonal responsibility. Cain refused moral responsibility. Noah refused responsibility for others and the builders of the Tower of Babel refused the essence of responsibility - the fact that we should be responsible to someone else at all."[10] Even one´s own mistakes cannot be blamed on others. Laziness, incorrigibility, irresponsibility, empty dreaming and talking are unacceptable in God's people.[11] The first people tried to place their own guilt on others when Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent (Gen 3): *„As far as human memory can go, one tried to blame one´s own failure on someone and something else. From the stars, destinies and gods today, people have passed in their excuses to their parents, environment, genes, media, education, system, and when all else fails - to the Jews."*[12]

The second term most commonly used in Hebrew is „ebion" (poor, needy, helpless). An expression derived from the verb a-b-h, whose basic meaning is „wanted, longed for something." „Ebion" longs for almost everything, because he lacks almost everything.[13] The poor man wants (desires, tries, strives), but often it is useless for him, as stated above. In this sense, „ebion" is even worse than „ani", because he wants far more (needs) everything he lacks and is therefore called „needy."[14] In the end, he has no choice but to shout: „Avoj!" (A term derived from the same word root as „ebion"), which means „oh ouvej". No one wants to get into a situation where they have to say these words. No one wants to be poor / needy, and yet in the Tanakh texts (especially in the book of Psalms and in the Prophetic books)[15] the word „poor" becomes synonymous with pious man.[16] According to the rabbis, however, it is out of poverty that justice, kindness, piety and love for the study of the Torah are born.[17]

Everything a person possesses, however much or not, has only been bestowed on him by the Lord, to whom the earth belongs and everything on it. It is God who gives man life, health, family, many children, large herds and property. Man *„by his charity…only contributes to a fairer distribution of God´s gifts."*[18] Every person must do charity:[19] *„Even a beggar who lives from the charity must do charity himself."*[20] But the greatest credit goes to *„He who causes others to give*

ders in children and their classification," *Aplikovaná psychologie* 6, no. 10, (2021): 838-855; Ivana Rochovská et al., "Pradinių klasių mokytojų edukaciniai poreikiai inkliuzinio ugdymo kontekste Slovakijoje," *Specialusis Ugdymas* 2, no. 40, (2019): 157-194; Viera Šilonová et al., "Zastosuvaňja cifrovich technologij u distancijnomu pedagogičnomu ociňjuvanni zdobuvačiv viššoi osviti," *Information Technologies and Learning Tools* 82, no. 2 (2021): 243-265; Hedviga Tkáčová et al., "Existence and Prevention of Social Exclusion of Religious University Students due to Stereotyping," *Bogoslovni Vestnik* 81, no. 1, (2021): 199-223.

10   Jonathan Sacks, *O svobodě a náboženství* (Příbram: P3K, 2005, p. 29).

11   Př 6,10-11; 13,18, 28,19 ecc.

12   Jonathan Sacks, *O svobodě a náboženství* (Příbram: P3K, 2005, p. 29).

13   Vajikra raba 34,6; RAŠI, Devarim 15,4; RAŠI, Šemot 24,6.

14   RAŠI, Devarim 15,4.

15   Antón Tyrol, *Profetizmus a prorocké knihy Starého zákona* (Verbum - vydavateľstvo KU Ružomberok, 2021).

16   Ž 12,6; Sof 2,3; 3,12-13 ecc. Cf. Jiří Beneš, *Dvanáctka. Uvedení do Malých proroků* (Praha: Návrat domů: 2019, p. 278).

17   Šulchan aruch, Even haezer 24.

18   Abraham Cohen, *Talmud pro každého. Historie, struktura a hlavní témata Talmudu.* Praha: Sefer, 2006, p. 269); Cf. Mária Gažiová, "Helplines as one of the forms of pastoral facilities," in *Aktualne kierunki w badaniach, edukacji i praktyce nauk społecznych II.,* ed. Amantius Akimjak and Slawomir Mazur, 49-64 (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Scientia, Ars, Educatio).

19   Peter Majda, "Mercy and repentance in interpersonal communication," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 7, no. 4, (2017): 81-99.

20   BT, Gitin 7b.

because he is greater than he who simply gives."[21] But God is also the One who tests and punishes man with disease, misery, hunger, cold and scarcity, and premature death.[22]

God in Torat Moshe offers his people, under certain conditions, an ideal state of the commonwealth of Israel, where the people come after their liberation from Egyptian slavery as poorest of the poorest. There no one will be poor / needy (ebion): *„There is no need for you (in you), for the Lord will bless you richly in the land that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance to possess"* (Dt 15,4). The rabbis often understood that if the people of Israel performed God's will, i.e. his commands („mitzvoth"), and especially the „Shemitah"/"Sabbath year" and „Jovel"/Jubilee year [23], they will be needy among other nations, but they will not be among God's people. However, if the people do not perform God's will, they will be needy among their people.[24] Some rabbis interpreted this as an order that no individual become needy.[25] Each individual influences the state of the whole society, as described by the midrash: *„One day the ship sailed on a long voyage. Far out to sea, a passenger pulled out a drill and began drilling a hole in the bottom. The other passengers were horrified and wanted to stop him. However, he defended himself and argued that he was drilling only under his seat."*[26]

Solidarity in relation to the needy

If the people do not do God's will and the poor are present in God's people, the Torah establishes the need for solidarity:[27] *„And if any of thy brethren be of thee, in thy gates of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thine heart shall not be plucked, neither shalt thou shut thine hand from thy brother's need"* (Dt 15,7). Poverty manifested itself in the country especially in the barren years (2 K 8,1-7) and in times of war, when famine, disease, and ubiquitous death hit the earth. Four groups of the population are most often mentioned as a prototype of the socially weak: widows, orphans,[28] incoming (homeless) and Levites,[29] to which slaves can be assigned. The law remembered them and others in need in many provisions that significantly alleviated their plight.[30] Among the most important are:

1)   The right to dignity and respect for the enslaved, poor, needy, sick, old, unsuccessful or otherwise disadvantaged person: *„No one shall be underestimated for his or her natural defects or poverty. The blind and crippled are just as respectable as the strong and the healthy, the poor as well as the rich, as long as they lead an honest life."*[31] It is necessary to treat all the weak with compassion: *„You would act disgustingly if you placed an object in the way of the blind man to fall over, or if you cursed the deaf-mute just because he did not understand*

21   BT, Bava batra 9a.

22   Vladimír Thurzo, "The Moral-Theological View of the End-of-Life Care," in *Proceedings from the 7th International Conference of Hospice and Palliative Care,* ed. Patricia Dobríková, 28-38. (Trnava: Faculty of Health Sciences and Social Work); Michal Vivoda, *Interdisciplinárna analýza ľudského súcitu a sebasúcitu* (Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2021).

23   CHIZKUNI, Devarim 15,4.

24   Sifrej Devarim 114,1; RAŠI, Devarim 15,4. Cf. Jiří Beneš, *Dvanáctka. Uvedení do Malých proroků.* Praha: Návrat domů, 2019, pp. 106, 122).

25   BT, Bava mecia 30b; 33a; BT, Sanhedrin 64b.

26   Vajikra raba 4,6.

27   Cf. Jiří Beneš, *Pláč Jeremjášův* (Praha: Advent-Orion, p. 109).

28   Dt 16,11.14; 24,19–21; 26,12–13; Ž 68,6; BT, Sanhedrin 19b; RAMBAM, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot deot 6,10.

29   Dt 8,1-8; Dt 12,12.19; Ex 22,21-22.

30   Cf. Jiří Beneš, *Dvanáctka. Uvedení do Malých proroků* (Praha: Návrat domů, 2019, pp. 121,195-198).

31   Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 1999, p. 308).

you and could not defend himself" (Lv 19,14).[32] One must respect the other (his life, health, freedom but also good reputation) and be considerate of him because even the poorest are „achicha" („your brother") and „celem elohim" („image of God").[33] From its first pages, Tanakh shows readers what fraternity (true humanity) means and that it is necessary to learn it patiently (it shows not only positive examples but also negative examples when describing non-fraternal/inhuman behaviour). „Your brother" deserves consideration at all levels of his existence.

2) The right to participate in holidays and festive feasts and to rejoice in them:[34] „Joy…together with eating (feast) is probably the most obvious expression (sign) of the new way (quality) of life of the new generation of the Lord's followers in the Promised Land… *„Joy and feast… culminate in the holidays designed for the believer to practice, adopt, and commemorate the new way of life (Dt 16,9-15). Holidays are a space of joy and sharing."*[35] A person who has something to rejoice in can be expected to do good to others as well:[36] *„Israel's view of life was far happier than the view of the Greeks. They taught that sin was indelible and that Erinia, the goddess of vengeance, persecuted the culprit relentlessly throughout his life, and that they would not allow him peace even after death. In contrast, the prophets taught in full agreement with Moses' teaching that guilt was erasable."*[37]

3) Saturday (seventh) year (Shemitah), the so-called gracious summer:[38]

   a) Land in Israel this year rested just as one rest every seventh day („Sabbath"). The land was not cultivated, sown and harvested (this provision applied to fields, orchards and vineyards).[39] Crops that grew spontaneously that year (e.g. from the roots of previously harvested plants) had the legal status of „hefker" („crop without owner"), they were not allowed to be harvested in the usual way.[40] These crops belonged to the socially disadvantaged.[41] Irrigation of the plants was allowed on Saturday year if they were in danger of dying from drought and no one (even the socially disadvantaged) would benefit from

them.[42] The rabbis extended (during the Temple's existence) Saturday year by the last thirty days of the previous (sixth year) - as a preparatory period for the seventh year (the field should not be cultivated after Shavuot and the orchard after Passover). During the period when the temple is not built, it is allowed to carry out agricultural work until Rosh Hashanah (New Year).[43]

   b) At the end of Saturday (on Sukkot), the creditor waived the right to repay the debt (according to Rambam, the debt was not forgiven automatically; the creditor had to state that the debt was forgiven in each specific case).[44] According to Torat Moshe (Deut. 15,2), *„Debt is to be forgiven altogether, for a creditor who has a personal social responsibility for his fellow man bears the burden of the disadvantaged (weak) on his shoulders - Debt simply forgets."*[45] This provision was intended primarily for the poor debtor, but the rich debtor was not excluded from the use of this law according to the rabbinic interpretation. Debts were cancelled not only in Israel but also in the diaspora.[46] In practice, creditors have probably often postponed the recovery of the amount owed to the year following Saturday's year because important halakha authorities often felt the need to comment on this discord.[47] The rich should also not restrict lending before this year.[48] If the employer does not pay the employee for his work, it is not considered a debt to be cancelled on Saturday year.[49] Fines set as punishments for the abuser,[50] seducer of the unmarried virgin,[51] the detractor of the bride, who falsely accuses her of not being a virgin on her wedding day,[52] are also not cancelled by the Saturday year. Similarly, it does not disrupt a man's obligations to his ex-wife, with whom he divorced.[53]

4) Seven sets of seven-year cycles[54] were ended with a jubilee year (Lv 25,8-10),[55] i.e. the 49th year was a Saturday year and the 50th year (Jovel) was a jubilee year (the following 51st year was the first year of the next Saturday cycle).[56] A smaller number of rabbis tend to believe that the jubilee was the 49th and not the 50th year. In this case, the last year of Saturday would merge with the jubilee year, because two consecutive years, when the land would not be sown, would, according to the proponents of this opinion, lead to famine.

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32   Richard Feder, "Mojžíš, první hlasatel sociální spravedlnosti. Spravedlnost v izraelském písemnictví," *Židovská ročenka* (1969/1970): 5730, p. 24.

33   See Michal Valčo, "Etické implikácie biblického *Imago Dei*," in *Bible a etika v kontextu doby a myšlení*, ed. Kamila Veverková, 51-72. (Praha HTF UK: L. Marek); José García Martín et al., "The Kantian ethical perspective seen from the existential philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard's Victor Eremita," *Ethics & Bioethics (in Central Europe)*, 11, no. 1-2, (2021): 48-57; Marián Ambrozy et al., "The issue of periodization in Wittgenstein's philosophy of religion," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 14, no. 1, (2018): 115-124; José García Martín et al., "The problem of the 'individual' concept in Kierkegaard's journals," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 16, no. 2, (2020): 39-46; Patrik Maturkanič, *Základy etiky 2.* (Terezín: VŠAPs, 2020, p. 166).
     Adam Mackerle, *Etické aspekty u předexilních Malých proroků* (Praha: Krystal, 2019, p. 86).

34   Dt 16,11.14; 26,11-14.

35   Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově.* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 22).

36   Cf. Kaz 3,12.

37   Richard Feder, "Mojžíš, první hlasatel sociální spravedlnosti. Spravedlnost v izraelském písemnictví," *Židovská ročenka* (1969/1970): 5730, p. 45.

38   Lv 25,10.12-15; Ex 34,21.

39   Lv 25,2.4; Ex 34,21; RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 1,1; Sefer hamicvot, Ase 135; Sefer hachinuch, Micva 112.

40   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 4,1.

41   Lv 25,1-12; BT, Menachot 5b; RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 4,1.

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42   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 1,10.

43   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 3,1; RAMBAM, Mišna, Ševiit 1,1.

44   Dt 15,1-6; Dt 31,10; RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 8,1; Sefer hamicvot, Ase 141; Sefer hachinuch, Micva 477.

45   Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 45).

46   BT, Gitin 36a; RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 9,3; Šulchan aruch, Chošen mišpat 67,1.

47   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 9,1.

48   Dt 15,9; RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 9,30.

49   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 9,11.

50   Dt 22,28-29.

51   Ex 22,15-16.

52   Dt 22,13.21.

53   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 9,12.13.

54   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 10,1; Sefer hamicvot, Ase 140; Sefer hachinuch, Micva 330.

55   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 10,1; Sefer hamicvot, Ase 136; Sefer hachinuch, Micva 332.

56   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 10,7.

Expert articles

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COMPASSION AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR IN TANAKH AND RABBINIC JUDAISM |
Roman Kralik, Marie Roubalova, Lubomir Hlad, Viliam Judak, Amantius Akimjak

a) The laws concerning land were the same in the jubilee year as in the Saturday year.[57]

b) In the jubilee year, Israeli slaves were released (the Hebrew slave was only a temporary slave, the only exception being the so-called „eternal slave", who remained with his master voluntarily) and could not be released empty-handed.[58] The lord of the house is an Israelite and „the confessor /of the Lord/ is not a slave trader who buys or trades slaves, but a compassionate neighbour who solves his brother's current need."[59] Slavery was not a natural state of man, but a state similar to leprosy, which also takes man out of his natural environment and brings him to the margins of society. By releasing his slave at large, the owner will allow him to change his identity: *„A slave (lawless, even though the devotee never considers him to be - for him he is still a brother - Dt 15,12) becomes another man, a full member of society."*[60] The social behaviour of a rich man (helping a poor brother at the cost of a personal loss) thus improves the quality of life of the whole community. According to rabbinic tradition, the Torah's demands (written and oral) on wealthy members of the Israeli community regarding Hebrew slaves are so great that it makes it possible to say, *„Whoever buys a Jewish slave obtains a master for himself."*[61] According to Tanakh and the rabbinic tradition, the Hebrew slave had the same rights as his master.[62] He had the right to (1) life;[63] (2) health;[64] (3) circumcision (men);[65] (4) Saturday rest;[66] (5) holiday celebration;[67] (6) life in the land of Israel;[68] (7) plenty of quality food[69] the same as their master ate, *„lest thou eat white bread, and he eat black bread, lest thou drink old wine, and he drink new wine"*;[70] (8) the right to eat from the crop that grew spontaneously in the field of the seventh year;[71] (9) dignified human treatment (the master was not allowed to impose unbearable, degrading or unnecessary work on him);[72] (10) the right to a quality bed *(„so that you don't sleep on a feather bed and he sleeps on straw")*;[73] (11) same residence as his master;[74] (12) joy;[75] (13) compassion;[76] (14) inheritance (slave could inherit even from his master);[77] (15)

share of „terumot" if his master was a priest;[78] (16) livelihood for his wife and children; (17) the right to flee if the conditions of his master's life are inhuman;[79] (18) the right to own property acquired before enslavement.[80]

c) The land was returned to the original owners without financial compensation at the beginning of this year (it was not possible to sell the land, but only to rent it, because its real owner was not man but God).[81] If someone still sold the land, he was not flogged because his act had no legal consequences (in the jubilee year, the sold land was returned to the original owner).[82]

5) Housing protection law: The original owner of the house (or his son, if the original owner of the house dies) in a city surrounded by a wall, has the right to buy it back within one year of the sale (he can even buy it the same day, which he sold it) for the same amount for which he sold it (for this purchase of his original house, however, he must not borrow or repay it).[83] If the house is in a village or town that is not surrounded by a wall, he can buy it back within a year or a jubilee year.[84]

6) Protection of members of the Levi tribe,[85] who did not receive land when dividing the land. For their security, they received 6 cities of refuge; 42 other cities, including the surrounding pastures,[86] tithes[87] and every third year a special tithe allocation.[88]

7) Consideration of the poor in assessing benefits and temple sacrifices:[89] The benefits were paid gradually (the next tithe was calculated from the remaining harvest) over a seven-year cycle: „Bikurim" (first fruit), „terumah gedolah" (offering elevated before the altar), „maaser rishon" (first tithe) with „terumat hamaaser", „maaser sheni" (second tithe) or „maaser ani" (tithe for the poor). „Maaser sheni" ate during the pilgrimage holidays in Jerusalem, the Levites, widows, orphans, and the homeless in the area where it was produced and was called the „maaser ani" („tithe for the poor").[90] In the seventh year (Saturday) neither „terumot" nor „maaserot" were submitted. The way the tithes are divided *„is an example of the transformation of the attitudes of the Lord's follower. The manifestation of worship of the Lord ceases to be exclusively participation in temple services, respectively implementation of cultural*

57   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 10,15.
58   Lv 25,8-10; podle Dt 12,15-18.
59   Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 51).
60   Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 54).
61   BT, Kidušin 22a; cf. Rambam, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot avadim 1,9.
62   Rambam, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot avadim 9,8; Šulchan aruch, Jore dea 267,17.
63   Ex 21,20.
64   Ex 21,26n.
65   Gn 17,12-13; BT, Šabat 135b; Šulchan aruch, Jore dea 267,1.
66   Ex 20,10; 23,12; Dt 5,14.
67   Dt 12,18; 16,11.14.
68   Mišna, Gitin 4,6.
69   Rambam, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot avadim 9,8.
70   BT, Kidušin 22a; cf. Rambam, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot avadim 1,9.
71   Ex 25,6.
72   Lv 25,34; Rambam, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot avadim 1,6.7; 9,8.
73   BT, Kidušin 22a; srov. Rambam, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot avadim 1,9.
74   Rambam, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot avadim 1,9.
75   Dt 12,12; Dt 16,11.
76   BT, Sota 14a.
77   Gn 15,3; Př 16,2.

78   Ex 29,27; Lv 22,11; Nu 15,18-19; BT, Jevamot 66a).
79   Dt 23,16-17.
80   BT, Bava mecia 12a.
81   Lv 25,23-24; RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 9,2; 10,16; 11,1; Sefer hamicvot, lo taase 227; Sefer hachinuch, Micva 339.
82   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 11,1.
83   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 12,1-3.
84   RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 12,10.
85   Dt 12,12; 14,27.
86   Nu 35,1-8; Joz 25,1-7; RAMBAM, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Šemita 12,1.
87   Dt 12,19; 14,27; 26,11.
88   Dt 14,28; 26,12.
89   Lv 12,8; 14,21, 27,8.
90   Devarim 14,28-29; 26,12-13.

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instructions to take care of the weak members of the Israeli community… The Lord's follower voluntarily becomes in solidarity and spontaneously limits himself, i.e. loses something for those who are waiting for justice and mercy."[91]

8) „Tzedakah" (righteous deeds / charity / alms). The Hebrew word „tzedakah" is associated with the term „tzedek", which means *„a concretely arranged, divine principle, what is an established, reliable order, but it also appears as active intervention, that is, the intervention of this order, God's justice, into human history. What is so marked is related to the order established by God."* „Tzedakah" is *„largely synonymous with the term „tzedek", it takes on the aspect of the concrete realization of the said order (therefore it also appears in the plural). These righteous deeds can be done by God (see Mi 6,5) or by man."*[92] The Hebrew word „tzedakah" can thus be characterized as *„iustitia salutifera (rescue that brings justice)."*[93] In rabbinic Judaism, the „tzedakah" is not a voluntary act of mercy, but an act of inevitable duty: *„Commitment on the part of the wealthy and right on the part of the poor."*[94] „Tzedakah" helps the needy („ebion") and at the same time brings spiritual benefits to the donor („baal tzedakah"):[95] *More than a farmer does for a beggar, a beggar does for a farmer."*[96] The main manifestations of „tzedakah" are:

a) Employ a person - hire him (the emphasis is on the rapid payment of wages, which must be paid on the same day immediately after the work is done)[97] or accept him as a slave.

b) Provide food and clothing.[98] In particular, it is necessary to mention the right of the poor to a part of the harvest of fields, orchards and vineyards in the form of: (1) "pea" (edge / field/), which is left unharvested for the socially disadvantaged, (it is considered "poor" to keep the minimum mandatory part, i.e. one-sixtieth of the harvest);[99] (2) "Leket" (residues on the field) - ears that fall during harvest should not be picked because they are intended for the poor;[100] (3) "Olalot" (residues on the vineyard) - even in the vineyard is not picked, because even fallen grapes are intended for the poor;[101] (4) "peret" (residues on the orchard) - fallen fruit and fruit separated for the poor;[102] (5) "lo tefaer" (you will not shake additionally / remaining olives /) - the farmer will not shake the olive residues after the harvest, because they are also intended for the poor;[103] (6) "sikhekha" (forgotten). This is a part of the field that was forgotten to be harvested during the harvest. The reapers should not have returned to this, nor should they have returned for the forgot-

ten sheaves, grapes, or other fruits, because it all belongs to the poor.[104] The owner is not entitled to this part of the harvest because it is not his property (he may not even distribute it to the poor himself) because God has designated it for the needy and they themselves must take it as a gift from God, who is its real owner.

c) Provision of interest-free loans:[105] *"The devotee not only forgives the debt but also himself and actively offers a gift (loan) according to the needs of the poor fellow (not according to own ideas) and despite the knowledge that he will lose the loan for the seventh year."*[106] The loan was to return the needy one to its original condition. Torat Moshe does not state that *„the creditor investigate or should investigate the causes of the fellow in distress. He does not care how he got into debt, nor how he handles the loan, whether he will manage efficiently, whether he will not abuse provided aid. He does not reproach or blame. For no reason will he delay the loan (cautiously and fearfully)."*[107]

d) Giving the poor monetary gifts and gifts (e.g. on Purim).[108]

9) "Gemilut chasadim" ("acts of mercy") partly coincides with the term "tzedakah" (see above). In other words, *"tzedakah is one of the pillars of the gemilut chasadim"*[109] in addition to "bikur cholim" (visiting the sick), "halvajat hamet" (dead man's burial) and comforting the bereaved. In "gemilut chasadim" there is one more dimension unlike "tzedekah", this dimension can be called kindness.[110] For charity ("tzedakah") we must "have" (money, clothing, food, etc.) so that we can provide it to the needy. We don't have to have anything for kindness, even the poorest can provide it, if he responds with a kind word, helpful gesture, kind smile, etc. Charity is focused primarily on the poor and needy, kindness turns to everyone - we provide it to the poor and rich, sick and health, mourning and rejoicing. We show charity towards the living, kindness can also be done towards the dead (by our work in the funeral fraternity of chevra kadisha, by attending a funeral)[111] According to Mishnah, "Gemilut chasadim" is one of the few things that have no set extent and whose fruits one enjoys in this world, while the reserves of them remain for the world to come.[112] Simon the Righteous (the last member of the Grand Assembly) defined the "gemilut chasadim" as one of the three pillars of Judaism (along with the Torah and the service to God in the Jerusalem Temple).[113] According to Midrash, *"anyone who denies the duty of "gemilut chasadim "denies the foundations of Judaism."*[114] Only a person who exercises this duty in his life is part of the Jewish people.[115]

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91 Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 37.40999).

92 Adam Mackerle, *Etické aspekty u predexilních Malých proroků* (Praha: Krystal, 2019, p. 86).

93 Vladimír Kubáč, *Člověk před Boží tváří* (Praha:Vyšehrad: Praha 2016, p. 178).

94 Pavel Sládek, *Malá encyklopedie rabínského judaismu* (Praha: Libri, 2008, p. 55).

95 Abraham Cohen, *Talmud pro každého. Historie, struktura a hlavní témata Talmudu* (Praha: Sefer, 2006, p. 270).

96 Vajikra raba 34,8.

97 Lv 19,13; Dt 24,14-15.

98 Iz 58,7; Ez 18,7.

99 Lv 23,22. Mišna, Terumot 4,3; Tosefta, Terumot 5,3.

100 Lv 19,9, Rt 2,2-3; 2,15-16.

101 Dt 24,21.

102 Lv 19,10.

103 Dt 24,4.

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104 Lv 19,9-10; 23,22; Dt 24,19-20.

105 Ex 22,24; Dt 15,7-11; 23,20-21.

106 Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 48).

107 Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 48).

108 Est 9,22.

109 Pavel Sládek, *Malá encyklopedie rabínského judaismu* (Praha: Libri, 2008, p. 55).

110 RAMBAM, Mišne Tóra, Hilchot evel 14,1.

111 BT, Suka 49b; Tanchuma, Vajechi 3; RAŠI, Berešit 47,29; Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, "Hevra Kaddisha," in *Encyclopedia Judaica IX.*, ed. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, 81-82. (Jerusalem: Thomson Gale, Keter Publishing House LTD).

112 Mišna, Pea 1.

113 Pirkej avot 1,2.

114 Kohelet raba 7,1.

115 BT, Jevamot 79a; Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, "Hevra Kaddisha," in *Encyclopedia Judaica VII.*, ed. Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, 427-428. (Jerusalem: Thomson Gale, Keter Publishing House LTD).

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Conclusion

The model of social justice and mutual support for members of God's people included many "mitzvoth" (God's commands) of the Torah, which in Israel's society served as a protective and redistributive function. These orders protected the whole community, the family and the individual. Great attention is paid especially to the protection of life and freedom of the socially disadvantaged (efforts to prevent (a) death by hunger and cold; (b) permanent enslavement) and efforts to prevent or reduce their suffering resulting from other shortcomings. According to rabbinic tradition, adherence to the years of "Shemitah" and "Jovel" means that no one in the Commonwealth of Israel will suffer permanently.[116]

However, the protection of the weakest part of society does not exhaust the intention of these "mitzvoth", because the other (rich) part of society deserves care and protection, which is protected from punishment by "gehinnom" by doing good against the weakest.[117] A rich man who gives up part of his wealth protects himself *"from disproportionate enrichment and the resulting insensitivity (ruthlessness and non-solidarity) and thus from the loss of the future."*[118]

Caring for the poor and rich, giving each of them what they need most, is based on compassion for every living creature.[119] Compassion is not just mercy that will not help, compassion *"is a tool that God has chosen to improve character. Compassion is the essence of love, charity, honesty. Compassion is what leads one to good deeds without expecting a reward for them…*

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116 CHIZKUNI, Devarim 15,4.

117 BT, Bava batra 10a.

118 Jiří Beneš, *Směrnice a řády. Zákoník v Páté knize Mojžíšově* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2012, p. 47).

119 Amantius Akimjak, "Managment of pastoration services in social facilities," in *Quality – a constant challenge and a pillar of holistic management of social and pastoral services*, ed. Peter Majda and Pavol Budaj (Dublin: ISBCRTI); Martin Taraj, "Medzináboženský dialóg v sektore sociálnej starostlivosti kresťansko-moslimská sociálna činnosť," in *Mižreligijnij dialog ta jogo vpliv na suspiľstvo, politiku, biznec, kuľturu*, ed. Oksana Gomoťuk, 38-41. (Ternopil: Ministerstvo osviti i nauki Ukraini); Edward Jarmoch, "Social Assistance according to some Polish Theologians," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 6, no. 2, (2016): 51-76; Joachim Nowak and Martin Taraj, *Die Katholische Kirche im Christlich-Islamischen Dialog in Deutschland. Eine Herausforderung Sozial-Kirchlichen Handelns* (Wien: Verlag ISSKA, 2020); Alexander Kobylarek, et al., "Educational priorities in a post pandemic world," *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 12, no. 2, (2021): 5-11; Vladimír Juhás, "Křesťanstvo ako rehabilitácia tela," *Verba Theologica* 21, no. 1, (2019): 94-100; František Petrovič et al., "Happiness in Czechia during the COVID-19 pandemic," *Sustainability* 13, no. 19, (2021): 10826; Hedviga Tkáčová et al., "Social Media and Students' Wellbeing: An Empirical Analysis during the Covid-19 Pandemic," *Sustainability* 13, no. 18, (2021): 10442; Radoslav Lojan, "Material and non-material poverty of seniors," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 9, no. 4, (2019): 19-25; Radovan Lojan, "The Power of Narrative and Listening in Palliative care Practice," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 9, no. 2, (2018): 117-134; Maturkanič Patrik et al., "Homo culturalis versus Cultura animi," *Journal of Education Culture and Society* 12, no. 2, (2021): 51-58; Oľga Gavendová, "Homo sperans - Existenciálny význam nádeje v živote človeka," *Studia Aloisiana* 7, no. 4, (2016): 47-61; Jozef Krupa, "Zabobon jako namiastka prawdziwej religii," in *Między wiarą a zabobonem*, 137-151. (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo naukowe uniwersytetu szczecińskiego); Anton Ďatelinka, "Rituálne vyjadrenie kresťanskej viery v kontexte moderny a postmoderny," *Duchovný pastier* 102, no. 5, (2021): 226-233; Bojan Žalec and Martina Pavlíková, "Religious tolerance and intolerance," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 15, no. 5, (2019): 39-48; Miroslav Tvrdoň et al., "Social work as a tool for anomie correction on second stage of primary school," *Ad Alta* 11, no. 1, (2021): 353-357; Ľubomír Hlad, "Hugo Rahner (1900–1968) - prítomnosť jeho kerygmatického odkazu v Magistériu a teológii zameranej na novoevanjelizačnú prax. Kerygmaticko-ludická teologická reflexia," *Verba Theologica* 20, no. 1, (2021): 6-28; Patrik Maturkanič, *Pastoral practice in the light of the 21st century* (Morrisville: Lulu Publishing Company, 2021); Martina Pavlíková, *Existential features of Søren Kierkegaard in modern American Literature.* (Toronto: Kierkegaard Circle, 2019). Emília Janigová and Ľubomír Pekarčík, "Case management as a tool for the inclusion disadvantaged people in society," *Revue Internationale des Sciences humaines et naturelles* 11, no. 3, (2021): 17-25; Tibor Máhrik et al., "Salvation as the teleological vector in Kierkegaard's Practice in Christianity," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 16, no. 4, (2020): 43-52.

Compassion is the purest reward itself… One who has mercy on one's neighbour has compassion for the suffering of another. He will not find peace until he makes it easier for his neighbour. (Samuel David Luzzato)."[120]

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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120   Leo Pavlát, "O mravnosti," *Židovská ročenka* (1983/1984): 5744, p. 22.

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BASIC ASPECTS OF SLEEP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TANAKH AND RABBINIC JUDAISM

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Marie Roubalova [1], Roman Kralik ✉ [2,3], Patrik Maturkanic [4,5], Lubomír Hlad [6], Anton Datelinka [7]

[1] Charles University in Prague, Hussite Theological Faculty (CZ)
[2] The Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Theology, Ružomberok (SK)
[3] RUDN University, Moscow, (RU)
[4] College of Applied Psychology, Terezín (CZ)
[5] Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius, Bratislava (SK)
[6] Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Faculty of Arts, Nitra (SK)
[7] Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology of Cyril and Methodius, Bratislava (SK)

„If one says, ‚I will not sleep for three days. He is beaten and must go to bed immediately."

(JT, Nedarim 37b)[2]

Abstract
Background: The theme of sleep appears quite often in Tanakh and rabbinic literature. The individual stages of the sleep cycle are described in detail here, even though these texts do not usually address the topic of sleep systematically.[3] The exception is the issue of dreams and their interpretation,[4] but only in connection with other topics. Some rabbis often commented on the topic of sleep when dealing with issues related to cleanliness, food, illness, etc. Other rabbis (e.g. Rava), on the other hand, did comment on sleep issues barely.
Conclusion: Sleep has many aspects in rabbinic Judaism that are very difficult to separate. The religious level (even more so the mystical level) of sleep and dreams remains shrouded in mystery. Neither the level of knowledge of human reason nor the quality of the heart is decisive in this sphere. A person who is falling asleep is like a person who puts a precious object in the

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✉ **Contact on all authors/ Correspondence author: Prof. ThDr. PaedDr. Roman Králik, ThD. – e-mail: Roman.kralik73@gmail.com**
ThDr. Marie Roubalová, Th.D., Doc. ThDr. Patrik Maturkanič, PhD., Doc. ThDr. Ľubomír Hlad, PhD., ThLic. Anton Ďatelinka, PhD.

2 The reason for such a harsh punishment is that the person in question is threatening his life with this foolish act and commits himself to a promise that he is unable to fulfill.

3 Theodor H. Gaster and Abraham Arzi, "Dreams," in Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica. VI.*, 8-10. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House LTD).

4 Markéta Holubová, *Ha-Ro´e. Židovský snář* (L. Marek: Chomutov, 2013).

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custody of another person. Such a person expects that the thing stored will be returned to him in its original and intact condition. However, he does not expect his thing to return to him in even better condition. The person falling asleep is different in that.

Keywords: Sleep – Rabbi – God – Man – Rabbinic Judaism.

1. Basic aspects of sleep and its purpose

According to rabbinic Judaism, sleep can be examined on several levels, which are so closely connected that they cannot be separated from each other. It is the religious (emuna, daat), mystical (kabbalah), ethical (musar), educational (chinuch), legal (halakha) and medical (refua) levels.

According to rabbinic tradition, sleep is a state in which the sleeping (or the highest part of his soul) can ascend to higher worlds and meet God there (this concept is developed mainly by Jewish mysticism) or receive a message from him (unambiguous or hidden requiring interpretation). The way a person acts awake affects what he experiences in his sleep. Only the righteous man (tzadik) and not the wicked (rasha) is revealed truth in a dream (a sleeping who is neither a tzadik nor rasha usually gets a strange mixture of truth and lies in a dream, which causes his suffering due to his ambiguity).[5] The message that a person receives during sleep then contributes to the meaningful and ethical life of a person in the waking state. Sufficient sleep allows you to focus on studying the Torah and fulfilling the mitzvahs (God's commands) during the day.

Sleep has a regenerative function for the health and contributes greatly to healing the sick (similar to medications and food). According to rabbinic tradition, God has created six things that can heal a patient from his illness, and one of these things is sleep.[6] For this reason, according to the rabbis, it is necessary to look at sleep also from a medical point of view.[7] As Sonia Ancoli-Israel demonstrates in her research: Rabbis thousands of years ago: (1) knew that Sleep was essential for man and revealed its regenerative and healing function; (2) they knew that sleep was not continuous and described its various stages; (3) they described various unpleasant states of sleep that corresponded to current knowledge about sleep disorders; (4) revealed that insomnia is related to stress (although they did not label it that way) as well as to many external factors; (5) revealed that sleep deprivation leads to life disruption and endangers a person with premature death; (6) they also considered excessive sleep unhealthy and linked it to illness; (7) put adequate quality sleep in the context of longevity; (8) revealed a beneficial effect of adequate physical activity on sleep; (8) understood that different foods and beverages have a positive and negative effect on sleep quality;[8] (9) produced insomnia medicines; (10) learned to work effectively with sleep rhythm.[9]

Folk creativity full of superstition then adds a magical level to the perception of sleep and its manifestations[10] (however, many rabbis also accepted the folk practice), where reason played no role at all. From this point of view, the manifestations of sleep are often viewed in particular, which seemed to be too mysterious (nightmares, screams from sleep, sleep apnea, etc.).[11]

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5   Zohar I.200.

6   BT, Berachot 57b; Berešit raba 20,10.

7   Julius Preuss (ed.), *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine* (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1993).

8   Rabi Nachman, Likutej Moharan 1,60.

9   Sonia Ancoli-Israel, "Sleep Is Not Tangible or What the Hebrew Tradition Has to Say About Sleep," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 63, (2002): 778-787.

10   More Markéta Holubová, *Ha-Ro´e. Židovský snář* (Chomutov: L. Marek, 2013).

11   In this context, Pavel Sládek mentions the demon Mare: *„Mare is sitting on a sleeping man - he grabs his tongue and lips and at the same time takes his breath away. Then one shouts out of sleep."* Pavel Sládek, "Filosofové, mystici a Spánek a sen v rabínském judaismu," in Jiří Starý and Josef Hrdlička, *Svět archaických kultur III. Spánek a sny*, 110. (Praha: Herrmann & synové).

2. Sleep phases

According to its depth in the Tanakh, human sleep is referred to as: deep sleep - faint - unconsciousness (Hebrew „tardema"), sleep (Hebrew „sheina") or doze (Hebrew „numa" or „tenuma").[12]

God can communicate with a person during each phase of sleep. This communication can take place on two levels: (1) Night prophetic visions that prepare individuals or people for upcoming events. (2) Possessed by the spirit, when one loses one's natural abilities (Da 10,8-10).

2.1 Tardema (deep sleep - faint - unconsciousness)

„Tardema" is the deepest phase of sleep or a special condition that is difficult to describe[13] accompanied by sleep (for this reason it is usually understood as very deep sleep or unconsciousness), in which a person falls into a state where he is completely detached from the outside world. The noun „tardema" is derived from the same word root as the verb „nirdam"[14] - „quickly fell into a hard sleep, he found himself in a faint." One falls into this state from exhaustion after a fight (Shoftim 4,21), from fatigue after hard work at harvest time (Mashal 10,5), from the horror of God's revelation [15] or on the run from God's mission (Jonah 1,6), etc. The verbal root R-D-M is read by some in connection with the elk R-H-M and R-T-M in the sense of „bound". The verb „ratam" is used in the book of Micah (1,13) to mean „hitched" /to carriage/. The term „tardema" in this context would describe the state of a person who is so tightly bound that he cannot even move.[16]

According to Tanakh, the faints „fall" on man from the Lord (*„tardemat Adonaj nafla"*).[17] Midrash explains that „tardema" is a manifestation of God's compassion for a person who would otherwise experience great pain or fear.[18] In some cases, strange phenomena (fear, great darkness) appear together with the faint, which, however, are not an accompanying phenomenon of the faint, but an accompanying manifestation of the theophany that takes place during them.[19] The two best-known very special cases in which a person finds himself in such a faint state have been described in the book Bereshit in the Creation of a Woman from Adam's Rib and the Conclusion of a Contract with Abram.[20] Other texts, on the other hand, show that there are documented cases where nothing strange happens to the person in a faint state and it is a deep sleep from which it is difficult to wake the person in question.[21]

The rabbis believed that „tardema" is a deeper phase of sleep than „sheina" and „ sheina" is deeper than „(te)numa".[22] The napping person gradually falls asleep, at first light („numa/ tenuma"), but still deepening („sheina") and finally very hard and deep („tardema"). This cycle is

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12   Substantiva „numa" a „tenuma"(Drowsiness, inactivity) are derived from the word root nun-vav-mem (he was drowsy, napping).

13   Berešit 2,21; Šemuel alef 26,12.

14   The verb R-D-M (he was in the dark, he fell asleep hard) is in Tanachu in Berešit 2,21; 15,12; Šemuel alef 26,12; Ješajahu 29,10; Ijov 4,13;33,15.

15   Daniel 10,9. *„Daniel is in the gloom ... then he shakes and finally dumb."* Jiří Beneš, *Kniha o Bohu soudci. Teologie knihy Daniel* (Chomutov: L. Marek, 2015, p. 129).

16   Hirsch, Bereshit 2,21.

17   Berešit 2,21; Šemuel alef 26,12.

18   Pirkej derabi Eliezer 12,7.

19   Berešit 15,12; Ijov 4,13.

20   Berešit 2,21; Berešit 15,12-21.

21   Šemuel alef 26,12; Jona 1,5-6.

22   Ibn Ezra, Berešit 2,21; Radak, Berešit 2,21.

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repeated several times a night (it ends with the awakening of a person and subsequent sleep). Their understanding of sleep thus corresponds to today's common idea of the course of sleep.[23]

The text of Bereshit 2,21, according to which „tardema" is followed by „sleep", does not quite fit this concept: *„And the Lord God brought a faint (tardema) upon a man, and he slept (sheina)."* This verse understands the state of „tardem" as immediate or a very rapid departure from waking state than as the peak of the sleep cycle running from the lightest sleep to the deepest. In the case of Adam, this condition resembles anaesthesia (unconsciousness), which prevents a person from feeling pain. Radak understands „tardema" as a special kind of sleep that lasted only after the wound closed on Adam's body, which then went into normal sleep („sheina").[24] In Jonah, it resembles an unconsciousness from which even the roar of a storm cannot awaken a person.

2.2. Numa – tenuma (drowsiness)

Doze („numa"/„tenuma") is a state similar to sleep (only less deep) and, like sleep, it is preceded by drowsiness (Yeshaahu 5,27). Some rabbis describe it as „light sleep."[25] According to Rabbi Asha, it is a sleep that is not sleep and at the same time it is wakefulness that is not wakefulness.[26] A person usually falls into this state during the day or during night waking. In areas with a hot climate, dozing was quite common.

Dozing during the day is more often forbidden by rabbis to men than to women because it is men who are to devote themselves fully to the study of the Torah at this time.[27] The refusal to take a doze was undoubtedly linked to the unfortunate influence that numerous dozing during the day could have on the quality of a night's sleep. However, taking a doze before a meal and after a bath is often considered beneficial by rabbis.[28]

As in the case of faint, strange things can happen when dozing, but usually, nothing happens during it. Unlike sleep, the rabbis did not establish any rituals for dozing, because, like the faint that struck a man unexpectedly, drowsiness invaded him in the same way, so no rituals could affect them. If one chooses to take a nap during the day, it was customary only to recite the psalm against the demons.[29]

2.3. Sheina (sleep)

Sleep is similar to faint. Only less deep than the faint and deeper than the drowsiness.[30] As in the case of faint, strange things can happen during sleep (Bereshit 28,12) or nothing mysterious happens.

According to Bereshit raba, sleep is one of the characteristics that distinguish God from man. After the creation of man, according to the midrash, the angels thought he was God. No wonder, for man was created in the image of God. Therefore, according to Bereshish Rab, God sent sleep to man, and everyone immediately knew that he was not God.[31] Thus, sleep is *„a symptom*

of human inadequacy resulting from its flesh,"[32] which moves him to non-existence, as Maharal taught.[33]

The Hebrew word for sleep „ sheina" is derived from the verb root J-Š-N with the meaning „slept", „was old", but also „was black".[34] „He was black" - because sleep is related to a time when everything is visible only in different shades of black. „He was old" - because it is characteristic of a very old man that he sleeps more because he loses strength for normal daily activities faster.

Sleep is described by Tanakh and the rabbinic tradition as very good if it is adequate. If it is excessive, it becomes a symbol of laziness (see below), if it is insufficient, it can endanger a person's life.[35] Peaceful sleep is one of God's best gifts: *„I give peace to the earth, and no one will frighten you when you sleep ..."* (Vayikra 26,6). Sleep brings a person rest, strength and thus supports their health: *„Sleep at dawn is like a steel turbidity of iron."*[36] In contrast, *„insomnia ... causes withering of the body ..."* (Sirach 31,1). Insomnia causes not only physical but also mental illness. One feels lonely because everyone else, unlike him, sleeps, *„I wake up all night, as a bird that is alone on the roof"* (Tehillim 102,8). As a rule, a person's poor life situation is reflected in the quality of his sleep: *„I am exhausted by wailing, I wet my pillow by crying every night, I shed my bed with tears"* (Tehillim 6,7). According to the rabbis, insomnia is caused mainly by a bad conscience: *„Our wise teaches that the best protection against, night terror´... is a clear conscience, gained by moral behaviour..."*[37] and anxiety that *„makes you unable to sleep."*[38] The horror of insomnia was already known to Ijov (7,3-4): *„Thus I got a legacy of vain months, nights full of torment became my destiny. When I lie down, I ask: When will I get up? And then again: When will evening come? I'm full of it on the bed to roll until dawn."*

Sleep is one-sixtieth of death. Similarly, dreams are one-sixtieth of the prophecy, fire is one-sixtieth of hell, and honey is one-sixtieth of mana.[39] One-sixtieth of something inappropriate cannot do anything wrong, according to rabbinic ideas. A drop of milk that inadvertently enters the meat dish does not degrade the dish, although mixing dairy and meat dishes is not allowed. One-sixtieth exists, and yet it does not seem to exist.

The moment a person finds himself in a situation where he would like to die, he seeks in his sleep an escape from the difficult reality of his life. The „dormant" (Hebrew „nirdam") Jonah thus escapes from the turbulent elements (Jonah 1,5) and the prophet Elijah escapes from the raging queen Jezebel (Melachim alef 19,5). He does so because escaping into a dream is very similar to escaping to death. The verbs „fell asleep" and „lay down" are used as synonyms for „death" (*„passed away"*, *„went to his fathers"*[40]). The dead is the one who *„sleeps in the dust of the earth"* (Daniel 12,2).

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23 More Michal Černoušek, *Sen a snění* (Praha: Horizont, 1988).

24 Radak, Berešit 2,21.

25 BT, Pesachim 120b.

26 BT, Pesachim 120b; More Sonia Ancoli-Israel, "Sleep Is Not Tangible or What the Hebrew Tradition Has to Say About Sleep," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 63, (2002): 779.

27 Raši, Suka 26b.

28 Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,17.

29 Pavel Sládek, "Filosofové, mystici a Spánek a sen v rabínském judaismu," in Jiří Starý and Josef Hrdlička, *Svět archaických kultur III. Spánek a sny*, 106. (Praha: Herrmann & synové).

30 Berešit 28,16; Tehilim 76,6.

31 Berešit raba 8,10.

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32 Pavel Sládek, "Filosofové, mystici a Spánek a sen v rabínském judaismu," in Jiří Starý and Josef Hrdlička, *Svět archaických kultur III. Spánek a sny*, 109. (Praha: Herrmann & synové).

33 Derech chajim 30.

34 Hirsch, Bereshit 2,21.

35 BT, Tamid 28a; Mišna, Avot 3,4-5.

36 BT, Berachot 57b; 62b.

37 Elie Munk, *Svět modliteb* (Praha: Garamond, 2019, p. 277).

38 BT, Sanhedrin 100b.

39 BT, Berachot 57b.

40 Melachim alef 1,21; 11,21; 11,43 atd.

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3. Leaving of the higher parts of the soul from the body

According to Tanakh, man is a „soul alive." According to the Talmud, this soul is pure because its source is pure.[41] Man's task is to guard this purity of his soul.[42] During one's sleep he leaves the higher parts of the soul („ruach" and „neshama"), ascend and draw life from above.[43] The higher soul is leaving [44] to its original home in different levels of heaven.[45] This journey of the soul is similar to the path that the soul follows after death. After leaving the body, a different world opens up to a higher soul outside our usual space and time. This heavenly world is the source of man's prophetic dreams.[46]

A body left by a higher soul falls into a „little death" during sleep.[47] Unclean and evil forces are waging a struggle for space freed by holy and pure souls. If a person falls asleep at night and sleeps longer than „sixty breaths" without interruption, the „spirit of uncleanness" comes and rests on the person. The moment a person wakes up from sleep, the „spirit of uncleanness" leaves him, except for his hands, which are therefore necessary to ritually wash after waking up.[48]

For this reason, some rabbis considered sleep to be very dangerous because the body could be occupied by demons (other rabbis prefer to speak of „evil instinct"/"yetzer hara").[49] Demons are a very common motive in connection with sleep, especially in Jewish folklore. Amulets,[50] spells and potions that prevent night terrors from entering were very popular among the people (supported by some rabbis). It was also one of the reasons why, in their opinion, the human body was in a state of ritual uncleanness in the morning.[51]

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41 BT, Berachot 10a.
42 BT, Nida 30b.
43 Berešit raba 14,9.
44 Ramchal believed that the higher parts of the soul separated from the body. More Ori Bergman, *Significance od Dreams*.
45 Vajikra raba 3,23.
46 Ramchal, Derech hašem 3,1.
47 Berešit raba 14,9.
48 Šulchan aruch haRav 4,4.
49 The rabbinic tradition knows many classes of demons operating not only at night but also during the day: „Night demons", „evening demons – shadows", „noon ghosts", „morning ghosts", „famine, storm and earthquake demons", „angels destruction "etc. (BT, Berachot 51a; BT, Sanhedrin 65b, 106b; Berešit raba 22). The most famous nocturnal female demon is Lilit (BT, Bava batra 73b; BT, Eruvin 100b; BT, Nida 24b), adjacent to men who sleep alone without a woman (BT, Sanhedrin 151b). According to the midrash, Lilith was Adam's first wife to rebel against God (pronouncing God's unpronounceable name) and her husband and flee the world. He is always jealous of Adam's second wife, Chava, and all his mothers. Their newborns (especially uncircumcised boys) are trying to kill them.
50 Many rabbis strongly warned against wearing amulets („kemia" - „the object that hangs"), others made them themselves. The protective amulet was often stones hung around the neck (similar to today's jewelry). It is probable that the Tefillins were originally also an amulet (Mišna, Eruvin 10.1), because the Torah scroll could be an amulet according to the halacha (BT, Sanhedrin 21b). Amulets often protected newborns from being attacked by a night demon.
51 Above all, one should strive to prevent the subsequent ritual contamination of tefillins (prayer straps). For this reason, the man who has them on his head or hands must not sleep with them. They may take a nap with them only if they are protected by a cloth that covers them and the man does not lie down on the bed with the woman (Šulchan aruch 44.1). A person who does not have tefillins tied to his hands, but only holds them freely in the palm of his hand, must not nap or sleep, even if both of the above conditions are met, because in this case it is more than likely that tefillin could fall from his hand to the ground. (Šulchan aruch 44.1).

4. The Night as a natural, the day as an unnatural time of sleep

The Night is natural for sleep, not day. „*Night was created for sleep.*"[52] A time when it used to be quite natural that there was a lack of light in it. A dark time when the gods of the surrounding nations of Israel went to bed and the world was left to the action of demons.[53] According to rabbinic tradition, „*demonic forces…incapable of their own existence are only an expression of the temporary fragmentation of the world and the human mind (they represent alien…elements that divert man from his being, namely, to become an image of God).*"[54] The prophet Elijah mocks such gods - demons when he calls on their prophets to bring their god: „*Call as loudly as possible, for he is a god! Maybe he's pensive or forced or has left. Perhaps he sleeps, let him wake up*" (Melachim alef 18,27).

Long sleep similar to drowsing (see above) during the day is forbidden as unhealthy.[55] According to the Tanakh tradition and the rabbinic tradition, the regular alternation of night and day was established by God before the creation of man, animals and plants. This rhythm is absolutely essential for their existence.[56]

The people were afraid of the dark because they were more vulnerable at night than during the day. The sleeper was threatened by evil people at night (even the closest ones, as shows the story of the sleeping Samson, who was threatened by the beloved woman Delilah at night; Shoftim 16,19-20), demons and other evil forces. The night was a time when the souls of the dead could return to earth.[57] Sleep is also a condition in which a man, in particular, is at great risk from ritual pollution if he has a „keri layla" (nocturnal emission) in his sleep.[58] Other damage can cause inappropriate dreams. The night also reminded people of the chaotic state of the beginning („tohu va-vohu") of the world (Bereshit 1). In contrast to light, „*darkness represents hopelessness and despair.*"[59] The darkness in rabbinic interpretations often symbolizes the time of exile.[60] But God is also Lord over darkness, as he says, „*I create light and I create darkness...*" (Yeshaahu 45,7), and as his devotee says of him: „*To you /God/ belongs the day and night, you strengthened the light of night and the sun…*" (Tehillim 74,16). And he urges man, „*Do not be afraid of the terror of the night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, of the plague that creeps through the darkness, the pestilence that spreads destruction at noon*" (Tehillim 91,5-6). At the same time, this verse warns the reader that the day also has its specific dangers.

According to Tanakh, God protects Israel even at night: „*Yes, the one who protects Israel does not doze and sleep*" (Tehillim 121,4). One can protect oneself at night by studying the Torah. If a person wakes up at night, he should study the Torah until he is overcome by sleep again. Nighttime, when one is not disturbed by others, is a suitable time to study, especially for scholars.[61]

According to rabbinic tradition, it is not necessary to be afraid of the evening, as it has a privilege to start the holidays (e.g. Shabbat begins on Friday evening). Even the night does not need

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52 BT, Eruvin 65a.
53 Pavel Sládek, "Filosofové, mystici a Spánek a sen v rabínském judaismu," in Jiří Starý and Josef Hrdlička, *Svět archaických kultur III. Spánek a sny*, 105. (Praha: Herrmann & synové).
54 Markéta Holubová, *Ha-Ro´e. Židovský snář* (Chomuvov: L. Marek, 2013, p. 19).
55 Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,5.
56 Sonia Ancoli-Israel, "Sleep Is Not Tangible or What the Hebrew Tradition Has to Say About Sleep," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 63, (2002): 778.
57 Pavel Sládek, "Filosofové, mystici a Spánek a sen v rabínském judaismu," in Jiří Starý and Josef Hrdlička, *Svět archaických kultur III. Spánek a sny*, 105. (Praha: Herrmann & synové).
58 BT, Berachot 57b.
59 Jiří Beneš, *Nevystižitelný Bůh?* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2010, p. 162).
60 Raši, Berešit 15,12; Radak, Berešit 15,12; Ramban, Berešit 15,12; Berešit raba 44,17.
61 BT, Chagiga 12b.

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to be afraid of because of receiving God's revelation,[62] night vision,[63] for prayers, pensiveness, remembrance (Tehillim 77,7) and study. At the same time, however, there are rituals and activities (e.g. circumcision, uttering the sound of the shofar, put on tefillin, shaking lulav, testifying in court, etc.),[64] which do not take place at night but at a time when there is light, which is a symbol of goodness and God's presence. The Temple also had to be built during the day and not at night.[65] And the world to come (olam ha-ba) will be completely without darkness: „There will be one day, known only to the Lord; where there is no day or night and in the evening time there will be light" (Zechariah 14,7); similarly, „Whoever studies the Torah in this night-like world, around him the Holy One, may he be blessed, will embrace the string of God's grace in a future day-like world."[66] But the Israelites also knew the crippling terror when something inappropriate happened at night, as Eliphaz testifies:"Something crept up on me, my ear caught a murmur; when imagining about night visions when faint fall on people; I was afraid and trembling, all my bones trembled with fear, as some ghost passed me, and my hair bristled upon my flesh." (Iyov 4,12-15). Eliphaz was frightened by a „some ghost." According to the Midrash, Adam was frightened by the mere darkness that descended on earth the first night after his creation.[67]

Twilight and dawn in the physical level bounded the appropriate sleep time. At the spiritual level, they are bounded by the morning and evening recitations of the Shema prayer. According to the Zohar, it is natural for a person to lie down when the world plunges into darkness, to sleep at the beginning of the night for five to six hours, then wake up and remain up for several hours.[68] One should use this time to study the Torah. According to Rambam and many rabbis of the Talmud, sleep should rather take place "at the end of the night, so that eight hours remain from the beginning of sleep until sunrise." In this way, one gets out of bed before sunrise.[69] The study of the Torah should thus take place before bed.[70] Whether one sleeps until midnight and studies after midnight or vice versa, scholars agree that it is beneficial to study at midnight.[71]

Before midnight, one should pray "tikkun chatzot":[72] "In the silence of the night, a devout Jew sits on a low stool like a mourner, reading a tikkun chatzot and lamenting the destruction of the Temple, the scattering of Israel among the nations and the galut,"[73] so that at exactly midnight the study of the Torah can begin.[74] According to the Talmud, so did King David, who got up to study after midnight.[75] According to Rabbi Chiji, "with the one who studies the Torah at night,

God's presence stands opposite him,"[76] because midnight is a time of special grace from God.[77] Also, according to Rambam, one gained most of his Torah wisdom while studying it at night.[78]

One should be the one who awakens the dawn (morning star), it should not be the case that the dawn awakens the person.[79] One should overcome the bad urge that convinces him that he has not yet had enough sleep.[80] He has to wake up in the morning as strong as a lion, so that he can resolutely carry out God's mitzvah (commands), because that is the purpose of his creation and daily morning renewal (rebirth), when his soul is restored to him by God:[81] " In the morning, man is like a newborn being."[82] He who wakes up from sleep does not remember anything (except vague dreams) of what he has experienced in the celestial spheres, which are opened to him according to the extent of his merits. Similarly, the baby does not remember anything after birth, even though it was already acquainted with the whole Torah in the mother's womb.[83]

The day is considered by the rabbis to be an unsuitable time to sleep because the day is a time to study the Torah and not a time to sleep (only on Saturdays it is allowed because, on this day, sleep is a mitzvah).[84] During the day, one should avoid anything that would cause drowsiness (dark study room, heavy food etc.[85]). Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas taught: "Morning sleep (i.e. sleep at a time when one is obliged to get up, to serve one's Creator, to recite the Shem and other prayers),[86] drinking wine at noon, chatting with children, and sitting where the uneducated gather, takes one out of this world."[87] If a person has to sleep during the day, he should limit the length of this sleep to the time that is absolutely necessary. However, the rabbis do not agree on how long this time is (they allow a three-minute doze and a three-hour sleep during the day).[88] According to the Talmud, "During the day, it is forbidden to sleep more than a horse sleeps. How long is it? Sixty breaths (i.e. sleep that lasts a significant amount of time)."[89]

5. Insufficient sleep

Insomnia is already described by Tanakh, as rolling over in bed, when a person is attacked by various thoughts and the night is full of suffering.[90] Crying at night (Ejka 1,2) "expresses that one cannot deal with trauma because one does not understand it" and night here refers to "darkness and related disorientation."[91] Sometimes a person barely lies down at dusk and already desires for the dawn to be able to get up. The night seems infinitely long. The moment he gets up in the

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62 Berešit 15,12; 32,24; Šemuel alef 3,2-4.

63 Cf. Jiří Beneš, *Kniha o Bohu soudci. Teologie knihy Daniel* (Chomutov: L. Marek, 2015, pp. 25-26).

64 Moses Israel Ta-shma, "Day and Night," in Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica. V.*, 487. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House LTD).

65 Moses Israel Ta-shma, "Day and Night," in Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica. V.*, 487. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House LTD).

66 BT, Chagiga 12b.

67 BT, Avoda zara 8a.

68 Zohar, I 13a; 46a; 72a; 136c; 185b.

69 Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4; BT, Joma 22a.

70 BT, Joma 22a; Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4.

71 Halacha berura, Birur halacha 1,1.

72 Mišna berura 1,9.

73 Šlomo Ganzfried (ed.), *Kicur šulchan aruch. I., II.* (Těšín: Agadah, 2012, p. 22).

74 Šlomo Ganzfried (ed.), *Kicur šulchan aruch. I., II.* (Těšín: Agadah, 2012, p. 22). Šulchan aruch haRav 1,2.

75 BT, Berachot 3b-4a.

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76 BT, Tamid 32b.

77 BT, Jevamot 72a; Šulchan aruch haRav 1,3; Zohar II 195b.

78 Mishneh Torah, Hil.Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot Talmud Torah, end oftalmud Tora 4,5.

79 Tehilim 57,9; JT, Berachot 1,1.

80 Šulchan aruch haRav 1,1.

81 Raši, Bemidbar 23,24; Šulchan aruch 1,1. Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4.

82 Kicur šulchan aruch 1,2.

83 BT, Nida 30b.

84 BT, Suka 28a; BT, Šabat 118b. Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,5.

85 BT, Joma 18a.

86 Bedřich Nosek, *Pirkej avot. Výroky otců. Traktát Babylónského talmudu s paralelním českým překladem a komentářem* (Praha: Sefer, 1994, p. 72).

87 Mišna, Avot 3,14.

88 Šulchan aruch 4,16; Mišna berura 4,36; Piskej tešuvot 231,1.

89 The time from twelve (exceptionally from three) minutes to seventy-two minutes is stated, most rabbis lean towards the average, ie about half an hour's sleep. BT, Suka 26b.

90 Ijov 7,4; Ješajahu 38,13-15; Tehilim 77,4-7.

91 Jiří Beneš, *Pláč Jeremjášův* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2020, pp. 44-45).

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morning, he is so sleepless that he longs only for dusk when he will be able to go to bed again. Insomnia is characteristic of old age when the quality of sleep is much worse than in youth. According to the Talmud, the singing of birds can also awaken the old man.[92] According to the rabbis, the elderly who do not doze while studying the Torah in Beth Midrash are living to an old age.[93]

According to the rabbis, one cannot survive without sleep for more than three days.[94] They fought insomnia in different ways. Some of their advice resembled the doctor's instructions (1). The rabbis recommended: potions for better sleep, not falling asleep hungry or too eaten, eating three to four hours before bedtime, mild physical exertion before bedtime;[95] (2) physiotherapist. The rabbis recommended: to place your palms on your forehead when insomnia is in place, which will make breathing easier; the first part of the night lying on the left side, the second part of the night lying on the right side, which is related to the location of various internal organs, whose activity prevails in this or that part of the night;[96] do not sleep on your back or abdomen);[97] (3) psychologist. The rabbis advised: not to worry and not to think about work and property before bedtime;[98] calm down with a monotonous not too loud sound;[99] (4) common sense. The rabbis recommended: getting up and lying down at the same time every day, turning off the light,[100] maintaining a suitable room temperature, sleeping on a comfortable bed, avoiding alcohol,[101] avoiding overeating and dozing during the day [102] and not lie down when we don't want to sleep.

Insomnia also causes anxiety[103] and an evil conscience, as Tanakh points to the examples of kings who decide the destinies of men. King Ahasuerus could not sleep if he did not repay Mordecai for saving his life: *"That night sleep flees from the king. So, he ordered that the Book of the Chronicles of Memorials be brought, and these were read to the king. A record was found of Mordecai reporting Bigtan and Teresh, the king's two court guardians, that they wanted to raise their hands against King Ahasuerus."* The king asked, *"What honour and promotion were Mordecai given for this?"* *The king's servants who served him replied, "He received nothing" (Esther 6,1-3).* Similarly, King Darius could not sleep when he had Daniel thrown into a lion's pit: *"They brought one stone and laid it on the hole of the pit. The king sealed it with his signet ring and the signet rings of his officers so that nothing might be changed in Daniel's situation. Then the king went to his palace and went to bed without eating. He didn't indulge in any pleasure, but sleep*

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92   BT, Šabat 152a.

93   BT, Megila 28a.

94   JT, Nedarim 37b.

95   BT, Bava mecia 83b-84a; BT, Berachot 61b; BT, Joma 18a; BT, Moed katan 11a; Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4-5.

96   Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,7. *Similarly: "It is good for the health, because there is a liver on the right side and a stomach on the left. So when a person is lying on his left side, the liver rests on his stomach and warms it with its heat, which makes it easier to digest food. When the food leaves the stomach, it is good to turn to the right side, this will relieve the stomach and eliminate leftovers. We shouldn't turn side by side too often."* (Kicur šulchan aruch 71,5). Srov. Šulchan aruch, Orach chajim 63,1; Mišna berura 239,6.

97   BT, Berachot 13b; Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,5; Kicur šulchan aruch 71,5; Mišna berura 239,6.

98   Kohelet 2,23; 5,11.

99   BT, Eruvim 104a; Tosefta, Šabat 2,8.

100 Mišna, Šabat 2,5.

101 The unfortunate consequences of a small amount of alcohol can be eliminated by a short brisk walk, which, however, with a larger amount of alcohol, will make the consequences even more severe, as Rami ben Aba taught (BT, Eruvin 64b; BT, Taanit 17b; BT, Sanhedrin 22b).

102 Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4-5.

103 Tehilim 6,7n; Ijov 7,3n; BT, Sanhedrin 100b.

(still) avoided him."[104] But there are also people who can't fall asleep unless they do something wrong. Tanakh states of these wicked (the opposite of righteous people): *"They will not sleep if they do not do something wrong, they are deprived of sleep if they do not lead someone to fall. They feed on the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence"* (Mashal 4,16-17).

Some rabbinical advice against insomnia and great sleepiness were superstitious and it is impossible to find a rational explanation in it (a tooth from a living fox should be worn by one who sleeps too much, a tooth from a dead fox should be worn by one who cannot sleep).[105]

6. Night without sleep ("Tikkun leil Shavout")

Sleep may be limited due to the study of the Torah,[106] because excessive sleep is "bitul Torah" (Torah negation). If the purpose is to study the Torah, you can stay awake any night. A person who has studied all night can sleep more than the maximum daily sleep allowed during the following day. One of these nights is quite strange because in it the Jews can correct something from the past of their ancestors.

This night is called "Tikkun leil Shavout" (Shavuot night correction). Shavuot commemorates the Torah donation event to the people of Israel at Sinai. That is why it is also called "Zeman matan Toratejnu". We would assume that the people could not sleep all night due to the expectations of this great event. According to the midrash, the situation was completely different instead of waiting for God, God had to wait for them. According to the midrash, God found them asleep and Moses had to wake them.[107] Jewish mystics instituted a remedy for this "sleep" of their ancestors in "Tikkun leil Shavuot".

Before the second pilgrimage, it is customary to stay awake all night and study the Torah either in the synagogue or at home. In Jerusalem, it is customary to come to the Wailing Wall after a late night and participate in a common prayer at sunrise. According to the Jewish mystical tradition, the night without sleep before this holiday brings seventy of God's blessings.[108]

7. "Gezel sheina" (sleep theft)

The rabbinic tradition is strongly opposed to all kinds of theft, which is already enshrined in the "Ten Words" of Torat Moshe, which states "lo tignov" ("you will not steal"), meaning: You cannot do something as abominable as theft.[109] For this reason, even an unreasonable "gezel sheina" literally "sleep theft" against the will of the sleeper is forbidden (if awakened is happy to have been awakened, it is, on the contrary, a "mitzvah"). The name was taken by the rabbis from Mashal (4,16), which states "nigzela shenatam" ("their sleep was plundered"). Under this label, there is no magical practice hidden in the rabbinic tradition, but simply the disturbance of someone from sleep against his will.

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104 Daniel 6,18-19. Here, however, the king's insomnia heralds an unsuspected and unexpected extraordinary event, the Lord's stark action - a miracle. Jiří Beneš, *Kniha o Bohu soudci. Teologie knihy Daniel* (Chomutov: L. Marek, 2015, pp. 74-76).

105 BT, Šabat 67a,b.

106 Mišna, Avot 6,6.

107 Šír hаširim raba 1,57; Pirkej de rabi Eliezer 40.

108 Zohar I, 8a.

109 *The „Eighth Commandment" states that „an Israelite, led out of Egypt," does not steal, does not live „on behalf of others ... is satisfied with what he has, and does not want to have more."* Jiří Beneš, *Desatero* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2020, p. 84).

Expert articles

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From the point of view of halakha (rabbinic law), this is a similar offence as "gezel zman",[110] when a person steals another person's time or "gezel daat" ("theft of mind/knowledge, i.e. lying/deception").[111] Similarly, a person who does not answer the greeting of another "shalom" is a thief because he owes his neighbour an answer.[112] This thief can replace his theft with a greeting, while a person who woke the other from sleep cannot return the "stolen" (some rabbis, therefore, questioning that anything was stolen at all). The theft of greetings, time and sleep cause harm to a person, and for that reason is often classified as "nezikin" (damages) rather than theft. Thus, "sleep theft" should be referred to as "sleep damage." Awakening from sleep is called a "sinful act" by the halakha.[113]

The person who awakened someone arbitrarily caused the "cara" to him - tribulation, distress, suffering and pain.[114] A person whose sleep has been stolen or damaged is less productive in his work (which causes him financial damage) and especially in his study of the Torah (which causes him spiritual damage). The perpetrator thus violates the basic provisions of rabbinic Judaism that one should not do to one's neighbour what one does not to be done to him (based on Vayikra 19,18). Moreover, it is very likely that the sleeping was robbed of his dream by one's arbitrary actions, which could have been of great importance to the awakened one if it had been a prophetic dream.

Halakha allows a neighbour to prevent a neighbour from opening a store in the courtyard so that people are not "stolen from sleep" in connection with his activities. In other places, too, an entrepreneur should not wake his neighbours by opening his store, where noisy customers come, too early or leaving it open late into the night.[115] It is considered an even more serious case when children deprive their parents of sleep. Such an awakening is understood as disrespect for parents and thus a violation of another of the "Ten Commandments".[116] It is allowed to wake up father if he would miss Shema's recitation, lacks in creating of a minjan (ten adult men who are necessary for the entire synagogue service), or fails to give a gift to a poor man who came to his door to ask for alms.

8. Excessive sleep

Sleep is healthy if it is not excessive,[117] it is among the things that are beneficial in small quantities but harmful in large quantities.[118] Sleep should last a maximum of one-third of a person's life, i.e. one-third of the day.[119] For this reason, one should lie down so that from the beginning of his sleep until waking (before dawn[120]) six[121] to eight[122] hours have passed.[123] Less sleep is considered unhealthy.[124]

Sleeping longer than eight hours becomes synonymous with laziness: *"How long will you lie down, sluggard? When will you wake up from your sleep? You'll sleep a little, take a little doze, put your hands in your lap a little and lie down, and your poverty will come as a slob and your distress as a gunman. "*[125] The Jewish legend of the sluggard is based on the same assumptions: *"They say to the sluggard: Your teacher is in the neighbouring town. Go learn the Torah from him. The sluggard says: "I am afraid there will be a lion on the way. They say to him: Your teacher is in your town. Get up and go to him. The sluggard replies: I am afraid that the lion may be in the streets. They say to him: Behold, your teacher is at home. The sluggard says: If I go home to the teacher, the door shall be shut. They say to the sluggard: The door is open. At that moment, the sluggard says: "Whether the door is open or closed, I want to sleep for a while."*[126] A person who is not lazy should get up at dawn.[127] Fighting too much sleep is the best prevention against illiteracy and poverty.

Priests and rabbis resisted excessive sleep by the loud reading of the Torah, singing, light, noise, walking without shoes on the cold floor, soaking their feet in cold water, pricking a thorn, buying a rooster endowed with such great intelligence by the Creator that it can distinguish day from night (Rabbi Akiva took a rooster on his travels so as not to sleep too much[128]), by opening a window and similar practices (paradoxically, the only real remedy for drowsiness was enough sleep in the previous days).[129] However, such waking should be required by the sleeper. When a person is waked up roughly (see above) by someone who needs to sleep and his sleep is not excessive, it brings him a curse: *"He who blesses his neighbuor too loudly in the early morning will be counted as a curse"* (Mashal 27,14).

9. Restless sleep - nightmares

The restless sleep accompanied by nightmares is already known from Tanakh: *"You frighten me with dreams and overwhelm me with visions, so that I would rather choose to suffocate, rather death than such cruel suffering"* (Iyov 7,14n). The rabbis of the Talmud believe that the source of such nightmares can be detected in the anxious states of man.[130]

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110 BT, Bava batra 20b.

111 See „gezel daat" the performance of magicians was also considered. BT, Chulin 94a; Tosefta, Bava kama 3,7; 7,8; Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 2,6; Šulchan aruch, Chošen mišpat 228.

112 BT, Berachot 6b.

113 BT, Bava batra 20b; Šulchan aruch, Chošen mišpat 156.

114 BT, Berachot 13a; BT, Sanhedrin 59a; Raši, Avoda zara 24a.

115 BT, Bava batra 21a.

116 „The fifth commandment is „honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commands you." Jiří Beneš, *Desatero* (Praha: Advent-Orion, 2020, p. 72).

117 Mišlej 20,13; 23,21; 24,33-34; BT, Gitin 70a; Mišna, Avot 3,11.

118 it is the same with wine, work, wealth, trade and hot water. Vajikra raba 4,3.

119 Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4.

120 Tehilim 57,9; 108,3. Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4-5.

121 Kicur šulchan aruch 71,2.

122 Moše ben Majmon, Mišne Tora, Hilchot deot 4,4.

123 In this context, Sonia Ancoli-Israel refers to current research that has suggested a link between sleep duration and life expectancy. People who slept less than six hours and more than ten hours have a shorter life expectancy. Sonia Ancoli-Israel, "Sleep Is Not Tangible or What the Hebrew Tradition Has to Say About Sleep," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 63, (2002): 783. As Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas had already guessed, he said that „Sleep in the morning - and wine at noon expel a person from the world" (Mišna, Avot 3,14).

124 Jalkut Josef 1.

125 Mišlej 6,9–11. Similarly, Mšlej 10, 5; 19.15; 20.13; 24, 33.34; 26.14. Compare *"Laziness brings to darkness; the idle soul shall be hungry "*(Mišlej 9:15). *„Do not love sleep, lest you become poor ..."* (Mišlej 20:13). Also, those who quickly prepare for sleep in the afternoon of Rosh Hashanah are considered lazy (Kaf hachajim 583,35).

126 Hayyim, Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky (ed.), *The Book of Legends/Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends from the Talmud and Midrash* (Schocken Books, 1992, p. 267).

127 As already mentioned, „Sleep in the morning … takes a person out of this world." Mišna, Avot 3,14.

128 BT Berachot 60b

129 BT, Joma 20a; BT, Gitin 84a; Mišna, Joma 1,7; Šulchan aruch haRav 1,3.

130 Sonia Ancoli-Israel, "Sleep Is Not Tangible or What the Hebrew Tradition Has to Say About Sleep," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 63, (2002): 785.

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Fear of terrifying night visions[131] can be limited by their positive interpretation after waking up.[132] According to the rabbis, night terrors could reach three basic levels according to their consequences: (1) Very mild nightmares require the recitation of special prayer in the synagogue before the kohani. (2) Moderate nightmares require the recitation of selected special verses of Tanakh in front of three witnesses; (3) Very severe nightmares require a one-day fast the next day as a sign of repentance.

Conclusion

During sleep, God protects the soul and body of a man and returns them in a better condition than their original condition.[133] The quality of the human heart, on the other hand, is crucial to ethics. Ethical requirements address the human heart and teach him to overcome an evil instinct (jecer ra): *"Tremble and do not sin! Think about it in your heart on the bed and be quiet"* (Tehillim 4,5). According to Rabbi Elya Lopian, *"he teaches the heart what reason has already understood."*[134] In relation to human sleep, the central ethical issues are: (1) Forgiveness for those who have sinned against sleeping during the day. (2) Not planning evil towards other people before bedtime. (3) Before going to bed and after waking up, think to glorify God (Tehillim 149,5) and talk only about valuable things, as already required by Torat Moshe (Devarim 6,6-7; 11,18-19). (4) Consideration for all sleeping beings. (5) Awakening as a new opportunity to improve your life. (6) A bad dream is an incentive for a good person to repent ("teshuvah"), i.e. to return to God. A bad man has a good dream because his repentance is not desirable. For this reason, one who has had no dream in seven days is considered evil.[135]

Human reason is crucial on the medical, legal and pedagogical levels. The answers to the questions of sleep and dreaming from the most important rabbinical scholars largely correspond, as stated above, with the views of modern doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists. Rabbinic law (halachic provisions) appeals to human reason and logic. It sets out in the smallest detail everything that concerns especially the rituals that demarcate sleep and can be influenced by the will of man. It sets out what is necessary to do before going to bed and immediately after waking up. At the same time, all aspects (religious, mystical, ethical, legal, medical) are interconnected (even legal provisions often include elements incomprehensible to reason).

Particular often very strict halachic provisions are mitigated for ethical reasons in favour of the socially weak (as shown, for example, by the lifting the ban on awakening parents in favour of the poor) and for religious reasons (execution of the "mitzvah" - God's command). At the same time, examples of some commands concerning sleep show how the rabbinic tradition distinguishes all possible variants (different levels of one sin) in the case of a single sin (e.g. theft) from the worst, such as human theft to sleep theft. Some rabbis even go so far as to question whether a person can wake an animal from sleep. The consequences of these offences certainly cannot be compared. Nevertheless, it is the only complex system introduced from its most monstrous forms to those that cause minimal damage. Not only the most difficult transgressions are graded in detail, but even the least dangerous ones (awakening: parents, a sick person, a neighbour, a foreign healthy stranger, an animal). All halachic transgressions are thus presented by the rabbinic tra-

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131 We find such visions in the prophet Zekarjah. There are seven of them and it probably took place at once, *"on the night of the 24th day of the month of Ševat in 519 BC."* Beneš, Jiří. *Dvanáctka. Uvedení do Malých proroků.* (Praha: Návrat domů, 2019, 335).
132 BT, Berachot 55b.
133 Ejcha raba 3,23.
134 Marcus Greg, *What is Mussar? A history and overview of this virtues-based approach to Jewish ethics and character development.* Retrieved from: https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-musar-movement/
135 BT, Berachot 55a,b.

dition as part of the only great dangerous cobweb into which it is not advisable to get involved, even if it is even the weakest and least dangerous marginal fibres. By increasing one's sensitivity (especially one's children sensitivity to sin, which is the basic meaning of their upbringing) to another by not failing to respond to the greeting and guarding someone else's sleep as one's own, one learns to resist the real theft of anyone and anything.

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All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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LITURGICAL MUSIC AND ITS MISSION: LITURGICAL PARTICIPATION AND MUSIC

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Vlastimil Dufka ✉

Department of pastoral theology, liturgy and canon law, Theological faculty of Trnava University

Abstract

Background: The aim of this study is to develop the basic role and „mission" of liturgical music. The liturgical celebration is above all the celebration of the paschal mystery of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. Since liturgical music forms an integral part of liturgical celebration, its mission is to deepen the participation of believers in the paschal mystery through those forms inherent in liturgical music.

This study is divided into three parts: (1) In the first part we clarify the relationship between the subject of liturgical celebration, active participation in liturgical celebration, and music. Very important steps forward in this area were taken at the Second Vatican Council. (2) The second significant shift after the Second Vatican Council is the understanding of the value of liturgical music, which derives from the connection with the liturgical celebration (not from the connection with the Gregorian chant). (3) Finally, the article 30 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, points out that „the spirit of the liturgical action" is related to active participation: „To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs ... „

Conclusion: In the third part of the study, we briefly approach these musical forms as tools for the active participation of people in the liturgical celebration of the paschal mystery.

Active listening of God's word, of the language of liturgy and of all the gathered Church is therefore the most important condition for our own active participation.

Keywords: Liturgy – Music – Participation – Mission – Forms [of music].

Introduction

Music is an integral part of a person's daily life. It reflects the cultural peculiarities of a nation, and also of individual people. One listens to music at concerts, at work and even when shopping. Music is heard at all important celebrations of various groups of people as well as individuals. Its role can be different: when listening to classical music at concerts, one admires the beauty of music, reflects and opens up to the horizons of another world... Music thus shapes a person's emotional life. Music is often a means of entertainment or relaxation.

What mission and role does music play in the liturgy? Its role is certainly not just a means of filling time; it is not intended to entertain people. Its mission and meaning are based on the liturgy of which it is a part. But what is the liturgy? Foremost, liturgy is the work of God, only secondarily is it people´s work: "Liturgy is the work of God drawing us to union with the divine Self

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✉   **Contact on author: Mgr. Vlastimil Dufka SJ, SL.D - e-mail: vlastimil.dufka@truni.sk, vlastodufka@gmail.com**

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through the person of Christ in the power of the Spirit. Liturgy is the action of God transforming us more perfectly into being the Body of Christ."[2] There is only one theme of worship, one event at the heart of every liturgy: the paschal mystery. Liturgical music supports the *kind* of "prayer which expresses surrender as Body of Christ to the ritual enactment of the paschal mystery."[3] As the *Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers* points out, "the core of that mystery is the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the sending of the Spirit upon the church. "[4]

Understanding liturgy as ritual enactment of the paschal mystery has implication for the ministry of liturgical music. The most important mission and role of liturgical music is to help believers surrender to the paschal mystery as it unfolds within the rite. We sing "not just because we enjoy this particular hymn or this particular setting of the Mass, but because we want to enter with the assembled Church into this dying and rising mystery which marks our identity."[5] Liturgical music enables one to participate more deeply in the paschal mystery celebrated in the liturgy.

This study is divided into three parts. First, we point to the relationship between the subject of the liturgical celebration – the whole Church – and liturgical participation as well as music. Then, we indicate important shifts in the understanding of liturgical music after Vatican II. Finally, we specify some forms of liturgical music and their relationship to the participation of the assembly.

1. The liturgical-theological starting point: the relationship between the understanding of the subject of liturgical celebration, liturgical participation, and music.

A very important shift in the post-counciliar liturgy is related to the understanding of the subject of the liturgy. Scholastic theology defines an ordained minister as the one who represents the Church and is the active subject of the liturgy. The task of the laity was to attend to praying in a devotional manner so as to participate in the celebration conducted by the ordained minister. *Ceremoniale episcoporum* from the year 1600, Chapter XXVIII called *"De organo, organista, et musicis, seu cantoribus, et norma per eos servanda in divinis"* indicates the role of sacred music; its aim is to deepen the people's devotion and to contemplate God's truths. However, it is evident that active participation in singing and in celebration alone was very limited.[6]

Sacrosanctum concilium considers the entire liturgical community, the whole Church – Head and members – as the subject of the liturgical celebration.[7] We can see this indication in SC number 26. Since the liturgy is the act of the whole community, assembly singing is important in every celebration.[8] Harmon underscores that "the most important ministers of music are the members of the assembly, for it is they who, as Body of Christ, enact the rite."[9] The importance

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2 Kathleen Harmon, *The ministry of music. Singing the Paschal Mystery* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2004) 1.

3 Harmon, *The ministry of music*, 8.

4 *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten-Year Report*. (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992), §28.

5 Harmon, *The ministry of* music, 5.

6 Cf. *Caeremoniale episcoporum*. Editio Princeps (1600). Ed. Achille M. Triacca-Manlio Sodi (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000) 119-121.

7 "Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations of the Church, which is the 'sacrament of unity', namely, the holy people united and ordered under their bishops. Therefore, liturgical services pertain to the whole body of the Church; they manifest it and have effects upon it; but they concern the individual members of the Church in different ways, according to their differing rank, office, and actual participation." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium. Constitution on the sacred liturgy* (SC) § 26. accessed 15 January 2022 https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

8 Cf. Michel Veuthey, *Il coro cuore dell'assemblea* (Milano: Ancora, 1998), 24.

9 Harmon, *The ministry of* music, 14.

of collective singing by the whole assembly is also emphasized in the document issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops entitled *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*. For instance, in relation to the introductory rites it states the following: "So that the people might come together as one, it is appropriate that they always sing at least one piece as a congregation in the introductory rites – Entrance song or chant, Kyrie, or Gloria – apart from the sung dialogues of the Liturgy."[10]

2. From Gregorian chant to liturgical action and active participation in liturgy

Another important shift in the understanding of liturgical music is expressed in article 112 of the Constitution on liturgy: "sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is *more closely connected with the liturgical action.*"[11] Edward Foley says that "liturgical music can be defined as that music which weds itself to the liturgical action, serves to reveal the full significance of the rite and, in turn, derives its full meaning from the liturgy."[12] Foley's explanation seems to be quite clear for us now, but at the beginning of the twentieth century the understanding of liturgical music was different (and for some groups of people it is different until now…).

The *Motu proprio* of the Pope Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini,*[13] published in 1903 is considered one of the most important documents related to the legislation of sacred music. Which music is "more holy" or "more liturgical" according to the *Motu proprio*? An answer is indicated in the third article of this document: "Gregorian Chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, so that it is fully legitimate to lay down the following rule: the more closely a composition for Church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savor the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple."[14] Comparing these two articles, *Sacrosanctum concilium* 112 and the *Motu proprio* 3, we can easily recognize a very important shift in the understanding of liturgical music: Gregorian chant is the supreme model of sacred music according to the *Motu proprio* and on the other hand according to the constitution *Sacrosanctum concilium* the most essential connection is with liturgical action.

The Constitution on liturgy recognizes an important role of Gregorian chant in article 116: "The Church acknowledges Gregorian chant as specially suited to the Roman liturgy."[15] However, in the same article 116, the Constitution emphasizes that "other kinds of sacred music, especially polyphony, are by no means excluded from liturgical celebrations, so long as they accord with the spirit of the liturgical action, as laid down in Art. 30."[16] And how does the Constitution understand the "spirit of the liturgical action" according to article 30? The "spirit of the liturgical action" is related to active participation: "To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence."[17]

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10 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sing to the Lord : Music in Divine Worship* (Washington D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2007) §140.

11 *Sacrosanctum concilium*, § 112.

12 Edward Foley, "Music, Liturgical." in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, edited by Peter E. Fink, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990, 855.

13 Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini*. In *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 36, 1904, 329-339.

14 Pius X, *Tra le sollecitudini*, § 3. accessed 15 January 2022 http://www.adoremus.org/MotuProprio.html

15 SC § 116.

16 SC § 116.

17 SC § 30.

3. Forms of liturgical music and their relationship to the participation of the assembly

According to the Constitution on the liturgy, active participation in the liturgy is the main tool for comprehension of the "spirit of the liturgical action," which is expressed, inter alia, through forms of liturgical music: acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons and songs. In this third part of the study, we specify some forms of liturgical music and their connection with the active participation of the assembly.

3.1 Acclamations

Acclamations are the most important musical form in the liturgy, because they constitute the rite and are to be sung by the assembly as a whole.[18] "The acclamations *are* the liturgy; in singing them the assembly enact the rite. Acclamations are of the highest importance both because of where they occur in the liturgy and because of who sings them."[19] According to Gelineau, acclamations, proclamations and dialogues "are, or should be, intense moments of participation by the assembly, manifesting and realizing its role as the first subject of liturgical action."[20] Each acclamation should be musically accessible to the assembly.

An acclamation is a collective vocal act that, in its short form, expresses confirmation of the faith or a wish, petition or an invocation. In celebration of the Eucharist, the most common acclamations are: *Amen; Alleluia; Glory to you, Lord!; Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ; Memorial acclamations; For the Kingdom, the Power… etc.*

The shortest acclamation is *Amen*. It concludes significant moments in the Eucharistic celebration: the end of the opening prayer, the general intercessions, the Eucharistic prayer and the prayer after communion. With this acclamation people "make the prayer their own."[21]

The response *Thanks be to God* after the first and second reading[22] and the responses before and after the proclamation of the Gospel are also called acclamations,[23] as well as the response after the embolism.[24] Through the acclamations surrounding the Gospel, the faithful "acknowledge and confess Christ present and speaking to them."[25]

The principal acclamations of the Mass are those belonging to the Eucharistic prayer. The meaning of the Eucharistic prayer is "that the entire congregation of the faithful should join itself with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice."[26] Acclamations,

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18 Cf. Harmon, *The ministry of music*, 13.

19 Harmon, *The ministry of music*, 12.

20 Joseph Gelineau, *Ritual roots of the sung parts of the mass*. In Joseph Gelineau, *Liturgical assembly – Liturgical song* (Portland – Oregon: Pastoral Press, 2002), 117. Original title: Joseph Gelineau, *Les chants de la Mess dans leur enracinement rituel* (Paris: Les Éditions du CERF, 2001).

21 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (London: Catholic Truth Society and Colloquium, 2005), § 54, § 89.

22 "At the end [of the first and second reading], the lector sings or says the acclamation: *Verbum Domini (The word of the Lord)*, and all respond: *Deo gratias (Thanks be to God).*" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* § 128, cf. § 130.)

23 "Then he [priest] says: *Lectio sancti Evangelii (A reading from the holy Gospel)*, making the Sign of the Cross with his thumb on the book and on his forehead, mouth, and breast, which everyone else does as well. The people say the acclamation: *Gloria tibi, Domine (Glory to you, Lord).*" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* § 134).

24 "After the Lord´s Prayer is concluded, the priest alone, with hands extended, says the embolism *Libera nos (Deliver us)*. At the end, the people make the acclamation, *Quia tuum est regnum (For the kingdom).*" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* § 153).

25 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* § 60.

26 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* § 78.

by their very nature, are meant to be sung.[27] The most important acclamation is the *Holy, Holy,*[28] in which the whole congregation joins with the heavenly power.[29]

A Hebrew word *alleluia*, which means *praise God, is a commonly* used acclamation in Christian worship. It is the shout *par excellence* of Easter victory. *Alleluia* is incorporated into certain verses of hymns, or as a refrain, or it is also found at the end of some antiphons, particularly those of the Easter season. *Alleluia* during the gospel procession strongly unites the liturgical assembly and supports its participation. *Alleluia* is often integrated into an actual song.

3.2 Dialogues and responses

Each important part of the Mass[30] opens with a *dialogue* between the presider and the assembly. "It gets the ritual action going, or starts it up again, and facilitates the free, conscious and active participation of the entire assembly."[31]

The traditional formula of dialogue, *Dominus vobiscum – Et cum spiritu tuo* goes back to the origins of Christian worship. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* says that "the acclamations and the responses of the faithful to the priest's greetings and prayers constitute that level of active participation that the gathered faithful are to contribute in every form of the Mass, so that the action of the entire community may be clearly expressed and fostered."[32]

Chanting gives the dialogues between the priest and the assembly more meaning and fullness as simple pronounced words. From a musical point of view, dialogues between the presider and the assembly are usually unaccompanied. Gelineau notes that "these exchanges awaken our consciousness of truly being the church formed in serving the Lord in the liturgy."[33] In liturgy we can also experience other types of dialogue: several dialogues among cantor, choir, and assembly, which also significantly foster the participation of the assembly.

3.3 Litanies

Liturgical celebrations use various litany-forms which allow easy participation of believers. Their content is usually intercessory. The form includes short variable petitions or invocations followed by a short, invariable response. The petitions are usually sung by a small group, choir, or a single person and the response is made by the entire community.

There are three ordinary sung parts of the Eucharist built on the litany-form: the *Lord have mercy (Kyrie eleison)*, the *Prayers of the Faithful* and the *Lamb of God*. None of these is a processional, but "the extended litany was a privileged form for accompanying a more solemn and festive entrance. This same form can be adapted and used in certain communion processionals."[34]

A litanic prayer, that was probably inspired by Latin texts used in northern Italy or other regions of the West, was introduced into the Roman liturgy by Pope Gelasius (492-496). The intercessions of Gelasius[35] called for the response "Lord, hear and have mercy" (*"Domine, ex-*

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27 Cf. *Introduction to the Order of Mass: A Pastoral Resource*. Washington : USCCB, 2003, no. 117.

28 Cf. Gelineau, *Ritual roots of the sung parts of the mass*, 119.

29 Cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* § 79.

30 The opening, the Gospel, the Eucharistic Prayer, the exchange of peace and the dismissal.

31 Gelineau, *Ritual roots of the sung parts of the mass*, 120.

32 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal,* § 35.

33 Gelineau, *Ritual roots of the sung parts of the mass*, 121.

34 Gelineau, *Ritual roots of the sung parts of the mass*, 136.

35 Intercession of Gelasius is known as *Deprecatio Gelasii.*

audi et miserere") in Milan, however, the response used was *Kyrie eleison*.[36] The intercessions were located after the liturgy of word, in the place of today´s restored General Intercessions. In the sixth century these intercessions were suppressed.[37] However, before 529 the petitions with *Kyrie eleison* appeared at the entrance rite of the Mass.[38] In order to shorten the Mass, Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) allowed the intention of the litany to be omitted on certain days with only the response being sung. This abbreviated form of litany finally became the rule.[39] Subsequently, "by the eighth century the petitions had disappeared and only the acclamatory response remained in the ninefold format of *Kyrie* three times, *Christe* three times, and again *Kyrie* three times – the format which eventually became fixed as the first element of the sung ordinary of the Mass."[40] This number then gave rise to the Trinitarian interpretation, which is evidently not primitive. Tropes were added to these litanic acclamations in the Middle Ages.[41] Even though the Council of Trent had eliminated all tropes, some of them were restored by the Second Vatican Council and re-introduced as a part of the third formula of penitential rite. The effectiveness of *Kyrie* litany is very limited because of its brevity.

The introduction of the *Lamb of God* is attributed to Pope Sergius I in the seventh century. However, most other liturgies, in Spain, Gaul, and Milan, already had special chants for the rites of sharing the bread.[42] The invocation uses John the Baptist´s words to point out the Messiah: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the word."[43] Its supplication is the most common: "Have mercy on us." The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* indicates that "the supplication *Agnus Dei*, is, as a rule, sung by the choir or cantor with the congregation responding; or it is, at least, recited aloud. This invocation accompanies the fraction and, for this reason, may be repeated as many times as necessary until the rite has reached its conclusion, the last time ending with the words *dona nobis pacem (grant us peace)*."[44]

3.4 Responsorial form

The responsorial form is frequently used during the celebration of the Eucharist. This form breaks up the flow of the lyrics and, by the repetition of the refrain, it is usually accented and fosters the central theme of the text. The most common instances of this form are responsorial psalms. "The importance of this form lies in the dialogical relationship of the psalm to the readings, and of the assembly to the Word of God, a relationship which the interaction between cantor and assembly embodies and deepens."[45] Through the singing of the antiphon, the assembly actively participates and responds to the proclamation of God's word. The responsorial form is also often used for processional songs.[46]

3.5 Hymns

Saint Paul in his Letter to the Colossians exhorts the Christians of that community: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."[47] The Church was born singing and by the fourth century the production of Christian hymns was already widespread. The introduction of the metrical hymn into the West is attributed to St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, who was imitating the practice of St. Ephrem of Syria.[48]

At the time of the Reformation, Luther and his followers created a popular hymnody for worship. However, in the Roman liturgy - generally - it was forbidden to use songs in the vernacular, especially after the Council of Trent (1545-1563). In some dioceses, for example in the territory of today's Czech and Slovak Republics, hymns in the vernacular language were used also in the Catholic liturgy as is well documented in the Slovak hymnal *Cantus Catholici* from 1655,[49] which contains Latin and Slovak hymns and chants.

3.6 Canons and repetitive forms of music (ostinato, etc.)

Undoubtedly, songs and *canons* from Taizé are already part of music used in Catholic liturgy. The main characteristic of this type of music is the repetition of one sentence and musical theme, which allows the easy participation of the assembly: "using just a few words they [songs of Taizé] express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. As the words are sung over many times, this reality gradually penetrates the whole being. Meditative singing thus becomes a way of listening to God. It allows everyone to take part in a time of prayer together and to remain together in attentive waiting for God, without having to fix the length of time too exactly."[50]

The songs and canons of Taizé are especially suitable for international assemblies, because they can be easily learned. In addition, the singing of solos in different languages helps to deepen the understanding of the text of a chant and increase the participation and attention of those present. Instrumental solos also bring variety and freshness to music.

The songs from Taizé also influenced the development of liturgical music in many countries around the world. Composers began to use similar forms for processional songs for the celebration of the Eucharist. This musical form is especially suitable for singing during communion, when believers approach holy communion and do not carry a songbook with strophic songs,[51] as well as during other parts of celebration.[52]

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36 Cf. Robert Cabié, *The Eucharist*. In *The Church at prayer. An Introduction to the Liturgy,* ed. Aimé Georges Martimort, vol. II. (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 72.

37 There is no trace of the General Intercessions in the Leonine Sacramentary from the middle of the sixth century.

38 Cf. Cabié, *The Eucharist*, 73.

39 Cf. Lawrence J. Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith. A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass* (Washington: Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 20115), 20.

40 Harmon, *The ministry of music,* 60-61.

41 Text of tropes became the tags for titling groups of Mass ordinaries, for example *Missa cuntipotens genitor Deus.*

42 Cf. Gelineau, *Ritual roots of the sung parts of the mass*, 140.

43 John 1:29

44 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, § 83.

45 Harmon, *The ministry of music*, 13.

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46 Processional songs or chants accompany the procession at the beginning of the celebration (*introit*), the procession with the gifts (*cantus ad offertorium*) and the communion procession (*communio*). More about processional chants: Vlastimil Dufka, *Historicko-liturgické aspekty procesiových spevov Eucharistie* (Historical-liturgical aspects of the processional chants of the Eucharist). *Teologický časopis*, roč. XVII, 1 (2019) 21-39.

47 Colossians 3:16.

48 More about hymns of St. Ambrose: Vlastimil Dufka, *Canto e fede. Il canto come strumento per promuovere l´ortodossia della fede* (México, D. F.: Buena Prensa, 2013).

49 Cfr. Vlastimil Dufka, *Il canto sacro del XVII secolo e il Cantus Catholici (1655)* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Collegium Bobolanum, 2019).

50 *Prayer for Each Day* (London/Chicago: Cassell/GIA Publications, 1998) 8.

51 Cf. Bub Hurd, *Dining in the kingdom. Songs for Communion and Gathering* (Portland: OCP, 2009).

52 Cfr. Vlastimil Dufka, *Nech nás žehná Pán (May the Lord bless us),* accessed 15 January 2022 https://liturgia-hudba.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Nech-n%c3%a1s-%c5%beehn%c3%a1-P%c3%a1n_VD.pdf

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Conclusion

The aim of this study was to develop the basic role and „mission" of liturgical music. The liturgical celebration is above all the celebration of the paschal mystery of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. Since liturgical music is an integral part of liturgical celebration, its mission is to deepen the participation of believers in the paschal mystery through those forms inherent in liturgical music. The starting point for understanding liturgical music was an understanding of the relationship between the subject of liturgical celebration, active participation in liturgical celebration, and music. It is clear that a very important step forward in this area was taken at the Second Vatican Council. The subject of the celebration is the whole Church, the Head with its members. The whole assembly should therefore actively participate in the liturgy, not just the choir or the soloists. The second significant shift after the Second Vatican Council is the understanding of the value of liturgical music, which is derived from the intensity of the link to the liturgical celebration (not from the link to the Gregorian chant). Finally, Article 30 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, points out that „the spirit of the liturgical action" is related to active participation: „To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs ... „[53] In the third part of the study, we briefly approached these musical forms. Article 30 ends with a simple mention of silence: "And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence."[54]

In the context of liturgical silence, in conclusion, we would like to refer to one paragraph from the second document of *Universa Laus* entitled *Music in Christian Liturgies*. This document understands the participation in liturgy as our response to God who creates through the Word and if we want to express our response, first, we have to listen. For this reason, the document says that "listening is the primary form of participation. To participate consciously, with devotion, and actively in the liturgical action therefore goes beyond the simple execution of the prescribed rites. It is in listening that we are led to respond through prayer, song and actions, in such a way as to take part together in the mystery of Christ."[55] *Active listening* of God's word, of the language of liturgy and of all the gathered Church is therefore the most important condition for our own active participation.

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The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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53   SC § 30.

54   SC § 30.

55   Universa Laus, *Document II: Music in Christian liturgies*, 1.5. accessed 15 January 2022 https://universalaus.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/2-document-ul-uk.pdf

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Expert articles

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PRE-CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY OF BISHOP AMBROSE OF MILAN IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES |
Miloš Lichner, Józef Kulisz

PRE-CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY OF BISHOP AMBROSE OF MILAN IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES*

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Miloš Lichner [1], Józef Kulisz ✉ [2]

[1]   Faculty of Theology, Trnava University in Trnava (SK); Collegium Bobolanum (PL)
[2]   Akademia Katolicka w Warszawie Collegium Bobolanum (PL)

Abstract

Background: The submitted study focuses on pre-Chalcedonian Christology in selected works of Bishop Ambrose of Milan (337?-397) in the context of historical theological discourses. It is part of an ongoing research project concerning the thinking of this important bishop who influenced work of St. Augustine of Hippo Regius. The study presents contextual analysis of selected scripts that show how Ambrose explained the teaching on Jesus Christ contradicted the heretic opinions of his time before the significant Council of Chalcedon (451).

The structure of the study is as follows: the introduction will consist of contextual information about the life and work of St. Ambrose, and the following parts will focus on an analysis of the complex Christological works of Ambrose: *On Faith to Gratian* (*De fide ad Gratianum*) and *On Sacraments of the Incarnation of the Lord* (*De incarnatione dominicae sacramento*), to which we can add his exegesis *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* (*Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*) as well as *Statement of Faith* (*Explanatio symboli*) and hymns, whose authorship is indisputably attributed to Bishop Ambrose of Milan.

Conclusion: Experts on early Christian literature have recently paid more attention to the study of dogmatic scripts of the Bishop of Milan. The importance of the submitted study lies in its crucial significance in the area of the research on the spirituality of the early Christian era and its contribution to the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the so-called non-Chalcedonian churches. The study also underlines the fundamental ideas of Latin Christianity.

Keywords: Ambrose of Milan – Christology – Incarnation – Apollinaris – Arius.

Introduction

St. Ambrose was born around year 337 in Trier and died on 4 April 397 in Milan.[2] His father held an important office; he was the praetorian prefect. Ambrose was the youngest of three children; oldest sister Marcellina became a nun and his brother Satyrus died. Ambrose worked in the

2   Cf. Vita Ambrosii, 3. In: Krabinger, Johann Georg: *S. Ambrosii episcopi mediolanensis de oficiis ministrorum libri III cum Paulini libello de vita s. Ambrosii*. Tubingae, 1857, p. 2; Savon, Hervé: *Ambroise de Milan* (340 – 397). Paris : Desclée, 1997.

area of administration, and in year 370 he became an imperial legate in the provinces of Liguria and Aemilia with the seat in Milan.[3] After the death of Arian Bishop Auxentius in 374, a great tension swept over the city and Ambrose was assigned the duty to oversee the peaceful election of a new bishop. However, during the process of election a little child shouted: "Ambrosius episcopus!", which was seen as a sign of providence. Ambrose was elected to the office of Bishop of Milan despite his own disapproval, because he was only a catechumen at that time. Thus, within several days he was baptised and also embraced other sacraments to become capable of being ordained.[4] After episcopal ordination on 7 December 374, he focused on a thorough study of Sacred Scripture under the guidance of priest Simplician,[5] study of the message of Greek Church fathers, Hebrew authors (mainly Philo of Alexandria),[6] the early Christian author Origen and pagan authors, mainly Plotinus.[7] In his works he focused on homiletic exegesis of biblical books of the Old Testament and The Gospel of Luke. In his exegesis of biblical texts he accepted three dimensions of the Bible: the literary, moral and allegorical-mystical.[8] His moral-spiritual scripts, letters, hymns, sermons and doctrinal documents have also been preserved. His works are influenced by historical political and theological battles against improper interference of imperial power in the freedom of the Church as well as against heresies of his time.[9]

Although Ambrose's works contain several partial expressions regarding Christology, we will give priority to complex works dealing with this topic: *On Faith to Gratian* (*De fide ad Gratianum*) and *On Sacraments of the Incarnation of the Lord* (*De incarnatione dominicae sacramento*), to which we can add his exegesis *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* (*Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam*) as well as *Statement of Faith* (*Explanatio symboli*) and hymns whose authorship is indisputably attributed to bishop Ambrose of Milan.

Treatise *On Faith to Gratian* against Arians

This work was written on the request of emperor Gratian,[10] who wished to have an explanation of faith as an argument against the Arians. Arius, a priest of Libyan origin from Alexandria, was educated by Lucian of Antioch. He insisted on the unity of God with the exclusion of the Word of God incarnated in Jesus, as stated in the Prologue to the Gospel of John. In his opinion, Jesus was the first of the whole creation through whom everything was created, but he was not God. To deal with this heresy, Emperor Constantine initiated the first ecumenical council in Nicaea in

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3   Cf. Vita Ambrosii, 5,1–2. In: Krabinger, Johann Georg: *S. Ambrosii episcopi mediolanensis de oficiis ministrorum libri III cum Paulini libello de vita s. Ambrosii*. Tubingae, 1857, p. 3.

4   Cf. Paredi, Angelo: *Sant'Ambrosio e la sua età*. Milano, 19602, p. 175.

5   Presbyter Simplician became the Bishop of Milan after Ambrose's death. He exchanged correspondence with St. Augustine, who dedicated his work *Ad Simplicianum* to Simplician. Fitzgerald, Allan: Simplicien. In: *Saint Augustin : La Méditerranée et l'Europe. IVe–XXIe siècle*. Paris, 2005, p. 1358–1359.

6   Cf. Dudden, Homes.: *Saint Ambrose, His Life and Time*, vol. 2. Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1935, p. 556.

7   Porov. Madec, Goulven: *Ambroise et la philosophie*. Paris : Études Augustiniennes, 1974, p. 200–214.

8   Dunkle, Brian P.: *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 79-80.

9   We spoke about Ambrose in the following books: Lichner, Miloš, Karasová, Ľubica: Riešenie problematiky miešaných manželstiev u sv. Ambróza z Milána na pozadí jeho asketicko-spirituálnych spisov. In: *Viera a Život*, vol. 23, no. 6 (2013), p. 72-82; Lichner, Miloš: Základné črty eschatológie v myslení sv. Ambróza z Milána. In: *Nové Horizonty*. Časopis pre teológiu, kultúru a spoločnosť, vol. 8, 2014, p. 29-35; Lichner, Miloš, Horka, Róbert: Svätý Ambróz a katechumenát. In: SV. AMBRÓZ. Výklad Vyznania viery, O sviatostiach, o tajomstvách. *Starokresťanská knižnica*, 9. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2017.

10   Palanque, Jean-Rémy: Un épisode des rapports entre Gratien et Saint Ambroise. In: Revue des Études Anciennes. Tome 30, 1928, n. 4, p. 291-301; Williams, Daniel: Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 141.

325. The council approved the statement of faith according to which Jesus Christ is born from the substance (*ousia*) of the Father and thus is homoousious (*homoousios*) with him. A few bishops signed this statement of faith unwillingly. After returning they spread the teaching of Arian, which gave birth to several different versions of Arianism. An extreme version announced by Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eunomius of Cyzicus stated that the Son is different from the Father (*anhomoios*), and the supporters of this heresy were called "anomeans". Others insisted that the Son is only similar to the Father (*homoios*), and they were called "homeans". There were also theologians who wanted to stick as much as possible to the Nicene Creed, believing that the Son is of the essence similar to the Father's (*homoiousios*) and these were called "homoiusians".

They actually rejected the Nicene Creed, because they tried to integrate the word *ousia* in it, despite the fact that the Sacred Scripture did not know such a term. They also feared that acknowledgement of unity between the Father and the Son would shift the confession towards the heretical opinion of Sabellius (another Libyan priest from the 3rd century), who supported the monarchianist position, according to which the Spirit and the Son are only the outer expression of one God the Father.

> *Commonitorium* by Vincent of Lérins left us a few bitter references about these heresies: "And when the poison of Arianism spoiled not only a part but the whole world so thoroughly that almost all bishops of the Latin language were misled, some by violence, others by artifice, and when a certain kind of darkness hid the true journey of following from them, everyone who remained a true disciple and venerator of Christ preferred old faith to new heresy and never allowed the contagion to spoil his soul."[11]

Ambrose's work consists of five books, two of which were written in the years 377–378 and the rest around the end of year 380. In his first book, Ambrose explains faith in one God. To believe in the Son of God eternally begotten, as well as in divinity of the Holy Spirit, does not mean that the Church believes in two Gods, as objected to by Arians, because true faith professes the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in a way that maintains unity in divinity.[12]

Ambrose subsequently quotes fundamental Arian texts and rejects them. He remarks that there is no difference between the Father and the Son, that the Son has no beginning of existence in time, that he was not created, that he is the true God. Then he quotes the proper definition from the Council of Nicaea, emphasising that the council clearly denounced the teaching of Arius. The second book brings certain theological clarifications. Ambrose explores selected passages of the New Testament described by the Arians as a basis of their theology: e. g. the Gospel of Mark 10:18 (No one is good but God alone) or Christ's words in the Garden of Gethsemane,[13] and explains that these biblical verses do not allow accentuation of the inferiority of the Son to the Father. Bishop Palladius of Ratiaria (northern Bulgaria) responded by publication of his work *De fide* in 379. In a short time, Ambrose published a sequel to the work *De fide ad Gratianum* and another three books, in which he focused on refuting the way of explanation of certain biblical verses by the Arians. For instance, he explained the words from book of Proverbs 8:22 ("The Lord begot me, the beginning of his works, the forerunner of his deeds of long ago"); even though this verse

is traditionally applied to Christ, argues Ambrose, use of the verb "create" does not cast doubt on divine begetting of the Son by the Father but relates to the Incarnation of the God's Son into a human being.[14] Ambrose recalls other verses in the Bible that clearly testify about the divinity of both the Father and the Son. He quotes the Gospel of John 17:21 (... so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you).[15] The works of Palladius and Ambrose are structurally built on biblical verses; they both were convinced that the truth can be found in the Sacred Scripture, although each of them explained it in a different way. Ambrose read and explained the verses through a normative statement of the Council of Nicaea.[16] According to the general opinion of his time, the Council of Nicaea only confirmed the *regula fidei* of the apostles that was normative for reading and explanation of the Bible. We can mention e. g. Origen[17] or Cassian, for whom the statement of faith represented a summary, a compendium of the whole Bible.[18]

Treatise *On the Sacrament of Incarnation of the Lord* against Apollinaris of Laodicea

In 382, Ambrose wrote the treatise *On the Sacrament of Incarnation of the Lord* dedicated to a rejection of the new heresy of Apollinaris of Laodicea.[19] Although Ambrose does not mention him explicitly, he writes about his teaching. Apollinaris was convinced that Logos took on a human body and that it could feel hunger, thirst or exhaustion; however, Christ could only have sensitive soul (psyche), not rational soul (*noûs*) – and it was substituted by Logos. Apollinaris strongly insisted on the total unity of the Word that took on a human body, which resulted in the conviction that if Christ had a human soul in the sense of *noûs*, we would have to have an intermediary between the Word and the human body of Jesus; thus, this body would not be under direct control of Logos. Although this teaching was widely spread in Christian east, Ambrose understood and interpreted it as a certain form of Arianism,[20] given the fact that Arians often quoted the biblical events of Gethsemane. Ambrose strictly distinguished between all that adheres to God and all that adheres to man. Christ did not know if he will avoid the obligation to drink from the chalice of suffering and obeyed his Father's will, but this lack of knowledge and obedience represented a part of Christ's human nature. However, this meant that Christ also had *noûs*, translated into Latin as *mens*, and so the event of the Incarnation was a true sacrament of salvation.[21] Therefore, Ambrose philosophically substantiates that a human being is created by the unity of body and soul – not only a sensitive soul but also rational: and if this were to be rejected, the whole teaching on the Incarnation would be rejected as well, because Christ accepted a whole human nature to redeem it.[22] Hence, Ambrose submits what he considers to be true Christology, which in many ways anticipates the later definition of the Chalcedonian Council and emphasises that Christ is both the Son of God and the son of man who was born of a virgin. Rigorous acceptance of the teaching about the Incarnation and true human nature (*integra ergo veri hominis perfectaque natura*) thus becomes an inevitable prerequisite of correct Christology. This explanation was

11   Vincentius Lerinensis: *Commonitorium* 4,3. In: Lichner, Miloš; Karabová, Katarína: *K prameňom ranokresťanskej latinskej tradície*. Dobrá kniha : Trnava, 2017, p. 350 – 351.

12   Ambrose: De fide I,10, CSEL 78, p. 8. Especially Basil the Great emphasised the word "and", which in his opinion clearly underlines the unity of three divine persons: Lichner, Miloš: „Sv. Bazil Veľký o Svätom Písme a tradícii." In: *Viera a život*, vol. 4 (2013), p. 76-85; Williams, Michael Stuart: The Politics of Heresy in Ambrose of Milan. Community and Consensus in Late Antique Christianity. Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 111-164.

13   Cf. Ambrose: De fide II,15-32.41-53, CSEL 78, p. 62-67.70-74.

14   Cf. Ambrose: De fide III,82-95, CSEL 78, p. 138-140.

15   Cf. Ambrose: De fide IV,33-37, CSEL 78, p. 168-170.

16   Cf. Savon, Hervé: Ambroise de Milan (340-397). Desclée, 1997, p. 99-107.

17   Origenes: *Commentaire sur l'épitre aux Romains* 7,19, *SCH* 543.

18   Cassian: *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium* 6, 3, *CSEL* 17, p. 334.

19   Cf. Lichner, Miloš: Inimici Leonis in homiletic work of pope Leo the Great. In: *Acta misiologica*, no. 1, vol. 14, 2020, p. 57-75.

20   Williams, Daniel: Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2002, p. 192.

21   Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 2,11,CSEL 79, p. 229.

22   Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 4,23,CSEL 79, p. 235.

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also later mentioned by his pupil Augustine of Hippo Regius.[23] Ambrose believes that in this way everything can be attributed to each of the two natures that appertains to it without incorrect blending: "and so he died in our nature adopted by him and he did not die according to nature of eternal life; he suffered martyrdom in his body, so that the truth about the body taken over by him might be accepted, and he did not suffer according to deity of the Word which cannot suffer. Thus he was immortal in death and unsuffering in martyrdom."[24] So it was not divine nature that would undertake martyrdom and death. Ambrose found this misunderstanding in the thinking of the supporters of Apollinaris.[25] The exclamation of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane: "I am troubled now" (John 12:27) clearly means that his soul was troubled and it was not wisdom itself that was grieving. Because eternal "wisdom remained unmoved even though it was vested in the body."[26] It is evident that Ambrose clearly distinguished between two natures long before Pope Leo the Great wrote his work *Tomus ad Flavianum.*[27] This unambiguously results in the fact that Apollinaris and Eutyches (against whom Leo the Great was opposed) had one thing in common – insufficient respect for the entirety of Christ's human nature. As Ambrose adds, the reason for the Incarnation was the redemption of the body that committed sin. And for this reason, the nature of the Word was not transformed into the nature of the body and neither was the deity free from sin sacrificed for a sin it did not commit.[28] It is true that even Apollinaris understood that the Word became flesh for our salvation. This, however, meant that the deity was bound to the body through the Word of God that substituted the rational soul. Ambrose responds that human salvation anticipates integral human nature.[29]

Obviously, he was aware of the objection of Apollinaris, according to whom the reasonable soul can commit a sin, but Christ was absolutely impeccable. For this reason he recalls the verse from the Letter to Romans 7:24-25 ("Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord").[30] So, if Christ can free man from sin, he can protect himself even more.[31] Ambrose concludes his argument by quoting several biblical verses which in his opinion prove the correctness of his arguments: 2 Cor 13:4 reminds that Christ "was crucified out of weakness" but he "lives by the power of God", adding the verse from 1 Cor 1:13 which emphasises that Christ is not divided.[32]

Exegesis of the Gospel according to Luke

This is the only preserved commentary of Ambrose to the New Testament written in the years 377–389.[33] The author deals with two fundamental Christological lines: on the one hand he underlines that deity was not diminished because of the total human nature of Jesus Christ.[34] On the other hand he points out the fact that the Son of God totally accepted complete human nature, in which nothing was missing.[35] A similar argument can be found in the explanation of Christ's anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, as we already mentioned in case of his work *On the Sacrament of Incarnation of the Lord.*[36] He even interprets Christ's conscious welcome of Judas among the apostles this way, although Christ knew that Judas would betray him. He welcomed him despite all of this to demonstrate how great human weakness can be: "Judas himself was chosen, not inadvertently but consciously (...) he accepted human weakness himself and thus he did not reject even this feature of human weakness."[37] Any lessening of human nature is wrong, and it is interesting that in Ambrose's work *De incarnationis domincae sacramento* we find this expression: "should any part of it be removed, the whole human nature is removed."[38] A similar construction can be found in the Commentary to the Gospel according to Luke: "if you remove one of these things, you retrench your salvation."[39] The emphasis put on absolute human nature that is not lessened by its bond with divine nature led Ambrose to veneration of Mary, Mother of Jesus. For him, the Virgin Mary represents the guarantee of her Son's humanity, which was also mentioned earlier by north African theologian Tertullian.[40]

Opus for catechumens *Statement of Faith*

Explanation of *Statement of Faith* (*Explanatio symboli*) was written approximately in year 380 and catechumens were supposed to learn it by heart.[41] Only its stenographic version was preserved and was published for the first time in 1784; Ambrose's authorship was proved in 1813. It was a catechesis during which catechumens were given the text of *Explanatio symboli*. They had to learn it by heart. In the Milanese Church, the procedure took place on the Sunday before Easter. The work does not contain any allusion to Christological polemics. The lecture of the text suggests that Ambrose gave the listeners introductory information about the title and the origin of the statement of faith (1-2) and subsequently asked them to cross themselves. Then Ambrose himself[42] declaimed the statement of faith, followed by the explanation of the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and Incarnation. The bishop put emphasis on entirety of Christs human nature: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God as the only one (from the Trinity) embraced this body. With his rational and perfect human soul he also embraced a visible body."[43] In the fourth article he mentions deformations integrated into the statement of faith by heretics and that the words *invisibilem* and *impassibilem* (invisible and impassable) were included in the first article by Augustine's

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23 Augustinus: *s. 183,13, PL* 38,993: Porov. Dodaro, Robert: *Omnes haeretici negant Christum in carne venisse.* (*Aug., serm. 183.9.13.*) Augustine on the Incarnation as Criterion for Orthodoxy. In: *Augustinian Studies,* 38, 2007, p.163–174.

24 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 5,39,CSEL 79, p. 242.

25 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 4,23,CSEL 79, p. 235.

26 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 5,41,CSEL 79, p. 243.

27 Lichner, Miloš: *Lev Veľký a jeho Tomus ad Flavianum*: Preklad a analýza textu. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2014.

28 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 6,54,CSEL 79, p. 252-253.

29 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 7,63,CSEL 79, p. 256-257.

30 Ambrose's text of the Letter to Romans is slightly different from its contemporary version.

31 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 7,70,CSEL 79, p. 260.

32 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 7,75-76,CSEL 79, p. 262-263.

33 Ambrose: Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, SC 45. Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1956; Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, SC 52. Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1958.

34 Ambrose: Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, II,42, SC 45. Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1956, p. 91-92; VI,101, SC 45, s. 266.

35 Ambrose: Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, IV,56, SC 45. Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1956, p. 173-174; II,64, SC 45, p. 100.

36 Ambrose: Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, X,56-57, SC 52 Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1956, p. 175-176;

37 Ambrose: Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, V,45, SC 45. Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1956, p. 199-200.

38 Ambrose: De incarnationis dominicae sacramento 2,11,CSEL 79, p. 229.

39 Ambrose: Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, VI,101, SC 45. Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1956, p. 266.

40 Lichner, Miloš: Tertullianova mariológia. In: *Teologický časopis,* vol. 10, no. 2 (2012), p. 33-43.

41 Dunkle, Brian P.: *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan.* Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 82-83.

42 Ambrose: epistula 76,4, CSEL 82/3, p. 109-110: Horka, Róbert; Andoková, Marcela: Konečná porážka arianizmu v Miláne: List 76 svätého Ambróza adresovaný sestre Marcelline o vydaní baziliky. In: Teologický časopis, vol., 12, no. 1, 2014, p. 40.

43 Explanatio symboli 3. In: Lichner, Miloš, Horka, Róbert: Sv. Ambróz. Výklad Vyznania viery, O sviatostiach, o tajomstvách. Úvodná štúdia, preklad a poznámky. *Starokresťanská knižnica,* 9. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2017, p. 128-129.

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predecessor in episcopal office, Auxentius,[44] who was a supporter of Arius. These two words related to God the Father to demonstrate that Christ was visible and passible.

Hymns

The last opus we are going to focus on is Ambrose's hymns. His work was influenced by eastern hymns, and we consider him to be the founder of western Latin liturgical hymnology. Jacques Fontaine reliably compiled the ambrosian hymns,[45] and today we can precisely determine,[46] based on Augustine's testimony, that four hymns can be attributed directly to Ambrose: *Aeterne rerum Conditior* (1.),[47] *Iam surgit hora tertia* (3.),[48] *Deus creator omnium* (4.),[49] *Intende qui regis Israel* (5.);[50] another four are very probably his, while the authenticity of another three is possible and his authorship of the last three is doubtful.[51] Various sources suggest that Ambrose paid rather a good deal of attention and time to composing hymns. However, on the basis of Augustine's testimony, as mentioned in his *Confessiones*, we can specify year 386, when Ambrose with the faithful occupied the basilica that empress Justina wanted to take away from Catholics to give to the Arians.[52] These hymns contain Christological and trinitary thoughts aimed against the Arians. The Catholic and Arian liturgy were very similar and learning hymns was a great pedagogical and doctrinal instrument: Catholics thus refused to participate at liturgies during which they could not sing trinitary and Christological hymns.[53]

A morning hymn, *Aeterne rerum conditor*, consists of eight strophes. It is based on the poeticisation of apostle Peter's denial of Christ and the crowing of the cock that marks the arrival of a new day but also the arrival of the true sun – Christ, the Son of God. The hymn theologically unfolds the verse from the Gospel according to John 1:5 (the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it). The hymn also recalls the event from the Gospel according to Matthew 14, where Christ walks on water and saves apostle Peter, who tries to get to him on the water but starts to drown and Christ saves him. Christ as the Son of God forgives and helps the apostle Peter, who is in misery, to get up again.[54]

An afternoon hymn, *Iam surgit hora tertia*, also consists of eight strophes. It was composed to be recited at three o'clock in the afternoon, when according to tradition Christ died on the cross. The third strophe recalls Christ's destruction of the original sin and the reign of death; Christ's entrustment of his mother, the Virgin Mary, to the disciple John; the miracles that came along

44 Williams, Michael Stuart: The Politics of Heresy in Ambrose of Milan. Community and Consensus in Late Antique Christianity. Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 58-110.

45 Fontaine, Jacque: Naissance de la poésie dans l'Ocident Chrétien. Esquisse d'une histoire de la poésie latine chrétienne du IIIe au Vie siècle. Paris, Études Augustiniennes, 1981, p. 124-141.

46 Jullien, Marie-Hélène: Les sources de la tradition ancienne des quatorze Hymnes attribuées à saint Ambroise de Milan. In: Revue d'histoire des textes, bulletin n. 19, 1989/1990, p. 57-189;

47 Augustinus: retr. I,21,1, CCL 57, p. 62.

48 Augustinus: nat. et gr. 74, CSEL 60, p. 289.

49 Augustinus: conf. 9,12, CCL 27, p. 140.

50 Augustinus: p. 372, 3, PL 39,1661-1663.

51 Bastiaensen, Antoon: Les Hymnes d'Ambroise de Milan: A Propos d'une Nouvelle Edition. In: *Vigiliae Christianae* 48, no. 2, 1994, p. 161.

52 Augustinus: conf. 9,15, CCL 27, p. 141-142.

53 Dunkle, Brian P.: *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan*. Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 24-28.

54 Horka, Róbert: Hymny Aeterne rerum conditor a Deus creator omnium svätého Ambróza. Acta 1/2011, p. 78-83.

with faith in Jesus, the Son of God. The final strophe was written in an anti-Arian spirit, putting the emphasis on Mary giving birth to God-man who sits at the right side of God the Father.

An evening hymn, *Deus creator omnium*, likewise has eight strophes and the last of them has theological content worthy of our exploration.[55] It has obvious doxological and trinitary content, thanks to which it is clearly aimed against Arians.[56] Christ is related to Father by the word "*et*", which – as suggested by bishop Basil the Great in his work *On the Holy Spirit* – means equality of used constituents of the sentence, i. e. enumerated persons.[57] Another part of the hymn mentions that the Spirit equally belongs to the Father and the Son, which is aimed not only against Arians but also against Macedonians, who denied the deity of the Holy Spirit. There can be found the word *patrisque*, the meaning of which is close to the term *filioque* found in Augustine's works.[58]

A Christmas hymn, *Intende qui regis Israel*, also consists of eight strophes. The whole hymn has a strong Christological background. In the third strophe Ambrose mentions the Incarnation of the Son of God (the Son of God has been incarnated in the Word); in the fifth he writes that the incarnated Son of God exists in two substances (hero of dual substance). In the seventh strophe Ambrose emphasises in a clearly anti-Arian spirit that the Son is equal to the Father (equal to the eternal Father).

Conclusion

In the submitted study we contextually analysed the significant systematic Christological treatises of Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan. In his pre-Chalcedonian Christology he underlines full deity and full humanity of Christ, opposing the heretics of his time. Christ and his redeeming work[59] thus represent the centre of his theological thinking: Christ is the Son of God and is equal to the Father, being also a true man consisting of body and soul who was incarnated to save humans. His deity was not lessened by his incarnation and death. The Council of Chalcedon does not mention Ambrose's works, relying – from the point of view of the Latin Roman Church – on the thinking of Pope Leo the Great. However, we can still witness a gradual doctrinal maturing. The translation and exegesis of the Christological texts of Leo the Great that we have been working on will enable us to include the results of this study oriented to the concrete author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly and directly contributed intellectually to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

55 Piáčková Gabriela: Sv. Ambrož: Deus creator omnium. In. Studa Theologica VI, jaro 2004, p. 20-38.

56 Horka, Róbert: Hymny Aeterne rerum conditor a Deus creator omnium svätého Ambróza. Acta 1/2011, p. 87-98.

57 Lichner, Miloš: „Sv. Bazil Veľký o Svätom Písme a tradícii." In: *Viera a život*, r. 4 (2013), p. 79.

58 Lichner, Miloš: Príspevok k poznaniu cyrilo-metodskej teológie: spresnenie chápania Filioque z pohľadu sv. Augustína. In: *Kultúrna identita gréckokatolíkov vo svetle cyrilo-metodského dedičstva I.* (kol. Monografia: M. Lichner, Š. Marinčák, P. Žeňuch. Bratislava : Dobrá kniha, 2013, p. 9-30.

59 Ambrose: Traité sur l'évangile de s. Luc, IV,11-19, SC 52 Les édition du Cerf, Paris 1956, p. 155-158.

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PRE-CHALCEDONIAN CHRISTOLOGY OF BISHOP AMBROSE OF MILAN IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGICAL DISCOURSES |
Miloš Lichner, Józef Kulisz

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CHRISTIAN FAMILIES AS PROTAGONISTS OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION*

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Ladislav Csontos

Faculty of Theology, Trnava University in Trnava (SK)

Abstract
Background: The study analyses the challenges emerging from the ongoing Synod on Syno-dality in connection with the role of Christian family in dechristianized environment. It focuses on key dimensions of the Synod - communion, participation and mission – and on deepening the theological understanding of Christian family. The study is structured in the following way: after briefly outlining the most problematic elements contained in the contemporary understand-ing of marriage and family we point to three crucial areas of married and family life lived in the context of faith: the transmission of faith from parents to children, the key role of kerygma and paschal mystery in the pastoral care of families and missionary testimony of families in ecclesial and civil community. Finally we highlight the invitations to pastoral conversion and outline the perspectives of further research in the field of pastoral theology and studying the missionary potentialities of the family.
Conclusion: A number of current sociological surveys show that in the case of numerous be-lievers their understanding of Christian marriage has undergone considerable changes. We are witnessing high level of tolerance for cohabitation and divorce going hand in hand with low level of understanding the essence of Christian marriage, which constitutes an urgent challenge inviting all of those who are involved in these issues to deeper study of Christian married life and revision of current pastoral methods.
Keywords: Christian marriage – Transmission of faith – Parish community – Evangelization –Synodality.

Introduction

The teachings of the Second Vatican Council include the following statement: "At all times and places but particularly in areas where the first seeds of the Gospel are being sown, or where the Church is just beginning, or is involved in some serious difficulty, Christian families can give effective testimony to Christ before the world by remaining faithful to the Gospel and by providing a model of Christian marriage through their whole way of life. To facilitate the attainment of the goals of their apostolate, it can be useful for families to be brought together into groups" (AA 11). This is a vision that should inspire the evangelization efforts of the Church, especially in the present situation when many say that the institution of marriage is outdated and other forms of partnership are being spread. Therefore, we want to take a deeper look at the situation of the

current Christian family and the challenges it faces so that it could become a protagonist of the new evangelization. Together with Pope Francis, we realize that families need the Church, and the Church needs families so that it could be present in people's lives and contemporary social environments. Without domestic churches, the Church as a whole becomes alienated from the concrete reality of life. Without the contribution of families the Church cannot take roots in places and situations where people feel at home. This implies the necessity of pastoral conversion that involves accompaniment of the family and renewed proclamation of the Gospel.[2]

Where do the problems of today's family stem from

Today, "the marriage out of love" and "conjugal family" that originated in the social context of European and North American bourgeoisie in the 19th century constitute the basic, predominant model of marriage. "Marriage out of love" is associated with the idea that the only legitimate motivation for entering into marriage is love, which implies that conjugal union is based on free choice of both partners, not on the matters of property or the will of the parents. "Conjugal family" means a separate household of married couple with minor children where at least one of the spouses is employed outside home. The main purposes of this relatively autonomous form of marriage and family consist in ensuring emotional balance, stability and physical regeneration, providing mutual assistance and solidarity, as well as in procreation and upbringing of children. Since current family it is no longer an (agrarian) productive community, family members are also involved in extra-familial social groups such as school, workplace, and various associations.[3] In the course of the twentieth century, the prevailing understanding of love shifted even farther in the direction of emotional love and infatuation.[4]

This development was strongly enhanced by the introduction and rapid spread of contracep-tive pill that abolished the natural connection between sexuality and fertility. Sure, contraceptives have always existed, but their safety and ease of use have never been comparable to the pill. In the past, the choice of sexual partner largely overlapped with the choice of parent for one's own children. This is no longer the case. What dominates today is the mentality of freeing women from the "fate" of motherhood, making it easier for them to develop their professional talents and escape economic dependence on men. The dangers of this development did not remain unnoticed. Paul VI prophetically drew attention to the risks for humanity that arise from breaking the link between sexuality and fertility. As a result the motivation to control one's own sexual impulses has been considerably weakened and new mental framework emerged, dominated by emotions. Romantic concept of love has gained ground, implying that love is utterly identified with infatuation. Thus, what is in fact a preliminary stage of love has become its final (and usually also fatal) stage. Sex loses the power and ability to unite and settle down two destinies.[5]

Recent sociological surveys confirm that love is generally understood in emotional and ro-mantic manner. The respondents - women even more than men - consider trust, love, loyalty, sincerity, i.e. the so-called "soft" qualities, as the signs of ideal partnership; on the contrary, "hard" qualities such as consideration, willingness to compromise, understanding, ability to lead a dialogue are valued much less. This corresponds to the widespread opinion: "The end of love is the end of marriage." Actually, under the term "love" is often meant romantic, narcissistic love that

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2   Livio Melina, ed., *Conversione pastorale per famiglia: Sì, ma quale?* (Siena: Edizioni Cantagalli, 2015), 39-40.

3   Michael Sievernich, "Problém rozvedených a znovuzosobášených v Cirkvi z pastorálno-teologického hľadis-ka, " *Teologický časopis* 8, no. 1 (2010): 49.

4   Miloš Lichner, Milan Urbančok, Silvia Brečková, and Tomáš Jelluš, "The change of system in 1989 and its impact on the Catholic Church in Slovakia. Challenges and chances of European Catholic theology, " *Acta Missiologica* 14, no. 2 (2020): 73-85.

5   Rocco Buttiglione, *Risposte amichevoli ai critici di Amoris Laetitia* (Milano: Edizioni ARES, 2017), 162.

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is supposed to ensure blissful moments of unbridled happiness. Suffering and pain are deliberately omitted. Thus, in many cases only the first half of the promise "I will stand by you for better or for worse" applies. Unconditional love for a loved one becomes a conditioned love that lasts only as long as the partner is "usable" for achieving one's own happiness. This ultimately means that it is not the other person that is actually loved, but the happiness she can bring to her "lover".[6]

This understanding of love is far away from the concept of Christian love and Catholic marriage that is understood as inseparable bond of love enduring in happiness and unhappiness, health and illness. Nevertheless, a lot of young people want to get married in church, although in many cases they only vaguely understand the essence of sacramental marriage and Christian love. It often happens that those who want to enter into a sacramental marriage are baptized but as far as practical life is concerned, they are not Christians at all. Hence it is necessary to take into account their own cultural background together with the peculiar values they profess. Sure, these people received baptism, but afterwards were only superficially evangelized. They may feel "the magic of faith", but the Christian formation of their personality is often completely absent or extremely vague. In the past, these problems only occurred in mission territories, but today the whole world has become a huge mission territory. One cannot take as granted firm faith and solid rootedness in moral teaching of the Church. We are facing enormous challenge to support these people in reshaping their inner emotional order, mentality and culture. It is a requirement implied by the law of graduality, which however does not mean any weakening of the requirements of law as such. St. Paul, who was a missionary, understood these things very well. He treated his brothers and sisters wavering in faith as "infants in Christ" giving them "milk, not solid food" as they were not yet ready for it. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 3: 1-2) Today's Church before the eyes of which missionary territories open even in the lands where ancient evangelization took place[7] is called to the new evangelization of current culture. The Pope makes it clear that there are no ready-made solutions. Every continent, every nation, every diocese, and every parish are called to meet their responsibilities and develop their own pastoral approach.[8] Among the main protagonists of this process should be included married couples living the sacramental grace of marriage to the full since this enables them to evangelize their children and social milieu.

The inner evangelization within the family - the transmission of the faith

Christian family is based on the sacrament of matrimony that can be understood in two ways: first, as the act of its celebration; second, as the period of its duration after being celebrated. It follows that the sacrament of matrimony resembles the Eucharist which is a sacrament not only during its celebration but until the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine persist. Similarly, until the spouses live, their union is always the sacrament of Christ and the Church. This is the way the ecclesial mission of Christian marriage and family to accept, maintain, reveal and communicate love as a living image and real partaking in the Christ's love for the Church, his Bride should be interpreted. Seen from this perspective, the Eucharist and matrimony represent two pillars of the symbolic space of Christianity.[9] The other sacraments stem from the symbolic space generated by the power of primordial sacrament - the Eucharist - while the coordinates of the sacramental marriage are in addition rooted in the very nature of the created world. It follows that in virtue

6   Paul M. Zulehner. *Za církev milosrdnou: Manželství a rodina v moderní kultuře* (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2016), 135.
7   Miloš Lichner. "Some Patristic Inspirations for the Theological Study of Spirituality," *Spirituality Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2020): 41-46.
8   Rocco Buttiglione, *Risposte amichevoli ai critici di Amoris Laetitia* (Milano: Edizioni ARES, 2017), 142-144.
9   Marc Ouellet, *Mistero e sacramento dell'amore. Teologia del matrimonio e della famiglia per la nuova evangelizzazione* (Siena: Cantagalli, 2007), 70. See also Renzo Bonetti, *La liturgia dela famiglia. La coppia sacramento dell' amore* (Milano: San Paolo, 2012), 21.

of their celebration, sacraments open a variety of symbolic, creative spaces shaping every life situation encountered by Christianity in the world and society.[10]

During their wedding day, engaged couples not only celebrate the sacrament of marriage, but they literally become the sacrament of marriage. In the act of their mutual self-giving, they celebrate the mystery of the cross; through the way their live their everyday life they celebrate the mystery of Christ's love for the Church: it manifests itself in the way they embrace each other when they return home from work in the evening, in the way they kiss... Every gesture of theirs can become a celebration, because it is a sign through which Christ makes visible his love and perpetuates his sacrifice. Through their married life, they are called to render glory, thanksgiving, and praise to the Lord God and sanctify the people of God. Thus, marriage is not a static sacrament, because it unites two free persons, two currents of life by means of mutual love which they can develop but also neglect. The Church teaches that Christian marriage is the cornerstone of domestic church whose inner vitality is further enfolding in the life of parish and diocesan community where the authentic faith is transmitted and celebrated, above all through the celebration of Eucharist and other sacraments. Thus, the fact that the family makes an integral part of parish community and the Church as such is made even more visible. Priests perform the ministry of the word, usually by preaching, spouses perform the ministry of writing living holy icon by their joint everyday life.[11] Marriage requires cultivating the unity of the spouses like a "mystical plant" that grows and blooms in paradise: indeed, the unity of spouses manifesting itself in their mutual relationship was established by God Himself and reflects His very beauty. In marriage, it is not enough just to say "good morning" or "good night", since what matters are not only the words uttered but also the way they are said, it is not enough just to kiss the partner, since it can be mere formality. It is not enough to say "I love you", these words must radiate the warmth of tenderness. The kingdom of God does not dwell in marriage and the family in the form of "power" and "force", but through the way of life characterised by service and giving life with such generosity and readiness that no obstacle can prevent doing it and no justification or response is needed. It is giving without measure, a gift for the sake of gift, the anticipation of self-giving for the sake of self-giving, which comes hand in hand with the generous embracement of the gift of life and offers forgiveness even face to face misunderstanding and injustice.[12]

Spouses make their faith and love visible in their joint daily life that becomes the basic educational tool and the key principle of transmitting the faith. Humans are mimetic beings, they learn by imitation. This is particularly true of preschool age, not excluding the matters of faith. The most natural way of embracing the faith is to encounter it in the daily testimony of its witnesses.[13] Hence, the personal testimony, the example of parents and other family members is of utmost importance. This is the case from the very beginning of human life and life of faith, as exemplified by the experience of the Old and New Testament's people of God. Thus, at first comes the reality of life which is followed by the word allowing the testimony to reach people. It must be added immediately that the home wherein the child is born is not only the home of personal relationships, but also "the home of words". From the very first moment of their existence babies

10   José Granados, "Senza differenza sessuale niente simbolismo: antropologia nuziale e teologia sacramentaria," in *Il Matrimonio cardine dell'economia sacramentaria*, ed. Alexandra Diriart, and Mirjana Gegaj (Siena: Cantagalli, 2017), 53.
11   Renzo Bonetti, *La liturgia dela famiglia. La coppia sacramento dell' amore* (Milano: San Paolo, 2012), 17-31.
12   Renzo Bonetti, *Come in terra così in cielo. Coppia e famiglia: quando l' amore è per sempre* (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 2017), 24-27.
13   Robert Cheaib, "La casa luogo di custodia e promozione dell fede," in *Per la Grazia del Sacramento delle Nozze. Anche la casa è risorsa pastorale per evangelizzare e far comunità* , ed. Renzo Bonetti (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 2018), 45-46.

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are enveloped by the womb of language. We do not invent language, but rather are born in it like in the womb. Only by "inhabiting" the language and accepting the beliefs that precede us we can learn to speak. In the family, the language consists of words inherited from past generations that contain[18] the culture of our country and ancestors. However, there are also radically simple, absolutely univocal, crystal-clearly structured words in the family that allow the child to learn the language in the atmosphere of peace and calmness: the word of marital vow exchanged by the parents and the name they gave to the child.[14]

Proclamation of faith to spouses and kerygma

Christ's missionary mandate to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15) is fulfilled by the testimony of life, not by moralizing and proclaiming the norms of canon law. Christians should not repeat learned formulas but rather proclaim what they personally experience. Therefore the pastoral care of engaged couples, young married couples, spouses overcoming crises, the divorced and remarried should be based on the truth that our Lord is full of love, mercy and tenderness. Above all, he is full of love for sinners, for us, sinners - thieves, bullies, adulterers, liars, pretenders, gamblers... God has great, immense love for every human being. He loves us so foolishly that he gives life for everyone without exception, even for the most abominable perverts, for paedophiles, for the worst of all villains. God Himself gives life for them. He is full of love for all of those who have failed. He generously accepts all of them, including the divorced and remarried.[15]

This is what all sinners need. They need not only to hear about but also experience God's love and goodness. All engaged couples, spouses, families need the Gospel. They need Jesus Christ. Knowing and loving him is the deepest of all human needs. This, often unconscious, but real need reaches us in the form of the cry of those who diverted from the faith, who do not believe, who suffer from the loss of humanity, from the emptiness of life deprived of meaning or from the unkindness, injustice and indifference of people who avoid noticing their needs and complaints. Their cry is a challenge and obligation for us Christians, even though we are weak ourselves. Let us listen to their calling: Help us![16] Kerygma is sacramental in its nature: the words proclaiming Christ's death, resurrection and new presence in the communion of the Church (kerygma of the coming God's kingdom) are only brought to perfection by Christian's death to sin, resurrection and new life in Christ (paschal kerygma).[17]

The experience of God's action leads to faith and conversion. An example of this is the Pentecost sermon of St. Peter the Apostle found in Acts of the Apostles 2:14-41. At the beginning comes the experience of God's action arousing interest and opening the minds of the listeners to the proclamation of god news. In the Acts of the Apostles, each proclamation of kerygma is preceded by a miracle that causes astonishment and surprise, opening the ears of people and preparing them to listening as faith comes from hearing the message. The first miracle recorded in the Acts of the Apostles - the miracle of tongues - took place on the day of Pentecost. People from different nations (Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Arabs...) heard St. Peter's proclamation of

kerygma, each in their own language: "You put Jesus of Nazareth to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead. God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."(Cf. Acts 2:22.24.36) In the Old Testament the word "Lord" (Kyrios) refers to God. It means that Peter actually proclaimed: "This Jesus is the Lord, he is God."[18] His bold speech was followed by numerous conversions and baptisms.

Those who want to devote themselves to pastoral care of marriage and pastoral ministry in general should make their own the confession of St. Paul Apostle: "Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. ... We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you"" (2 Corinthians 5: 14-15.20-21.6:1-2). Pastoral workers should make feel this reality to everyone, not excluding divorced and homosexual people. They should not take strict legal approach, but rather follow Jesus' way of approaching people: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2).

The radicalness of kerygma reveals itself very clearly in connection with the range of issues bound to marriage. No other field of pastoral activity seems to be so closely connected to such dramatic questions and tensions like the pastoral care of marriage. The presence of kerygma is absolutely crucial to solving the question of the nature of the sacramental marriage and the way it differs *in concreto* from the non-sacramental married life. Baptism is received in faith, and the other sacraments can be only received after being baptized. Gradually, this sense of baptism has disappeared in favour of priestly and conjugal spirituality. Nevertheless, currently we are experiencing the renewal of the life of faith drawing its vigour directly from baptism. This also affects the position of spouses in parish community. Strengthened by the power of faith and love, they should primarily represent God's closeness to us and his voluntary fidelity. They should bear witness to this reality in the midst of the community of believers.[19]

The family bears witness in community

At present, new relational and family patterns together with a new lifestyle are sought.[20] Lifestyle as such is characterized by a complex interplay of voluntary behaviour forms in given life situations based on individual choice among various options emerging in different areas of human life. Choice practised in the form of voluntary building a meaningful lifestyle can help not only parents, but the whole family.[21] As was already indicated, sacramental marriage understood and lived as a permanent sacrament is able to transform everyday life events into a coherent Christian lifestyle that can be shared with other families in the context of parish community. As a matter of fact, the family as such has natural ability to deeply share their inner life with the people around them, and therefore can, in their own, specific way, proclaim the good news of

14 José Granados, "La casa ,luogo telogico'," in *Per la Grazia del Sacramento delle Nozze. Anche la casa è risorsa pastorale per evangelizzare e far comunità* , ed. Renzo Bonetti (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 2018), 81.

15 Argüello Kiko, *Kerygma. V barakoch s chudobnými* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2013), 93.

16 Antonio Cañizares Llovera, "Predslov," in Argüello Kiko, *Kerygma. V barakoch s chudobnými* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2013), 13.

17 Pavel Ambros, "Kerygma jako imperativ současné farní pastorace", in Michal Altrichter, Pavel Ambros, Ferdinando Castelli, Marta Lucie Cincialová , Bernardo Commodi, Václav Kodet, Karel Sládek, and Antonio Spadaro, *Studijní texty ze spirituální teologie IV. Duchovní život a kerygma* (Olomouc: Refugium Velehrad-Roma, 2010), 9-10.

18 Argüello Kiko, *Kerygma. V barakoch s chudobnými* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2013), 86-87.

19 Pavel Ambros, "Kerygma jako imperativ současné farní pastorace", in Michal Altrichter, Pavel Ambros, Ferdinando Castelli, Marta Lucie Cincialová , Bernardo Commodi, Václav Kodet, Karel Sládek, and Antonio Spadaro, *Studijní texty ze spirituální teologie IV. Duchovní život a kerygma* (Olomouc: Refugium Velehrad-Roma, 2010), 27-29.

20 Mariana Hamarová, "Možnosti prevencie nedorozumení v manželstve prostredníctvom etického prístupu Ursa Baumanna," in *Kultúrne a sociálne vplyvy na stabilitu rodiny*, ed. Ladislav Csontos, and Józef Młyński (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2019), 90.

21 Mária Šmidová, Magdaléna Kollárová, Marek Šmid, *Kvalita života rodín s dieťaťom so špecifickými potrebami. Výsledky kvantitatívneho výskumu* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2019), 76.

the gospel in a very credible way. They can and should do so above all at home via joint family prayer, mutual love among the family members, loving attention to other people, good example, mutual encouragement to good deeds and Christian upbringing of children.

For a family, its field of evangelization is also the environment in which it lives.[22] The evangelizing mission of the family also concerns the ecclesial community: the family performs it primarily by participating faithfully and persistently in Sunday Holy Mass, by actively participating in the life of the parish community to the extent the circumstances allow it, and, last but not least, by taking an active part in the pastoral care of families. This form of pastoral ministry can be carried out by participating in the preparation of engaged couples for marriage, education of young people for love, permanent formation of married couples regarding the matters of partnership and parenthood, accompaniment of couples living in irregular unions, the involvement in the life of family movements and many other activities. The family also brings the leaven of the gospel into the civic community by bearing and educating new citizens for the society, inculcating social virtues to them, helping people who suffer from any form of poverty and social exclusion, concretely living and promoting the attitude of civic engagement and by practising many other forms of active citizenship.[23]

Today, like in apostolic times, families and their homes represent primary places for evangelization. In apostolic times, Christian families were not only the places of importance; they were much more than this - basic units, living cells forming the community of the universal Church, basic units and cells making it possible to live in and confess the faith as well as to spread the Gospel in the Jewish and pagan world. In analogy to living organisms, in these cells the processes of assimilation, growth and multiplication of faith take place. The Church and family are linked by a relationship characterised by mutual reciprocity: the Church is the mother who gives birth to every newly baptised infusing him/her with the life of Christ; the family raises their children and accompanies them on their way of growth, being aware that she was made participant in the "nuptial mystery" of the Church, the Bride of the Word (cf. Ephesians 5:21-33) and committed herself to follow family precepts she received (Cf. Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-23; 1 Peter 3:1-7). The family represents the space within and by means of which the faith is transmitted, the Passover of the Resurrected celebrated and the proclamation of salvation carried out.[24] The upbringing taking place in the family is not primarily based on the process of education but rather on the testimony of life, on natural relations of fatherhood and motherhood stemming from the divine fatherhood reflecting the fruitful love of Creator for the created universe.[25]

The discussions held at the Synod on the Family 2015 revealed the need to accompany the married couples and their families. Through this form of accompaniment, the mission mandate of the family is being fulfilled.[26] The accompaniment should be carried out according to the example of the Good Samaritan guiding the steps of the Church face to face human misery, not excluding the frailty that can be encountered in families. In this context there emerges special need to pay attention to the family, accompanying it in the whole range of difficult situations it

faces. Special attention should be paid to the divorced living alone but also the remarried, and those who live in incomplete families. These people are day by day met by Christian families who are called to hear their cry and lend a helping hand to the families in difficult situations. Their task is to help them find the way of healing their wounds, but not only this. By bearing witness to unquestionable value of the family they should introduce their wounded brothers and sisters into the community of faith. In a word, Christian families are called to overcome the temptation of selfish individualism. It is in the first place mothers who represent a very effective remedy for this plague, falsifying its central dogma according to which people cannot share their richness without being impoverished. In contradiction with this, mothers share the whole of their being - body and mind - by giving life to the child and making it grow. Mothers who give life to children heal the wound of egoism and individualism[27], literally keeping the world alive. Doing so, they notice it not only their children but also themselves who grow and develop their potential.[28] In this way families provide guidance to families.

In Slovakia, especially among the clergy, still persists a problematic premise - the process of accompaniment is narrowly understood as spiritual accompaniment and guidance only. Actually, as far as this type of accompaniment is concerned, priests lack the required experience and competence since the guidance of families primarily consists in passing on the Christian family lifestyle which is at best remotely familiar to priest living in celibacy. Therefore, it is necessary that families accompany families.[29] The need of this type of guidance is particularly urgent with regard to young families who are to adopt the Christian family lifestyle, but not only in their case. All Christians need to be accompanied and live their faith within community. No one can make their journey to God as isolated individual. Realizing this is essential for overcoming individualism that also contaminates Christian community. Family is the first place of accompaniment for its members and the paradigm for all others types of guidance.[30] Authentic Christianity cannot be lived in a mere individualistic manner, but only in community. In this framework the Church can no longer be understood as a hierarchy only (although this is the way it is still - erroneously - perceived today) but rather as organically ordered people of God where, instead of everybody doing everything, every one carries out his own task for the good of the whole. (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31). All of this requires conversion, the renewal of thought, heart and practice in our communities, in the life of married couples but above all among clergy who are since centuries ago used to consider themselves as the only group of believers responsible for the Church. Everyone without exception, no matter whether belonging among spouses, priests or consecrated person, has a share in common responsibility to be fulfilled via mutual cooperation.[31]

22 For a more extensive treatment of this topic see Józef Kulisz, Miloš Lichner, Andrej Filipek, Jozef Kyselica, Helena Lukianová, and Silvia Sýkorová, "Return of the Encyclical Fratelli Tutti to the Patristic roots of Christian Social Tradition, " *Acta Missiologica* 15, no. 1 (April 2021): 180-190.

23 Glória Braunsteiner, Ladislav Csontos, Krzysztof Trębski, *Obnovená teológia manželstva a rodiny* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2019), 61-62.

24 Carlo Rocchetta, *Teologia della famiglia. Fondamenti e prospettive* (Bologna: EDB, 2011), 394-395.

25 Roberto Carelli, "La casa, scuola di comunione delle differenze," in *Per la Grazia del Sacramento delle Nozze. Anche la casa è risorsa pastorale per evangelizzare e far comunità*, ed. Renzo Bonetti (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 2018), 135-137.

26 Ján Pavol II., Apoštolská exhortácia *Familiaris consortio*, 38.

27 Miloš Lichner, Mariana Hamarová, "Vanity of Vanities in the Concept of the Spirituality of Augustine of Hippo, " *Spirituality Studies* 7, no. 2 (Spring 2021): 48-53.

28 Vincenzo Paglia, Antonio Sciortino, *La famiglia – Vocazione e missione nella Chiesa e nel mondo* (Milano: San Paolo, 2015), 113-115.

29 Ladislav Csontos, "Aký obsah by mohla mať mystagogická ketechéza sviatosti manželstva," in *Jednotlivec a rodina v pastoračnej starostlivosti vo farnosti : výzvy Posynodálnej apoštolskej exhortácie Amoris Laetitia* (Trnava: Dobrá kniha, 2017), 31.

30 Livio Melina, ed., *Conversione pastorale per famiglia: Sì, ma quale?* (Siena: Edizioni Cantagalli, 2015), 76.

31 Carlo Rocchetta, *Senza sposi non c'è Chiesa. Nuove vie di pastorale per/con la famiglia.* (Assisi: Edizioni Porziuncola, 2018), 10-11.

Conclusion

Experience reveals that there still persist two attitudes in the Church that downplay the importance of the family. The first one consists in considering the family as mere "consumer" of parish activity, instead of seeing it as primordial subject of parish life and activity. The second one can be summarised as follows: the family is often seen as a problem rather than the source of real richness. We still lack sufficiently deep comprehension of the principle that understanding its place in the context of ecclesial community constitutes a rare opportunity for building the Mystical Body of Christ and carrying out fruitful evangelization.[32] Actually, family is the basic cell of both the Church and human society. This is why it represents one of the key issues discussed in the course of the Synodal Process on Synodality - it is above all the family where communion, participation and mission are lived. This is what primarily constitutes the Church as a community of communities, or, understood in a more basic sense, the community of families. We cannot but agree with the opinion of Msgr. Piero Coda: "Although trying to avoid exaggerated enthusiasm, I suppose that this is the most important, most strategic ecclesial event since the Second Vatican Council. The Council made us rediscover the Church as it really is: as the unity in the name of the Father, and of Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as communion and mission. Today, after making the whole journey along which we have gained new energy and experience, we are ready to take the next step. Today we can - with regard to all manifestations of communion and mission of the Church – give a concrete, living form to the participation in the mystery of Christ into which we have been incorporated by the grace of baptism. Hence, holding the Synod on Synodality does not mean focusing on one topic among many others, but rather on the deepest identity of the Church as communion and mission that becomes concrete, historically relevant, only if shared by all. In fact, the Church can only be such in case that it is carried by everyone on their own shoulders and shared by all it in their hearts through generous service to brothers and sisters, especially the emarginated, excluded, discarded ones, to those who live on existential and spiritual peripheries of our times."[33] Expressed in a nutshell, today's Church is facing unprecedented challenge, or better, it was given a unique opportunity. We have a historic opportunity to infuse more ecclesial spirit into families and more family spirit into the Church.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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32   Carlo Rocchetta, *Una Chiesa della tenerezza* (Bologna: Centro editoriale dehoniano, 2018), 262.

33   Piero Coda, "Synodálny proces je najstrategickejšia cirkevná udalosť od Koncilu," Vatican news, accessed accessed January 30, 2022, https://www.vaticannews.va/sk/cirkev/news/2021-10/teolog-piero-coda-synodalny-proces-je-najstrategickejsia- cirkev.html

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Expert articles

SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT DEMAND SURVEY*

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Martin Dojčár [1] ✉, Monika Zaviš [2], Kristína Pinčeková [3]

[1] Faculty of Education, Trnava University (SK) ; Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research (MN, US)
[2] Faculty of Education, Comenius University (SK)
[3] Faculty of Education, Comenius University (SK)

Abstract
Background: The current study is an outcome of the first phase of the project on spiritual accompaniment titled *The Spiritual Accompaniment Program for University Teachers*, which is aimed at examination of demand of university teachers of theology, religious studies, and related fields to acquire or/and develop the competence of spiritual accompaniment. The demand is researched by the means of a questionnaire survey. The aim of the study is to present the results of this survey and to interpret them regarding the overall objective of the project.
Conclusion: Findings from our spiritual accompaniment demand survey undoubtedly show that the interest in spiritual accompaniment competence prevails to disinterest among respondents under investigation. Our respondents made it as clear as possible that there is the need for such a competence among university teachers of theology, religious studies, and related fields in Slovakia.
Keywords: Spiritual accompaniment – Spiritual accompaniment competency – Lifelong learning – Educational program.

Introduction

Education aimed at acquiring the competence of spiritual accompaniment is a complete novelty in Slovakia. The topic of spiritual accompaniment has not yet been dealt with in theory or practice at institutions of higher education in the country. At the same time, spiritual accompaniment is one of the key competences related to spirituality – practical spirituality is not conceivable without it. Applied research project *The Spiritual Accompaniment Program for University Teachers* is created to fill this gap. Its main objective is to design such a program of spiritual accompaniment that can be implemented into the lifelong education of university teachers of theology, religious studies, and related fields.

Our project on spiritual accompaniment is designed to respond to current institutional challenges and framing needs of practice in lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is one of the politi-

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cal priorities of both the Slovak Republic and the European Union. With the *Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011* and the *Lifelong Learning and Counseling Strategy for 2021–2030*, the Slovak Republic is committed to the European Commission's *Europe 2020* strategy, which considers progress in this area in the Member States to be crucial.[2] In Slovakia, Act no. 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning defines lifelong learning as "a set of activities that take place during life in order to improve the knowledge, skills and competences of individuals" (§ 2, par. 1).

Lifelong learning, as a deliberate educational activity aimed at improving knowledge, skills and competences, is focused on the development of basic competencies of an individual that support one's qualification and personal development, since "education should not be aimed only at meeting professional development needs, but also to develop the personality of an individual in the area of one's realization in society and in the development of one's personal interests".[3] Consequently, educational institutions should provide education based also on citizens' requirements for their personal development.[4] The Spiritual Accompaniment Program for University Teachers directly responds to the requirement "to develop the personality of the individual in the area of one's realization in society and in the development of one's personal interests". Further, in accordance with the request that educational institutions should provide education based also on citizens' demands, The Spiritual Accompanying Program for University Teachers is designed as a part of higher education in its lifelong form. Based on the presumption that among the institutions of higher education, Theological faculties would meet best specifies of such a program, these are proposed as a possible provider of the program. Pursuant to the provisions of § 2, par. 3) of Act no. 568/2009 Coll. on lifelong learning, the project will offer university teachers the opportunity to "supplement, renew, expand, or deepen [note: their] qualification" or "to satisfy [note: their] interests".

Our research project is realized in a sequence of four consecutive steps, of which the first deals with the identification of framing needs of practice in lifelong learning of university teachers of theology, religious studies, and related fields. More specifically, the first phase examines the demand of this category of university teachers to acquire or/and develop the competence of spiritual accompaniment. This demand is researched by the means of a questionnaire survey. The aim of current study is to present the results of this survey and to interpret them regarding the overall objective of the project.

Theoretical Framework of the Project on Spiritual Accompaniment

The Spiritual Accompaniment Program for University Teachers is built around the notion of spiritual accompaniment. This key concept of the program finds its traditional "location" in spirituality. Here it's well documented – either in the history of Christian spirituality,[5] or in non-Christian spiritualities.[6]

For the purpose of the project, the Ignatian interpretation of spiritual accompaniment was borrowed due to the fact that it has been elaborated extensively in the Ignatian spirituality and pedagogy throughout almost five hundred years of their history. The Ignatian model of spiritual accompaniment thus serves as a reference model to our purposes. Responding to the framing needs of practice in lifelong learning, the project adapts the reference model to the needs of

Slovak educational practice notably in its final outcome of the educational program of lifelong learning.

The primary sources for defining the meaning of the project's keystone notion of spiritual accompaniment are represented by the *Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*, his autobiography and correspondence. Among the primary sources from the field of Ignatian pedagogy belongs the anthology *Ignatian Pedagogy: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Jesuit Education from St. Ignatius to Today*.[7] Historical studies of spiritual accompaniment in the history of Christian spirituality, more notably in early Christianity, are also considered important source, since the history of Christianity tells us that "whenever there has been a spiritual and cultural renewal in thought or action (these two realities are constantly interconnected), it has always happened in the context of the teachings of the Church Fathers".[8]

Participants, Procedure and Measures

Our research sample involved 50 respondents, all of them university teachers from various universities and faculties in Slovakia specialized in theology, religious studies, or other related fields. Their opinions were analyzed in a quantitative way and consequently interpreted within the overall context of the project.

The research was conducted through the questionnaire, which was made available online for respondents in Google Forms between March 9 and March 17, 2022. The distribution and administration of the questionnaire followed the general ethical criteria set for this type of quantitative research.

The anonymous questionnaire was designed specifically for the purpose to obtain data from university teachers from the fields of theology, religious studies, and other related fields, as we presuppose that among those professionals there is a higher probability of the need for the competence of spiritual accompaniment than among teaching professionals specialized otherwise. The questionnaire consists of 19 items and was partly inspired by the standardized questionnaires, namely FICA Spiritual Assessment Tool and Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ), along with the methodology for identifying problems of teaching practice by Martin Brestovanský and Katarína Kotuľáková.[9]

Structured in three parts, the questionnaire gradually develops the research line set by three hypotheses. The three thematic areas of the questionnaire are:
1. Self-reflection of the teacher's spiritual or religious orientation (questions # 5–6).
2. Teacher's perception of spiritual needs of students (questions # 7–10).
3. Teacher's view of the need for academic grounding of education aimed at acquiring the competence of spiritual accompaniment (questions # 11–19).

Purposely created combination of open and closed queries related to these areas provided us with data that were scrutinized in an analytical manner, as demonstrated in the part Results, and further interpreted with regard to our hypotheses in the part Discussion. Hypotheses were constructed as follows:

2   *Europe 2020*, p. 20.
3   *Lifelong Learning Strategy 2011*, p. 26.
4   Ibid. Chapter 3.
5   Martin Dojčár, *Mystická kontemplácia* (Bratislava: Iris, 2008), p. 37, 44–46, 48–49.
6   Martin Dojčár, "Hugo Makibi Enamiya-Lassalle, SJ: A Pioneer of the Dialogue of Spiritual Experience," *Acta Missiologica* 13 no. 2, (2019): p. 40.

7   José Mesa, ed., *Ignatian Pedagogy: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Jesuit Education from St. Ignatius to Today*. (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2017).
8   Miloš Lichner, "Some Patristic Inspirations for the Theological Study of Spirituality," *Spirituality Studies* 6, no. 2, (2020): p. 41.
9   Martin Brestovanský, Katarína Kotuľáková, *Ako identifikovať problem praxe vo vyučovaní na našej škole*. (Trnava: Pedagogická fakulta TU, 2020).

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H1: More respondents share the opinion that their personal spiritual or religious experiences are an important prerequisite for their personal competence of spiritual accompaniment comparing to the number of respondents who disagree.

H2: The claim that sufficient attention is paid to the personal spirituality of students in the academic environment in Slovakia is held by significantly fewer respondents than the claim that not enough attention is paid to it.

H3: The need for education and training of university teachers in the field of spiritual accompaniment of students is claimed by the majority of respondents, while the minority of respondents claims that it is not necessary or that they have no opinion in this regard.

Results
The description of our findings follows the order of individual items of the questionnaire.

Question 1: I am: Man, Woman.
Overall, 50 respondents took part in the survey, of which 32 (64%) were men, and 18 (36%) were women.

Question 2: Enter your highest academic degree.

Figure 1 displays the overall structure of academic degrees of respondents.
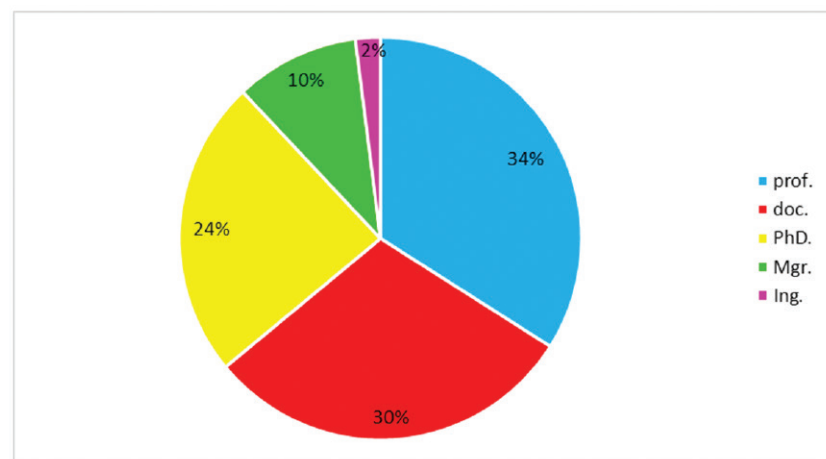
Figure 1. Academic Degrees of Respondents

Question 3. Enter the name of the university and faculty you currently work for.
Respondents from the Comenius University in Bratislava were affiliated in this manner: 7 (14%) from the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty, 5 (10%) from the Faculty of Education, 2 (4%) from the Faculty of Theology, 1 (2%) from the Faculty of Philosophy, and 1 (2%) from the Faculty of Law. Respondents from the Trnava University in Trnava had the following institutional affiliation: 8 (16%) from the Faculty of Education, 6 (12%) from the Faculty of Theology, and 2 (4%) from the Faculty of Philosophy. One (2%) respondent affiliated to the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava completed the survey. One (2%) respondent from the Catholic University in Ružomberok claimed his affiliation to the Faculty of Philosophy and 2 (4%) to the Faculty of Education. Seven (14%) respondents from the Greek-Catholic Theological Faculty at University of Prešov in Prešov took part in the survey. From the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, there were 3 (6%) respondents from the Faculty of Education. Finally, 3 (6%) respondents took part in the survey from the Institute of Missionary Work and Tropical Health Care of St. John Paul II. One (2%) respondent stated that currently is not working for any university in Slovakia.

Question 4: Indicate length of your teaching practice in years.

Table 1 displays the length of teaching practice of respondents.
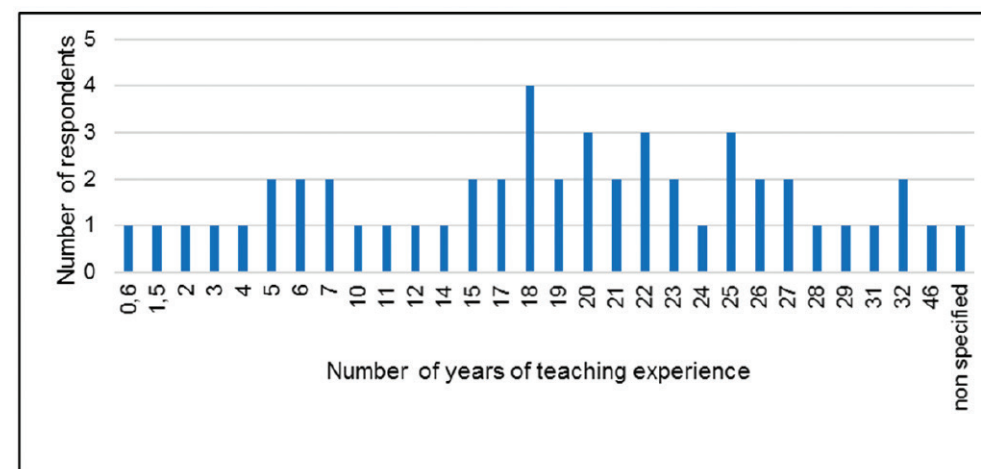
Table 1. Length of Teaching Practice of Respondents in Years

Question 5: Do you consider yourself spiritually or religiously oriented person?
Up to 48 (96%) respondents considered themselves to be spiritually or religiously oriented. Only 2 (4%) respondents made their choice for the "No" option.

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Question 6: Do you think that your personal spiritual or religious experience is an important prerequisite for your competence of spiritual accompaniment?

Up to 41 (82%) respondents agree that their personal spiritual experience is an important prerequisite for their competence to spiritually accompany others. Only 4 (8%) respondents do not agree with this statement and another 4 (8%) choose the option "I do not know". One (2%) respondent agreed with the statement with the reservation not applying spiritual accompaniment in the teaching process.

Question 7: Do you observe spiritual or religious aspirations of your students without even asking them directly?

Spiritual or religious aspirations of their students were observed by 36 (72%) respondents according to their statements, while 6 (12%) respondents didn't notice any kind of spiritual aspiration of their students, and 6 (12%) respondents selected the "I don't know" option. Two (4%) respondents said that students like to talk about spiritual subjects, but more preferably outside the teaching process.

Question 8: Name at least three of the most common problems you encounter when directly requested by students to provide them with spiritual accompaniment.

The problems of spiritual accompaniment noted by the respondents were as follows: uncertainty, prejudice, environmental influence, authority of the clergy, immaturity and inability to fulfill duties, humility, spiritual growth and life, interpretation of God's will, religious obedience, fluctuating spiritual attitudes, doubts, insufficient distinction between religiosity and faith. Openness to other cultures, loss of initial ambition, various theological problems, naivety of religious thought were also mentioned. Just 7 (14%) respondents stated that they didn't encounter problems in the spiritual accompaniment and 7 (14%) respondents did not comment on the issue because, according to their own statements, they do not accompany students.

Question 9: Do you think that in the academic environment in Slovakia, sufficient attention is paid to personal spirituality of students?

Only 7 (14%) respondents believed sufficient attention is paid to personal spirituality of students at institutions of higher education in Slovakia, while two (4%) respondents stated that they don't know, and up to 38 (76%) respondents chose to answer "No". According to comments of 3 respondents, there are not sufficient opportunities created at the higher education environment to address personal spirituality of students, and the attention to personal spirituality of students is dependent on initiatives of students; according to their belief, it also depends on individual faculties how much attention they pay to personal spirituality of their students.

Question 10: Do you consider important that a teacher providing vocational subjects also reflects the spiritual aspect of his students' personal identity?

According to 34 respondents, it's essential for a teacher to reflect the spiritual aspect of the students' personal identity. Nine respondents disagree with the connection of this kind, and two respondents stated that they don't know. Four respondents commented that it depends on the subject, approach, and personality of a teacher. One of respondents stated that it's of particular importance to reflect student's spirituality in the field of human sciences since spirituality affects the overall attitude of a student not only to one's profession but also to one's self-understanding.

Question 11: Do you perceive the need for education and training of university teachers in the field of spiritual accompaniment of students?

Up to 34 (68%) respondents share the opinion that education and training of university teachers in the field of spiritual accompaniment of students is necessary, while 10 (14%) respondents chose the answer "No" and 3 (6%) respondents chose the option "I don't know". Finally, 3 respondents stated that it depends on the profile of the faculty and the professional orientation of each teacher. In their opinion, it's not appropriate to combine professional training and spiritual accompaniment in the person of one teacher.

Question 12: What should the competence of spiritual accompaniment, in your opinion, include?

According to our respondents, the competence of spiritual accompaniment should include orientation in spiritual matters, excellent knowledge of the matter, the ability to create a tolerant environment based on mutual confidence and expression of one's own opinions. Respondents also repeatedly mentioned critical thinking, personal spiritual experience, tutoring and ability to understand one's religious or spiritual experience. Some respondents also mentioned the ability to deal with stress, social empathy, teamwork, and knowledge of the psychology of religion, theology, and religion itself.

Question 13: Would you be interested in completing a program aimed at developing your spiritual accompaniment competence?

Up to 31 (62%) respondents declared their interest in completing a program aimed at developing their spiritual accompaniment competence, while 11 (22%) respondents stated that they don't know, and 6 (12%) respondents replied "No". Finally, 2 (4%) respondents stated that they have already completed such a program and are applying them in practice.

Question 14: What should not be missing in the content of such a program?

Respondents stated that the content of the program should include psychological and pastoral counseling, addressing social issues from the spiritual point of view, etc. Some believe that spiritual leadership, psychology of spirituality, biblical hermeneutics, knowledge of other religions, tutoring and couching would also be beneficial. Respondents repeatedly stated that it would be beneficial to provide recommendations concerning identification of student's needs. According to several respondents, a greater emphasis should be put on spirituality than on religion.

Question 15: In what form should the program be implemented?

Respondents mentioned several options in their answers, the most frequently workshops, outdoor trainings, discussions, group meetings, attestation trainings, and online seminars.

Question 16: In what periodicity should the individual educational and training units of the program be implemented?

Respondents stated that it depends on the overall setting of the program, especially on the expected goals and outputs. The variant of 50 hours completing by an exam was suggested among other variants as displayed in Table 2.

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Table 2. Proposed Periodicity of Implementation of Educational Program
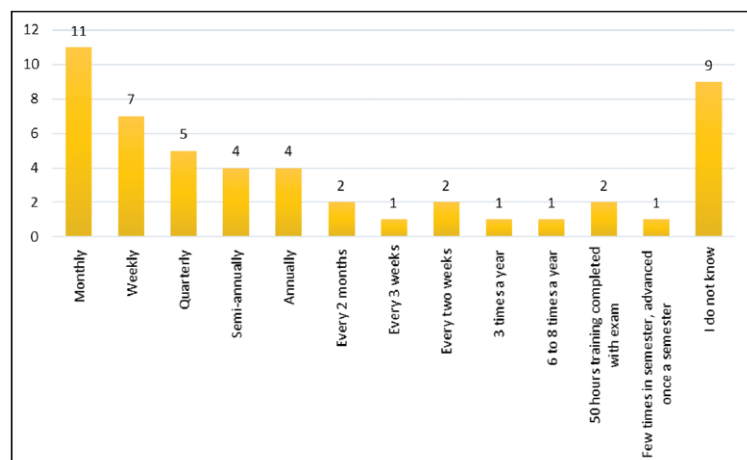
Question 17: What should be the institutional, or material and spatial background of the program?
According to 27 respondents, an institution of higher education should provide facilities as well as technical and material equipment directly at a given institution. On the contrary, 7 respondents believe that the program should be outsourced to a spiritual or pastoral center, while 5 respondents preferer an outdoor environment in nature, and 11 respondents picked the option "I don't know".

Question 18: What should be the professional composition of the program's team?
The most frequently were mentioned professions as: a priest, theologian, psychologist, philosopher, religion scholar, Biblicist, mediator, andrologist, sociologist, or pedagogue.

Question 19: How would you motivate your colleagues, university teachers, to undergo a spiritual accompaniment program?
According to 41 respondents, the internal motivation of an aspirant is of the highest importance – participation in the program should be based primarily on the internal needs. However, several motivation factors were mentioned in this regard, such as interesting lecturers and topics, the possibility of improving the teaching process, internship offers, obtaining a certificate, the possibility of growing skills portfolio, and personal growth.

Discussion
Spiritual care is nowadays an inseparable part of every of world's religions, which all tend to cultivate authentic and internalized spirituality in their confessors. In Slovakia, we speak to a dominant extent of Christian faith or cultural background with its value system that is by society consciously or subconsciously taken over and subsequently applied to everyday life, decision making, attitudes towards different issues, etc. The most often analyzed form of spiritual care concerning scientific publication outputs is internationally the clinical pastoral care,[10] especially

in palliative care;[11] it ultimately has reached even the level of interfaith chaplaincy or even more specifically pet chaplaincy; those exceed all classical forms of spiritual accompaniment in the Christian context of current Slovak society. Spiritual accompaniment education is a complete novelty in Slovakia. Even more novelty represents the issue of spiritual accompaniment of students from the part of their university teachers in those areas of higher education where this is appropriate from the professional, ethical, and legal point of view, such as at faculties of theology. This is a brand-new area that is discussed and researched right now.

In the context of Slovak university education, we are in general used to a strict distinction of pedagogical activity with regards to strict professional ethics focused on requirements of teacher code of conduct[12] that is not allowed to interfere with any kind of personal affairs of students. However, our research has shown, that there is a major difference in perception of these interferences regarding university teachers at theological faculties[13] on one side, and university teachers of humanities and social sciences in general. Whereas university teachers of Christian theological faculties often professionally work simultaneously as pastors or priests,[14] they are more sensitive to the question of spiritual care, accompaniment of their students, as are those of pedagogical, psychological, or other professional focus, that generally do not agree with parallel acting as a teacher and spiritual accompanying in one person. Also, the question of academic area as a field of this kind of joined activity of university teacher has shown a major difference between the teachers of theological and teachers of other disciplines. Theological teachers do not see any ethical problem of providing spiritual accompaniment on the academic ground and do not insist on having a special space, or institutional anchorage of this kind of activity, whereas teachers of other scientific fields place spiritual accompaniment outside the university area.

Multilayered findings stemming from the responses to our questionnaire survey are enriching to a significant extent and therefore we will focus on three areas contained in our hypotheses. Verification of our hypotheses has shown that:

H1: hypothesis #1 has been confirmed. Out of 50 respondents 48 (96%) have responded that they consider themselves to be spiritually or religiously oriented persons. This is in significant correlation to the number of 41 (82%) respondents who agree that their personal spiritual experience is an important precondition of their competence of spiritual accompanying others. Only 2 (4%) of respondents have claimed that they do not consider themselves to be spiritually or religiously oriented, which is also in correlation to a number of 4 (8%) of respondents who claimed that they do not consider their spiritual experience to be of any importance regarding spiritual care of others, or to 4 (8%) of those claiming that they do not know if this is of any significance, or even 1 (2%) respondent who stated that he/she agrees with the assertion that although his/her personal spiritual is of an importance for his spiritual accompaniment of others, he/she is not in primary manner transmitting his/her spiritual orientation to one's own teaching process.

10 Ricko Damberg Nissen, Dorte Toudal Viftrup, Niels Christian Hvidt, "The Process of Spiritual Care," *Front. Psychol.* (2021).

11 Ian Koper, H. Roeline, W. Pasman, Bart P. M. Schweitzer, Annemieke Kuin, Bregje D. Onwuteaka-Philipsen, "Spiritual Care at the End of Life in the Primary Care Setting: Experiences from Spiritual Caregivers – A Mixed Methods Study." *BMC Palliative Care* 18, no. 98 (2019).

12 Marta Gluchmanová, *Profesijná etika v učiteľskom povolaní,* in: MVEK (Prešov: FHPV PU, 2011), pp. 175–185.

13 Christian theological faculties in Slovakia commonly provide spiritual care or spiritual accompaniment via office of spiritual administrator, who is a direct employee of the church, which confession the faculty professes, e.g. at the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty at Comenius University in Bratislava: https://fevth.uniba.sk/en/theological-dormitory/spirituals/; at the Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology at Comenius University in Bratislava: http://www.kscm.sk/o-nas/predstaveni/; at the Greek-Catholic Theological Faculty at University of Prešov in Prešov: https://www.unipo.sk/2224/.

14 Cf. Stephen B. Roberts (ed.), *Professional Spiritual & Pastoral Care: A Practical Clergy and Chaplain's Handbook* (SkyLight Paths, 2011).

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Therefore, we have found out that more respondents share the opinion that their spiritual or religious experiences are an important prerequisite for their personal competence of spiritual accompaniment comparing to the number of respondents who disagree.

H2: hypothesis #2 has been confirmed. Out of 50 respondents in sum 38 (76%) have responded that they don't agree with the statement that students' spirituality is given sufficient attention in the frame of Slovak education system. Only 7 (14%) respondents agree that at Slovak universities there is sufficient attention given to this matter, and 2 (4%) respondents stated that they do not know the answer to this question. Finally, 3 (6%) respondents claimed that there are not sufficient opportunities available for teachers to pay enough attention to spirituality of students and that this only depends on initiative of students. They also claimed that it depends on a particular faculty how much attention they give to the spirituality of their students. In summary, we have found out that in the academic environment in Slovakia there is not sufficient attention paid to the spirituality of students. Slovak universities could be in this regard inspired by foreign universities that approach students as well as patients as a wholeness that is bio-psycho-social-spiritual[15] personalities reckoning all the possible width of the spectrum of the meanings of spirituality.

H3: hypothesis #3 has been confirmed. Out of 50 respondents totally 34 (68%) have responded that there is a need for education and training of university teachers in the area of spiritual accompaniment of students; 10 (14%) stated that it is not needed; 3 (6%) claimed that they don't know, and last 3 (6%) stated that this depends on the profiling of the particular faculty and expertise of every teacher. They do not agree with possibility that vocational training and spiritual accompaniment is done by one and the same person.[16] Number of 34 respondents exceeds the summary number of respondents from theological faculties and theologically profiled departments at other kind of faculties, which is 29, and where we could anticipate this kind of approach. This is an interesting founding, because there are 5 more respondents that are open to the idea of education and training in spiritual accompaniment without them being affiliated to theological academic workplace. This number, 34 (68%) respondents, is though very close to the number of 36 (72%) respondents agreeing with the statement from the question #7, that as teachers they do perceive spiritual aspirations of their students without directly questioning them about these aspirations. Of course, we cannot generally conclude upon this that there is a certain correlation, but it would be interesting to find this out during our further research.

In sum, all the three hypotheses have been confirmed and we perceive these results as encouraging concerning the focus of our project that in this light seems to be practically meaningful and regarding current Slovak education environment and positions of interviewed university teachers also needed.

Conclusion

Findings from our spiritual accompaniment demand survey undoubtedly show that the interest in spiritual accompaniment competence prevails to disinterest among respondents under investigation. Our respondents made it as clear as possible that there is the need for such a competence among university teachers of theology, religious studies, and related fields in Slovakia.

Majority of respondents considers their spiritual or religious experiences to be an important prerequisite for their personal competence of spiritual accompaniment. It is also remarkable that our respondents perceive insufficiency of the attention given to spirituality of students within the Slovak educational system. Both findings are in favor of their declared interest in acquiring the competence of spiritual accompaniment through lifelong learning.

The diverse professional structure and institutional affiliation of all the 50 respondents, who generously took part in our survey, provides us with the evidence of demand for spiritual accompaniment competence from teaching professionals across Slovakia. Scrutiny of their views gives us important suggestions how to set The Spiritual Accompaniment Program for University Teachers so that it would meet the needs of those for whom it is primarily intended.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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15 Marcelo Saad, Roberta de Medeiros, Amanda Cristina Mosini, "Are We Ready for a True Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model? The Many Meanings of 'Spiritual'," Medicines 4, no. 4 (2017): p. 79.

16 Kilian McCurrie, "Spiritual Identities, Teacher Identities, and the Teaching of Writing," Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning 9 (2003/2004).

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THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF FLORENSKY´S CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE SILVER AGE CULTURE*

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Peter Rusnák ✉

Department of Paedagogical Studies, Faculty of Paedagogy, Trnava University in Trnava (SK)

Abstract

Background: The religious question in the history of Russian philosophical thinking of the Silver Age in particular has not been a question of unlocking a new spirituality problem, however, it has always been rather a question newly seen, posed and explored. Theological missiology is standing here before ontology in the sense that human being poses the question of existence and that God reflects the depths of being, descending through asking to fundamentals of existence, to determination of conditions of life. The author believe that a critical reflection and intellectual reception of the Russian philosophy of the Silver Age, specially religious thinking of Pavel Florensky, is still a great open space for examination and discovery of new intellectual impulses that have a potential to address our contemporary era of spirituality. Florensky's religious missiology examines the definition of spirituality and, at the same time, it examines the thought of man and God. The Christian concept of man in a significant way enriches the noetic issue of spirituality aspects by the interpersonal dimension of relationship. Florensky understands missiology as an existential relationship that has deeper meaning (anthropodicy) and is in dialogue with personal God (theodicy).

Conclusion: The main tendencies of the Russian personalist philosophy are the presence of verticality in relation to horizontal relationship between men, and the effort to link transcendence with factuality – which is where Florensky defines his concept of spirituality and spiritual truth, concept of theodicy and anthropodicy.

Keywords: Spirituality – Faith – God – Theodicy – Anthropodicy.

Introduction

The spiritual consequences of metaphysical and mystical thinking of all-unity is unification of the material and the spiritual concept in the Russian religious philosophy, which refers about spirituality to the unification of the subject and the object of knowledge. This was after all the meaning of the above-mentioned ontological turnover, which was carried out by philosophers of spiritual Russian culture and the Russian religious renaissance, that is, the philosophers of all-unity. That is also why the philosophers of the Russian religious renaissance of the epoch of the Silver Age, which assumes the separation of subject and object. Our goals to point out the basis of the hermeneutic method used in the correct analysis of historical texts by the authors of

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the period of the Russian religious renaissance, the so-called Silver age on the spiritual motifs of the all-unity philosophy. All-unity philosophy and concept of theodicy and anthropodicy by Pavel A. Florensky was original concept of spirituality. It was very radical because thinking of ontological gnoseology was radical intuitive. This is one of the original and specific moments of Russian culture and spirituality in modern age. Through the method of textual analysis and the hermeneutic approach, we want to take a deeper approach to the knowledge of the specifics of Russian spirituality, especially in the period of the Russian religious renaissance, the so-called The Silver Age, without which this understanding of spirituality would not be possible. Our research focuses on the religious understanding of spirituality in Florensky´s philosophy with an emphasis on the specific concept of justification of God (theodicy) and man (anthropodicy). First we will describe the specifics of the culture of the Russian religious renaissance with emphasis on the philosophy of Florensky. We see the spiritual aspect of this new anthropology in the unity of man and God. Subsequently, we present the concept of spirituality and intuition in the Russian philosophy of the Silver age, on the basis of which we can describe and analyze the spiritual moments of all-unity theory, human justification (anthropodicy) and God's justification (theodicy). Philosophical thinking of all-unity is unification of the material and the spiritual extraordinary concept in the Russian religious philosophy, and in Florensky´s too.

Florensky´s Christian Philosophy in Culture of Silver Age

Thus, the authors` current aim is to introduce, in the hermeneutical effort of contemporary philosophy, anthropological and religiosity motifs of the Russian philosophical thinking of the Silver Age. Among the emblematic representatives of this period is Pavel Alexandrovich Florensky. His missiology trajectories intersect in several themes of the Russian philosophical thinking and also, the contemporary research in Russian philosophy grants attention to both of these key philosophers of themes about Russian religiosity. If the emphasis on the questions of ethics and social philosophy in the contemporary relevant professional literature reflecting Russian philosophy is generally attributed to its main characteristic features, then the authors` ambition to point out selected ethical and anthropological themes in the Russian thinking of the Silver Age on the ground of ethics and philosophy is legitimate.[2]

The text is inspired by contemporary philosophical research in the field of philosophical-literary science on modernism, nature of philosophical and anthropological models of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century that are denoted as the "Silver Age" of Russian culture. The notion of the "Silver Age" originated as an analogy to the notion of a philosophical-aesthetic quality that was meant to replace the "Golden Age", i.e. the Pushkin-Gogol age of the Russian classics including figures like Dostoyevsky, Turgenev and Tolstoy. Cultural context that is impacted by the import of topics from the Western culture and their refusal and critical reception in the environment of the Russian cultural and philosophical modernism has always been an inspiring challenge. The experimental aspect of Russian culture, its openness to confrontation and also, the declared and in philosophy constantly fulfilled desire for own topics, for unique grasp of the Russian philosophemes in the background of the confrontation of philosophy and art of the West, represent crucial aspects of religious renaissance in the Silver Age of Russian culture. As Soňa Pašteková notes, the notion of the Silver Age "in the Western literary science, corresponds with other established terms such as fin-de-siècle, secession, belle époque, etc. It is a more poetical synonym for the period of modernism in Russian literature,

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2   Terése Obolevitch, *Philosophie Religieuse Russe.* Paris: Les Éditions du CERF, 2014.

blended with it in manner of time and aestheticism."[3] It is a period that integrates the elements of modernism and avant-garde. Symbolism had a crucial impact on the philosophers of the Silver Age. The essential impact will be pointed out through Florensky`s philosophy; it will be a creative confrontation (Florensky vs. Bely) in the spirit of the era when symbolism enters disputes with other avantgarde currents such as acmeism and futurism.

The poetical polyphony of the "Silver Age" was influenced by several non-philosophical impacts. Without doubt, we will deal with the import of the Western European philosophemes, antique inspirations, religious-philosophical irrationalism, voluntarism and mysticism. Religiously shaped messianic and chiliastic conscience was manifested in philosophical-religious thinking of the generation of elder symbolists (D. Merezhkovsky, Z. Gippius) as well as in the form of Hegelian antitheses and antinomies in thinking of authors of the religious philosophy and culture (Bulgakov, Florensky, Losev). The Russian accent on *bogoľubije*, the search for God in human life and the world around us, is without question an original attempt for synthesis of Orthodox doctrines in Russian philosophical thinking that may be labelled as the Russian religious renaissance (V. Solovyov, N. Berdayev, P. Florensky, S. Bulgakov, S. Frank). The confrontation with nihilism, Nietzsche`s philosophy and doctrinal teaching of revolutionary Marxism (in contrast to Nietzsche`s appellative adoration of superhuman, Vladimir Solovyov searches for presence of God-man in the world) occur in the era of the Silver Age, too. Literature of the Silver Epoch resonates with ideas of Christian humanism, revolutionary socialism and political radicalism (former Marxists N. Berdayev and S. Bulgakov vs. philosophical idealists S. Frank and N. Lossky vs. political anarchists and nihilists, e.g. Vj. Ivanov). Russian utopianism and apocalyptica are represented by eschatological conceptions of the generation of younger symbolists (A. Bely, A. Blok) and literary modernists (L. Andreyev). The utopian vision is directed toward post-revolutionary catharsis, ransomed by blood. The thought about a unique position and historical mission of the Russian national identity motivate the ideas of Dostoyevsky and Solovyov about Russian messianism. Idea of messianism and historical slavianofilism was "concentrated on policy of freedoms and culture cooperation while preserving the specific character of each national community".[4]

Admittedly, Vladimir Solovyov, who creatively connected to the conceptions of Russian Slavophiles as well as the tradition of the German mystical philosophy remains an inspiring source of philosophy of the Russian religious renaissance of the "Silver Age". He expressed himself openly against materialism, relativism, positivism and strict rationalism in philosophy (V.G. Belinsky, N.G. Chernyshevsky, N.A. Dobrolyubov), that is, against the ideas of revolutionary democrats of the 19th century, who intentionally created ideological antipole of the Russian idealistic thinking of the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. It was not possible to realise universal knowledge through the synthesis of rationalism and empiricism, that is, through Kant`s criticism, but only through the synthesis of science, philosophy and theology. How much these philosophical ideas affected Florensky will be also demonstrated.[5]

The philosophers of the religious Silver Age, philosophers of period since end of 19th century to modern age of 20th century in Russian culture, criticise also the so-called subjective anthropo-psychological complex that rests in the fact that the knowing subject is understood as the only reality and necessary centre of the world. This Russian version of spirituality and

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3   Soňa Pašteková, „Strieborný vek ruskej literatúry. Pojmy a interpretácie." *Horizons,* (World Literature Studies) 4 (21), (2 012): 83.

4   Marcel Martinkovič, „Idea slovanskej vzájomnosti v interpretácii predstaviteľov Novej školy." *Filozofia* 60, no. 10, (2005): 816.

5   Ivan Yevlampijev, *Istorija russkoj filosofii.* (Sankt-Peterburg: Russkaja Christianskaja gumanitarnaja akademija, 2014). 103-112.

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solipsism was a reaction to religious themes of the Russian philosophy of the Silver Age. Thus, the religious philosophers of the Russian Silver Age advocate the principle of logism in contrast to the rationalistic logicism, while they interpret logos as fundamental unity of the knowing and objective meaning that is being known. Radical rejection of classical epistemology, labelled as a hypocritical and dangerous philosophical system by Florensky, is consistently completed in the philosophy of religious renaissance. Florensky demonstrated that regarding the entire European tradition Kant`s criticism is expressed in the most radical manner for separation of being from thinking, which directs reason to a blind alley of non-functioning abstractness and makes philosophy a non-living form of relating to the world. According to Florensky, spirituality and gnoseology has to be monistic – our knowledge is possible only as an integral and hierarchical unity of mind – human mind and the absolute mind. By separation from God and object, human knowledge has lost reliability. Only integration of subject and object based on faith will enable reaching of the truth.

The anthropological consequence of spirituality and metaphysics of all-unity and thus, the anthropological consequence of the religious Russian philosophy of the Silver Age is unification of God, the Absolute, with man. As mentioned above, man acquires in the entire anthropology of the Russian religious philosophy of the Silver Age a unique status of "God-man", becoming divinised and having divine essence that enables them to declare God`s will in the otherwise relative world. The idea of God-man is used to determine the integral relationship of God and man by Florensky in his anthropology. The idea of God-humanity becomes a characteristic feature of the Russian religious philosophy of all-unity, that is, a kind of anthropological constant of the Russian religious renaissance of the Silver Age.

Theological Concept of spirituality un Russian philosophy of the Silver Age

Philosophers of the Russian religious renaissance of the Silver Age attempted to create a universal worldview, new spirituality paradigm in universal philosophical anthropology that is, according to them, necessary for meaningful orientation of man in the world. This anthropology is possible to be created only on fundaments of faith because faith with its attributes is essentially trans-logical, necessarily trans-rational and trans-empirical, it is the only possible mean of reason overcoming the limitedness of rational and empirical knowledge and enabling implementation of this universal anthropological and worldview synthesis. When the philosophers of the religious renaissance of the Silver Age understood that it is not possible to justify the world through a strictly rational way, in contrast to other religious thinkers, they did not try to elevate faith over reason, on the contrary – they grasped reason more broadly by integrating faith as its fundamental element in it, which gave reason a capability to overcome contradictions of abstract knowledge and to successfully solve absolute questions of human world.

Therefore, it may be claimed that in the philosophy and anthropology of the Russian religious renaissance of the Silver Age, faith is not positioned beyond reason as its opponent, but it is organically integrated in rationality, while it is perceived as its base. In Florensky`s gnoseology, faith is identified with intuition: intuition is a noetic expression of faith, which makes it its philosophical equivalent. Intuition-love-faith as a trans-rational mean, which enables to grasp the otherwise ungraspable evidences of reason from which human knowledge grows, becomes a methodological core of mystical religious philosophy. Therefore, he argues that it is not a primary mean but a secondary mean that necessarily assumes primary evidence, which, however, remains unavailable for abstract thinking (it is of trans-rational nature), but despite, it is the criterion of truthfulness of thinking. Therefore, the philosophers of the Russian religious renaissance of the Silver Age claim that the primary trans-rational evidence is available only to a trans-rational mean

that is "intutition-love-faith" (Florensky). Thus, faith does not essentially defy thinking, nor rejects it, on the contrary – it sets the basis for truthful thinking.

Even though a unified understanding of faith cannot be found in theological nor religious-philosophical systems, the transcendental nature may be considered for the common character of variously interpreted religious faith. Through integrating man in the system of relationships with God, it enables man to go beyond the borders of the human world, or as Nietzsche put it: too human, empirical and necessarily relative world, while opening the possibility of the absolutely truthful knowledge. It is understood similarly by the philosophers of the Russian religious renaissance of the Silver Age and philosophy of all-unity, who perceive faith as an integrating connection between being of man and being of God.[6]

Christian Concept of Theodicy and Anthropodicy by Florensky

Religious faith in Florensky`s philosophy – and in the Russian religious philosophy of the Silver Age – should not be built as irrationalism. Even though it remains always trans-rational and trans-empirical, which makes it a source of basic evidence, it is not anti-rational, nor anti-empirical. It is a necessary base and an absolute condition of truthfulness of the otherwise always relative empirical and rational knowledge, at the same time, a base that is truthful only in a complexly understood knowledge. It is necessary both for the outer and necessarily relative empirical and rational knowledge and the inner unconditional mystical knowledge based on faith, coming from the inner connection of our absolute person with the essence of the known, to complement one another.

A mutually conditioned relationship between philosophy and religion is with Florensky declared by two fundamental, although, diverse spiritual streams of philosophical and theological contemplations that Florensky keeps on coming back to in his work: theodicy and anthropodicy. By Florensky the issue of theodicy is always interlinked with anthropodicy, which enables him to build a distinctive anthropology, philosophy reflecting life and death of a man. Florensky`s Christian anthropology and spirituality creates one of the supporting motives of interaction of philosophical and religious approach to God and man, to human death and its overcoming. Florensky`s anthropology is in a certain sense principal: as a matter of principle, it talks about a radical path to holiness, about an ascetic path of raising a man, about overcoming death. Florensky proposes amending classical anthropology with special spiritual anthropology, and from his perspective, with the necessary question of anthropodicy, while this question shall be clearly Christological. Anthropodicy deals with a question, how to accept a faith in man who was created in God`s image and at the same time remains sinful in his incompleteness. Florensky`s anthropodicy is existentially bonded with Christian spirituality and specific anthropology, which is grounded on ideas of purification and salvation of a man. However, human possibilities are not sufficient for this task. Florensky suggests overcoming the tragic experience through strict asceticism and through searching for a true relationship to God, who is the only one to imprint a face to the confused and chaotic reality. Christological motif of incarnation of the Word and the connection of a man with Christ in mysteries of church becomes the central motive of Florensky`s spiritual apology of a man.

Two diverse spiritual and inspirational streams present in the philosophy of Pavel A. Florensky can be understood as a peculiar version of the original spirituality conception of theodicy and anthropodicy. Florensky understands theodicy mainly as a theoretical direction, whose intention is directed at meeting – face to face – the Truth, a meeting that is a quiet and contemplative

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6   Peter Rusnák, „The Significance of Religion in Heidegger´s Thinking and the Cult in Florensky´s." *Faith and Reason in Russian Thought*. (Krakow: Copernicus Center Press, 2015). p. 161-172.

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perception of the Truth. Theodicy is a path of a man, which every human being can take alone, using their own strength without any help. It is a path on which human reason keeps on changing its forms constantly so that it can accept qualitatively new contents. The higher a man gets in his knowledge, forms of this knowledge are becoming increasingly personal.

Florensky understands anthropodicy predominantly in its practical sense. After realising the limitations, boundaries and human futility, the philosopher, in the light of spiritual Truth, strives to know and understand all forms of human culture. Philosophy attempts to find and apply possibilities and criteria of evaluation in the impending contrasts and antinomies. To justify a man, according to Florensky, it means to find a vertical intentionality in his acts. However, according to Florensky, to know the dimension of evaluation in all spheres of culture means to discover their relationship to religious cult that connects the sphere of the "visible" and "invisible" into one, while at the same time it transforms our emotional understanding so that the "invisible" becomes emotionally perceivable through its continual relationship with the "visible".[7]

Florensky develops this topic further through an idea that it is precisely a touch of the "visible" and "Godly", the emotional and the rational, the noumenal with the transcendent that is the characteristic and fundamental feature of a cult. Consequences of such a meeting reside in the fact that the "visible" and the "emotional" guide our acting in unique connections. Spiritual strength connected to the emotional parallelly changes emotionality itself, forcing a man not to be such which would otherwise be natural for him. (Florensky 1977, 89)

As it was already mentioned, according to Florensky, theodicy is foremost a theoretical path, while spiritual anthropodicy is more pragmatic. As pointed out by the monk Andronik, a dedicated commentator of Florensky, the task of anthropodicy is the analysis of the function of reason submerged back to ordinariness after having gained the spiritual experience of the touch with the Truth. "Broadly speaking, each religious-philosophical teaching that seeks to reconcile the idea of perfection and rationality in an obviously imperfect man can be understood under the notion of anthropodicy."[8]

Therefore, in his later stage, Florensky deals precisely with the analysis of religious cult in which he saw the source of all kinds of human culture. However, the cult is only understandable when applying the perspective from God to a man. If the cult is perceived in a reversed order, it presents itself only as one of the kinds of spiritual activity of a man. However, right in this case the light of the Truth becomes inaccessible for us. If we yet manage to enter the nucleus of the cult and to spot the glimpse of the Truth, the entire futility of our earthliness, our daily life will open up in its radiance at the same time. Here, however, according to Florensky, awe is necessarily born in our soul, the *tremendum* in front of God, which is the beginning of great wisdom. In this regard Florensky states that for cognition it is necessary to touch the subject of the cognition at the same time.

The task of Florensky`s anthropodicy is to show the importance of the contrast between the Creator and the created with the intention of generating human desire to proceed vertically in life. And it is precisely the effort of advancement that Florensky wants to justify a man through. Human experiencing of life contrasts and antinomies does not take a man primarily to sin and it does not suppress his creative energy, but on the contrary – it provokes human effort to be directed to where the light of the Truth shines on him. The fundamental characteristic feature of a cult is, according to Florensky, the touching of the "visible" and the "Godly", the sensual and the transcendent. It is the cult in particular that ensures our immediate perception of the "invisible", while the presence of the "invisible" changes our acting significantly. The presence of

7   Pavel Florensky, „Antropodicea. Nabroski i materialy." *Filosofia kuľta*. (Moskva, 2004). 417-420.
8   Andronik. *Teodicea i antropodicea svjaščennika Pavla Florenskovo.* (Tomsk, 1989) 60 [auth. translation]

the "invisible" tears the power of laws of "earthly" activity, until a man begins to act in a manner not belonging to the "visible" and the "sensual" perception. Our sensuality is also changed in vertical intentionality, which means that objects that surround us also change. Not violating the laws of the object world, we begin to live in another objectivity, different to the one we had lived in until the light of the Truth irradiated us. "Entering the realm of the cult, the bodily lives on and no longer connects according to immanent connections, but according to other connections, thereby becoming a part of another, transcendent structure that has its own laws and its specific connections. Corporeality, drawn into these relationships – strange and incomprehensible at the level of sensuality, is pulled out of the field of gravity and ceases to be simply earthily, while becoming only sensual."[9]

Florensky points out that it is not possible to understand all intentions and plots of human activity, including death, merely through rational inquiry. It is the touch with the cult that opens up the "logic" of life practice. A man is deeply bond with culture and cult is a soul of every culture, therefore: a soul is the manner of the meeting of the immanent with the transcendent, the manner of the insight of the light of the truth and at the same time it is the manner of perceiving everything daily in the light of the spiritual Truth. And even though a man uninitiated into the cult perceives the behavior and acting of a religiously-based man as "illogical", it is the rationalistically-based man who closes his thoughts in an ordinary, totalitarian closed system, limiting them by his experience that was not opened by transcendence. Florensky insists that the awareness of the antinomic disintegrity of human cognition and phenomenological fragmentariness of the perception of the world are the fundamental indicators of thinking directed at spiritual depth and transcendent height.

Conclusion

Florensky`s anthropological conception of philosophical missiology is graspable only through man as a person, while man may become a person only in an act of self-acceptance and acceptance in a community. In *sobornost* and the metaphysical environment of *vsejedinost*, it is possible to look at the inner motivation of man, their aims, hopes, expectations and desires.[10] *Metanoia* of man is possible only in a community, only there it is possible to experience the encounter with God, the Absolute that Florensky understand as love. Transformation of thinking, however, requires courage to step forward to new thinking; courage that has all the attributes of faith. Only authentic love may become a true assumption of principled unanimity and integrality of human thinking and life. The integrality of thinking of loving persons later sets the basis for many other forms and institutions of human co-existence. The approach to spiritual truth is also enabled through God`s impingement through blessing grace that significantly helps the integrating sources and potentials of man and that teaches them interpersonal communication. It is a fundamental moral requirement that is placed on man by the thinking of the Russian religious philosophy of the Silver Age. The Christian philosophy is always a philosophy of person that builds on personal courage of man to authenticity. And man may experience personal knowing of God only in creative knowing.

The always present signal that our description maintains a memory of the original spiritual truth is the presence of a contradiction. Man does not need to defend against antinomies in thinking. Contradiction is an integral part of human thinking. The presence of antinomies proves the presence of spiritual truth in human consciousness. To see a trace of the spiritual truth in

9   Pavel Florensky, *Iz bogoslovskovo nasledija.* (Moskva, 1977). 102.
10   Zlatica Plašienková, Peter Rusnák, and Lucio Florio. „Alexei Khomiakov, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Ladislav Hanus: Three Points of View on Faith and Church in Human Life." *Alexei Khomiakov: The Mystery of Sobornosť.* (Oregon: Pickwick/Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019. p. 203-216).

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antinomy is enabled to mind that draws on the gifts of blessing and grace. Only like this, it is possible to reconstitute meaning and build such a person in man that is capable of acceptance of the other in a spiritual community of the truth and hope. It is possible to overcome the contradiction present in human life only through love. A person that experiences their life through the life of the other acquires existential knowledge that is inseparable from reality. Beyond love, it is not possible to know unity, freedom, nor the truth. Authentic knowledge of the truth about man takes place in love and it is thinkable further only in love. The basic attributes of person (freedom, love) cannot be captured in rational categories of positivist science. Human person is always mysteriously beyond any rational definition. And therefore, person may be grasped only in unity with the secret of Christ, through an intuitive insight and revelation, which, however, approach knowing of person through symbols. The issue of theory of knowledge becomes a question of possibilities of interpretation of the language of symbols. A symbol originates as a result of mutual synergic influence of energies of being that carries energy both of the knowing and the known being. Symbolic knowledge is ontological and spiritual knowledge as symbol is actually a realistic event of being. The exchange of ontological language with pragmatic vocabulary refers to functionally-reductionistic understanding of person that is related to expressions of mass culture. Only personalistic thinking, in the centre of which stands the unique value of person, may be an adequate answer to utilitarian-minded understanding of life. The alternative of the Russian religious philosophy of the Silver Age is to confront the objectifying and existentially unsymbolic thinking with the religious experience of Christianity that may become a path to a conscious life and an approach to truthful knowledge of reality.[11]

Florensky´s theory of spirituality is an extraordinary attempt to reach synthetic depth, which at the same time, gives the opportunity to show characteristic tendencies in Russian Christian reasoning and their contribution to the history of European philosophy. Florensky's concept of spiritual life and spiritual truth is an answer to actual issues of contemporary personalistic and phenomenologistic philosophies such as the issue of structure of human being in interpersonal relationship, the issue of preservation of identity of man in a heterogeneous relationship to another man, the issue of personal relationship to God, or the actual issue of depersonalization of subject in a post-industrial society. In his philosophy of spiritual phainomenon Florensky suggests a model of interpersonal relationship between men as well as relationship of man to God. Florensky´s spiritual and religious philosophy shows a unique form of existential thinking that is concerned particularly with the issue of anthropology.

Florensky´s definition of spiritual truth is accessible only through understanding of the concept of man, while man can become personality only after gaining self-respect and respect from the society of others. The understanding of the spiritual Truth is possible only in the society, because only in human society the *metanoia* of man can take place. It is also the only place where a man can come into contact with the God, who represents love. To change your thinking, it is necessary to have the courage to step forward to new way of thinking, the courage with the characteristics of belief and hope. The only condition of integrality of human thinking and life is the love of two loving persons. It is only in unity of thought of the two loving persons that gives grounds for other forms and institutions of co-existence of men. The Christian philosophy of Florensky is always a philosophy of man, based on the courage of the man to authenticity.

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11   Eva Orbanová, *Náboženstvo a etika*. (Trnava: FF TU, 2018). 21-24.

PURSUING SHALOM IN THE CITY: A THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD IN URBAN SETTINGS*

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Pavol Bargár ✉

Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague (CZ)

Abstract
Background: Nicholas Wolterstorff argues that the tragedy of contemporary urban life lies not only in the fact that injustice and oppression burgeon in many cities today but also that "so many have nothing surrounding them in which any human being could possibly take sensory delight." As far as Christians are concerned, this unfortunate state is due to a pie-tistic-materialistic anthropology that considers nothing but the need for a saved soul and the need for food, clothes, and shelter. Drawing on the biblical concept of shalom, this article will explore how both the pursuit of justice and aesthetics can, and should, be employed in our theological considerations on the city.
Conclusion: Conversing with (especially) contemporary theological voices, the article will seek to outline a holistic theological anthropology, based on the categories of corporeality, relationality, and storiedness, that is envisioned as a way to pursuing a Christian contribution to human and non-human flourishing vis-à-vis the context of today's urban life, and beyond.
Keywords: Shalom – Theological anthropology – Justice – Aesthetics – Transformation.

Introduction: The city and Christianity

This article aims to reflect theologically on the beautiful and the good in the city.[1] The city has been of much interest to Christian theologians throughout the ages. One of the essential images represents the Johannine vision of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21). It was not only written as a piercing anti-Babylonian, that is, anti-imperial polemic but, perhaps even more importantly, provided a robust case for the unity of economic, social, and ecological justice.[2] Subsequently, Augustine with his *The City of God* directed the course for Christian thinking about the city for centuries to come, owing much, somewhat ironically, to the political decision-making of the Roman emperors vis-à-vis the encounters with "pagan" Germanic peoples. Furthermore, later theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, considered from a Chris-

tian perspective such subtle issues as city planning.[3] In Aquinas's understanding, this activity consisted of not only the activity of establishing a city itself but also setting up civic life.[4]

Nevertheless, a legitimate question comes to mind, why does the city play such a prominent role in Christian tradition? Several reasons for Christian theological engagements with the urban reality can be given in response. There is a demographic factor as more than a half of the world's population currently lives in cities.[5] With more than seven billion people currently alive around the globe, and the number still rapidly growing, this trend toward urbanization still continues, despite the phenomenon of "counter-urbanization" in some Western countries and despite the fact that the majority of the population in the world's two most populous countries, China and India, still lives in rural settings.[6]

The demographic factor is further amplified by the fact that religion plays a prominent role in the city today.[7] Mike Davis put it very succinctly: "Marx has yielded the historical stage to Mohammed and the Holy Ghost. If God died in the cities of the industrial revolution, he has risen again in the postindustrial cities of the developing world."[8] In many places, this resurgence of religion in urban settings must be interpreted from an interfaith perspective as religious pluralism has become an everyday reality.[9] In this context, faith communities, including Christians, cooperate with each other on issues, such as social justice, debt alleviation, and the care for the environment/creation. To put it theologically, God is not brought in the city by the people; God is there already to be encountered in the "strata of lived urban form" through negotiations on human flourishing using the channels of economics, culture, religion, and identity.[10]

By virtue of its tradition, therefore, the city has a measure of creative spirituality that other places do not have. The Johannine language in the book of Revelation metaphorically expresses this aspect through the image of the "angel" of a city (Rev. 2–3).[11] In Scripture, more generally, this dynamic is underlined by the plotline reaching from the garden of Eden toward the desired picture of the New Jerusalem. Theologically, one can assert that the city is the model of human dwelling that will be redeemed.[12] In a Christian understanding, then, the city, represented by the symbol of the New Jerusalem, has a prominent part to play in God's story with the world.

Having said this, one needs to add that there has been a considerable degree of reluctance toward or even fear of the city among theologians. Again, these thinkers can vastly rely on biblical tradition. Scripture is deeply ambivalent regarding the city. As Jesus shows us using the example of Jerusalem, the city of peace that, at the same time, stones proph-

2   See James W. Perkinson, "A Theological Aesthetic of the Ugly: Hip-Hop, Race, and the City," *CrossCurrents* 65, no. 1 (March 2015): 100–115, here at 103.

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3   See T. J. Gorringe, *A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.

4   See Saint Thomas Aquinas, "On Princely Government," in *Selected Political Writings*, ed. Alessandro Passerin d'Entreves (Oxford: Blackwell, 1948), chapter 13.

5   See Gorringe, *A Theology*, 23.

6   See Gorringe, *A Theology*, 123.

7   See Andrew P. Davey, "Better Place: Performing the Urbanisms of Hope," *International Journal of Public Theology* 2 (2008): 27–46, here at 30–31.

8   Mike Davis, "Planet of Slums," *New Left Review* 26 (March/April 2004): 5–34, here at 30.

9   See Elaine Graham, "What Makes a Good City? Reflections on Urban Life and Faith," *International Journal of Public Theology* 2 (2008): 7–26, here at 12.

10 See Davey, "Better Place," 31.

11 See Gorringe, *A Theology*, 140.

12 See Gorringe, *A Theology*, 140.

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ets (Luke 19:41), any city is always both Jerusalem and Babylon.[13] Other biblical passages are even more critical, articulating, for example, Sabbath and Jubilee (Lev. 25, Deut. 15) as "safeguards against the tide of city-dwelling exploitation and pride."[14] Fast forwarding to contemporary theology, one of the most vocal critics was Jacques Ellul who perceived the city as a human hubristic pursuit to replace God in an attempt to construct an ideal place for human development. In modern urbanism, Ellul argued, people refuse accepting the uniqueness of their meeting with Christ as a sign of the hidden kingdom, striving for permanent human flourishing in the here and now.[15] Ultimately, however, there is space in Ellul's theology for a doctrine of pardon which leads him to accept the city as under Christ's rule, thus obliging Christians to work alongside others in the construction of the city.[16]

Other authors point out that the contemporary city is unduly focused on profit since it is itself a result of industrial production. As such, the today's cities are designed to make profit, and not foster the well-being of their inhabitants.[17] Furthermore, another line of criticism goes, the city has become "a glorified den of robbery" in its effective endeavor to foster the lifestyles of excess, while hiding its essential "savagery" under the ideological veil of "civility."[18] The sense of ownership has been lost due to various influences and agents involved in the process going on in cities. In other words, the city has become a commodity that few traditionally associated with it can afford.[19] As a result, in cities people live in fractured communities where "wealth and poverty perhaps rub shoulders on the same street or in adjoining neighbourhoods."[20] Based on this analysis, the present urban reality can be characterized in terms of a shift from *oikos* to *necropolis*, the process in which the dominant movers and shakers are "cathedrals of consumerism," such as stock exchange, political authorities, and banks.[21]

These observations point out to the fact of the of the deep tragedy of contemporary urban life. Even though this tragedy is, as we have seen, complex and multidimensional, its core has been aptly identified by Nicholas Wolterstorff as follows:

> The tragedy of modern urban life is not only that so many in our cities are oppressed and powerless, but also that so many have nothing surrounding them in which any human being could possibly take sensory delight. For this state of affairs we who are Christians are as guilty as any. We have adopted a pietistic-materialistic understanding of man [sic], viewing human needs as the need for a saved soul plus the need for food, clothes and shelter. True shalom is vastly richer than that.[22]

This article will argue that a pietistic-materialistic anthropology is inadequate to be employed for theological reflection on life in urban settings. The city as a place of human dwell-

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13 See Gorringe, *A Theology*, 140.

14 Perkinson, "A Theological Aesthetic," 102.

15 See Jacques Ellul, *The Meaning of the City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 130. See also Gorringe, *A Theology*, 19.

16 See Ellul, *The Meaning*, 162 and 180.

17 See Néstor O. Míguez, "A Theology of the Urban Space," *Anglican Theological Review* 91, no. 4 (2009): 559–580, here at 573.

18 See Perkinson, "A Theological Aesthetic," 105.

19 See Davey, "Better Place," 28.

20 Davey, "Better Place," 29.

21 See Mary Grey, "The Shape of the Human Home: A Response to Professor T. Gorringe," *Political Theology* 2, no. 3 (2000): 95–103, here at 96.

22 Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action: Toward a Christian Aesthetic* (Carlisle: Solway, 1997), 82.

ing is to be understood as essential to being human since the human, as an enfleshed and situated being, needs a place to pursue his or her existence. Although the city is not the only setting in which people live, it is, as we have seen, of much importance since Scripture introduce it as the model that will ultimately be redeemed. Cities are loci with certain stories, "bodies," and webs of relationships. In this sense, there is a parallel between human beings and cities. Therefore, if humans are to pursue shalom (Micah 6:8) which can be taken as a concept including goodness, beauty, and justice, in their lives as individuals and communities, they also need to commit themselves to this pursuit when planning and building their cities. Drawing from the biblical concept of shalom and contemporary theological resources, this article will introduce a fuller theological anthropology that is based on corporeality, relationality, and storiedness.

Shalom as flourishing and the fullness of life

The Hebrew term shalom refers not only to the absence of war but also, even more importantly, to "a process of living in wholesome relationship with others," characterized by mutual trust, integrity in action, and the common good sought by all interested parties.[23] This semantically rich concept integrates peace and life to bring forward the biblical vision of wholeness.[24] As such, shalom can also be defined as the fullness of life.[25] Not a natural outcome of evolutionary processes or human involvement in history, the biblical accounts see it as the result of God's rule as Lord and Redeemer.[26] And yet, shalom concerns both humankind and non-human creation and even calls for their agency in the process of its divine inauguration and realization.

Shalom is effectively conveyed through the concept of human flourishing that can also be described in terms of happiness, self-actualization, empowerment, or transformation. Behind this process there is the image of "human beings blossoming to their full potential in harmony with God, one another, and the rest of creation."[27] In recent theological discussions, the term flourishing is frequently preferred over salvation, precisely for the former's semantic richness. Flourishing regards spiritual, biological, psychological, and social factors to imply creativity, vitality, and organic growth, all aimed at promoting well-being. When compared with, for instance, Abraham Maslow's pyramid of needs, however, the difference is that a theology of flourishing perceives these dimensions as always interwoven and present at every level.[28] While flourishing is rooted in everyday, bodily, life, it also provides a practical ethical yardstick, as persuasively voiced by Mary Grey:

> *Flourishing* pushes far beyond the mere fact of survival, to qualitative factors like relationships of mutuality, plentiful provision of nourishment, the giving and receiving of hospitality, just employment, self-esteem and esteem of the community: and way and above the absolute minimum for social survival and just interaction. *Flourishing* emphasizes that the human spirit longs for beauty, joy, a peace that is far deeper than cessation of fighting. *Flourishing* can act

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23 See William Klassen, "Peace," in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 338.

24 See Al Tizon, "Preaching for Shalom: Life and Peace," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 19, no. 1 (2016): 17–29, here at 19.

25 See Ronald J. Sider, *Completely Pro-Life* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 1986), 15–16.

26 See Tizon, "Preaching for Shalom," 19.

27 Tizon, "Preaching for Shalom," 22.

28 See Grey, "The Shape," 101 and 102.

as an ethical yardstick with more potential than the language of Human Rights, as critique against poor housing, for classroom conditions which in theory pass the basic norm, but in which children cannot flourish, hospitals where the quality of care does not respect the whole person-in-relation, and so on.[29]

Rooted in and drawing from the biblical concept of shalom, the theological foundations of flourishing can be found not only in the Isaiahan messianic feast (Isa. 25:6–8) but also, and this is important for the focus of this article, in the refreshing vision of the New Jerusalem "where the leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations."[30] At the same time, however, it is necessary to add that this vision implicitly presupposes that both flourishing and, more fundamentally, shalom definitely require people to engage in acts of compassion and justice aimed at subverting the status quo.[31] In practice, then, pursuing shalom means standing with the poor and victims and empowering them to claim their dignity as human beings.

Perhaps one of the most appealing biblical elucidations of shalom can be found in Micah 6:8. The prophet perceives the human task as the pursuit of justice, kindness/mercy, and presence of and partnership with God (as expressed in the call to "walk humbly"). Indeed, shalom conveys the intrinsic relationship between peace, compassion, and justice.[32] Some authors, therefore, interpret shalom as "just peace" because it involves a double dynamic: not only the harsh realities of life, such as war, poverty, greed, exploitation, discrimination or division must cease but also the liberating realities of what can be referred to as "new creation," such as dignity, equality, sharing, kindness, harmony or health must reign.[33] Just peace (shalom) presupposes the biblical view of justice. Much different from a harsh and cold legal, "debit-and-credit" understanding of justice, Scripture regards this concept as characterized by several dimensions, including "right relationship"; the awareness of responsibility, mutuality, and duties (rather than rights); the struggle against forms of domination and oppression that violate mutuality; and the process of correction of injustice through liberation from oppression.[34] The aspect of liberation is crucial here since liberation struggle implies justice as rightly ordered relationships of mutuality. Identified by reciprocity and interdependence in social relations, this model accentuates both responsibility and control in ordering the complex web of human relationships.[35] Exodus is perceived as foundational in this regard since it posits God's liberation of Israel as establishing a claim on human commitment to justice, mutuality, and relationship. In other words, those who have been liberated are called to act to win justice, and thus shalom, for others.[36] Scripture understands justice as a concern for the weak against power and privilege.[37] Drawing from these

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29   Grey, "The Shape," 102, italics in the original.

30   Grey, "The Shape," 103.

31   See also Tizon, "Preaching for Shalom," 25–26.

32   See Tizon, "Preaching for Shalom," 25 and Duleep Kamil De Chickera, "Just Peace: Beyond Rhetoric," *The Ecumenical Review* 65, no. 2 (2013): 181–198, here at 182.

33   See De Chickera, "Just Peace," 182.

34   See Karen Lebacqz, *Justice in an Unjust World: Foundations for a Christian Approach to Justice* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 154–160.

35   See Beverly W. Harrison, *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Carol S. Robb (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985), 253.

36   See Namsoon Kang, "The Centrality of Gender Justice in Prophetic Christianity and the Mission of the Church Reconsidered," *International Review of Mission* 94, no. 373 (2005): 278–289, here at 279.

37   See Kang, "The Centrality of Gender Justice," 287.

reflections, I would suggest that human life seen from the perspective of shalom becomes a pursuit aimed not only at fulfilling basic needs but also searching for "a plus to life" in beauty and art.[38] Shalom implies beauty.

Aesthetics

The way how the concept of beauty comes into the picture in Christian tradition is most intriguing though. It is especially through the lens of liberation theology that we are reminded that the weak and the poor are able to retain their humanity, and thus beauty, by resisting the injustice done to them by their oppressors. James Nickoloff shows this in his study on Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez and Italian music composer Giuseppe Verdi when he argues for the inseparability of the ethical and the aesthetic. Nickoloff's thesis is indebted to Gutiérrez's fellow Peruvian, novelist José María Arguedas, and his notion of the "fraternity of the broken-hearted" whose members perceive glimpses of a new world becoming reality in the beauty of liberated humankind.[39] Furthermore, in the history of Christianity there are numerous examples of artists devoted to social justice and activists devoted to arts. Nickoloff mentions Dorothy Day and Ambrose of Milan. It was the latter who maintained that "Justice, Beauty, and Reason must form a single plait for followers of Christ."[40] Similarly, we can with a grain of salt read, together with James Perkinson, the Hebrew Bible as accounts of the struggles of "anti-imperial breakout artists" against urban empire.[41]

At the same time, however, it is important to emphasize that art should not lead to escapism. Art engenders feelings of tenderness and it is tenderness that gives both love and hope their viability and strength. A genuine engagement for liberation cannot do without any of these elements. When the psalmist encourages the downtrodden to praise God's name, it is meant not only as a call to celebrate life but also a bidding to resist everything that may threaten it.[42]

I would, therefore, like to suggest that there is a link between liberation, justice, and beauty. From the biblical perspective, something is regarded as beautiful because it has a power to liberate.[43] Through her action, for example, the brave anonymous woman who anoints Jesus in Bethany (Mark 14:3–9) lets those shackled by fear know that death and doom does not have the final say. To the dislike of many present there, Jesus recognizes her deed as "good" and "beautiful"; the Greek term, *kalos*, that Mark uses has both meanings. The beauty of the deed lies in its ability to expose her lack of fear, leading her to accept her own humanity. She is liberated by Jesus's acceptance of her gesture and, ultimately, of herself.[44]

However, one must constantly beware of distorting beauty. In her Princeton lectures on youth, church, and culture, Cecilia González-Andrieu critiques aestheticism as the view that instrumen-

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38   For the term, see Tim Gorringe, "The Shape of the Human Home: Cities, Global Capital, and *Ec-clesia*," *Political Theology* 2, no. 3 (2000): 80–94, here at 84.

39   See James B. Nickoloff, "Gustavo Gutiérrez Meets Giuseppe Verdi: The Beauty of Liberation and the Liberation of Beauty," *Religion and the Arts* 17 (2013): 203–221, here at 203.

40   See Nickoloff, "Gustavo Gutiérrez," 206 and 204. The quotation can be found on 205.

41   See Perkinson, "A Theological Aesthetic," 102.

42   See Nickoloff, "Gustavo Gutiérrez," 212. Nickoloff refers to Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Entre las calandrias: Un ensayo sobre José María Arguedas* (Lima: Instituto Bartolomé de las Casas / Centro de Educación y Publicaciones, 1990), 25–26 and 46.

43   See Nickoloff, "Gustavo Gutiérrez," 220.

44   See Nickoloff, "Gustavo Gutiérrez," 219–220.

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talizes beauty, making it just another commodity for sale and separating it from everyday life.[45] As a Christian response, González-Andrieu calls on the church to "take back with all the force of our ancient wisdom and practices the realm of the aesthetic, and […] re-orient it."[46] Drawing upon Jesus' understanding of the role of senses and beauty,[47] González-Andrieu proposes that we, like the disciples, are to believe what we see and experience; to relate our experience with communal wisdom and tradition; and to take seriously the belief that Jesus restores senses and the whole reality.[48] She then concludes that the realm of the beautiful is one of the most personal, intimate, and unique expressions of our being as it touches upon the profound mystery of God being active in our embodiment and our history.[49]

Additional helpful insights on the intersection of beauty, justice, and liberation are provided by John de Gruchy. He is drawing from the thoughts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who, refusing to accept the dualisms of body and spirit, and rationality and experience, maintains that beauty is simply earthly and Christians need to approach it as such. However, de Gruchy goes even further when he argues that this claim applies not only to beauty and art but to the whole realm of life, explicitly mentioning the quest for justice. To make sense of this process theologically, de Gruchy turns to the theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar, putting a central accent on beauty as revealed in Christ.[50] While the beauty of Christ is the beauty of God, one needs to keep in mind that it is the beauty of Isaiah's "suffering servant" since in Jesus of Nazareth "beauty has been crucified; it has descended to hell."[51] Von Balthasar's argument is constructed upon Irenaeus's premise that Christ could only redeem what he has assumed. By implication, Christ had to assume the ugliness and horror of death on a cross to reveal God's beauty and liberate the world. Since such an understanding of beauty is counterintuitive and paradoxical, de Gruchy speaks about "the alien beauty of the cross."[52] De Gruchy elaborates as follows:

> […] the "beauty" of the cross does not stand in judgment on beauty but on the ugliness that results from human sin. For that reason it is an "alien beauty," a beauty that takes upon itself the contradictions of the human condition that repel us. But paradoxically, such beauty is redemptive. It is a power that attracts us to worship and propels us into society; it is a power that transforms us and seeks the just transformation of the world.[53]

On this reading, Christ's cross has a two-fold revelatory power. First, it unmasks human depravity and sin with their severe social, economic, political, ecological, and spiritual consequences for the whole creation. Second, it reveals God's solidarity with humankind and creation as well

as God's grace and love that have the power to redeem those who suffer under the alienating and dehumanizing realities.[54] As such, the cross is "the supreme icon of the transformation of ugliness into beauty."[55]

When we consider the pursuit of shalom as a project to which Christians are called, the dynamic of turning the ugly (i.e., the unjust) into the beautiful (i.e., just and good) is of crucial significance. Speaking about evil spawning in urban settings due to systemic injustice, James Perkinson finds a primary skill for survival in developing a "blues sensibility… [with] the capacity to go down into the ugly to push its agony to the very edge where it reverses into delirious beauty."[56] Forming a partnership, Christian theology and art must thus embrace the ugly before trying to exorcize it.[57] This is also what Rosemary Radford Ruether argued in her letter exchange with Thomas Merton when she wrote that "principalities and powers" must be struggled against in "the steaming ghetto of my big city," and not through escapism of "going off to the hills."[58]

Justice, aesthetics, and the city

This brings us to weaving threads of what has been said on justice, aesthetics, and the city in pursuit of shalom. According to a Christian understanding, faith refers to people responding to God doing with the humankind and the world everything God can to keep humans human, and creation flourishing.[59] These processes take place in the "soot and dirt" of the here and now, pointing out the theologically relevant fact that createdness and physicality is of essential importance. Karl Barth maintained that people are besouled bodies and bodily souls.[60] By implication, places of human dwelling are also of prime relevance in this process, just like the human body.[61] To go even further, if we understand, together with Walter Wink, spirituality in terms of "the powers" in the Pauline sense, we can say that sites, buildings, and structures – and therefore – cities too have their spirituality or a certain spiritual ethos.[62] Perhaps to a greater degree than in Christianity, the spiritual dimension of a place is more prominent for indigenous peoples of various continents whose thinking and practice have significantly been shaped by such notions as, the sacredness of land, the memory of place, and the sanctity and integrity of the natural environment.[63] Nevertheless, Christian tradition too harbors the convictions about the spirituality of places. Specifically to our topic, it can be asserted that city life fosters a spirituality of the everyday. Writing from a Catholic (Ignatian) perspective, Chad Thralls suggests that living in a city provides one with an opportunity to practice the Examen in one's daily life through observing one's secret feelings about and attitudes toward others

45 See Cecilia González-Andrieu, "Taking Back the Aesthetic," The 2012 Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture. 12 pages, here at 3. accessed December 15, 2020 https://youthlectures.ptsem.edu/?action=results&by=creator&qtext=creator%3a%22Gonz%c3%a1lez-Andrieu,%20Cecilia%22%20sort%3atitle

46 González-Andrieu, "Taking Back," 4.

47 See, for example, Luke 7:18ff.

48 See González-Andrieu, "Taking Back," 5.

49 See González-Andrieu, "Taking Back," 10.

50 See John W. de Gruchy, Christianity, Art and Transformation: Theological Aesthetics in the Struggle for Justice (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 110. De Gruchy here refers to Hans Urs von Balthasar, The Glory of the Lord. Vol. 2: Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 11.

51 De Gruchy, Christianity, 122.

52 See de Gruchy, Christianity, 122–124. For von Balthasar's argument on this theme see Hans Urs von Balthasar, Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990).

53 De Gruchy, Christianity, 226.

54 See Pavol Bargár, Narrative, Myth, Transformation: Reflecting Theologically on Contemporary Culture (Jihlava: Mlýn, 2016), 120.

55 De Gruchy, Christianity, 245.

56 Perkinson, "A Theological Aesthetic," 104–105.

57 See also Perkinson, "A Theological Aesthetic," 114.

58 The correspondence can be found in Mary Tardiff, ed., At Home in the World: The Letters of Thomas Merton and Rosemary Ruether (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 20. Cited in Grey, "The Shape," 98. Mary Grey correctly objects that this argument is anachronistic and creates a false dichotomy.

59 See T. J. Gorringe, Furthering Humanity: A Theology of Culture (Aldershot, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 4.

60 See Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, III/2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 350.

61 See Gorringe, A Theology, 114. Gorringe refers to Irenaeus, Adv. Haer., 4.38.2.

62 See Walter Wink, Engaging the Powers (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 6. See also Gorringe, A Theology, 22.

63 See Leonie Sandercock, Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities in the Twenty-First Century (London: Continuum, 2003).

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and confessing them. Moreover, city life enables one to realize common humanity one shares with others. Realizing this connection, one can be conversion and transformation.[64]

Therefore, urban theory, that is, the way we think of and construct our cities, needs to be in harmony with human everyday experience.[65] In particular, urban theory should regard common sense and the ordinary, even "gossip and myth and human fallibility," being critical of and absorbing them at the same time. Only then it can fulfill its mission: to be implicit in society's practical life, its aspirations and traumas.[66]

This view should also be paramount for an urban public theology.[67] What theology can contribute to the discussion on, and realization of, city planning is the perspective of, to use the words of Néstor Míguez, "radical abundance" for all. Some of the critical questions to ask when considering a particular urban development project include thinking about who will benefit from it, what power dynamics are involved in the related processes, and what issues and circumstances play a relevant role. Furthermore, such factors as gender, class or culture location need also be considered as city planners are, like all people, situated social beings.[68] With regard to the well-being of people and creation, there are still many other things to keep in mind during urban planning, including cultural habits, education, economic system, a network of existing institutions with laws and bureaucratic instances, and environment/nature.[69] This is an area where theology certainly has much to say, both critically and constructively. A point of departure here is the thesis that in all human endeavors, including urban planning and construction, human force cooperates with God's grace. This process takes place in spite of all loose ends and fragility. It is thanks to God's grace that there is hope in human planning. Non-claimable, God's grace enters this dynamic as "the expected surprise."[70] Theologically speaking, then, construction enterprises should involve human agency, on the one hand, and God's grace and the work of the Spirit, on the other.

Grace does not refer to "power" or "influence" entering the picture at certain moments. Rather, it is a way to acknowledge that God who is love sustains the fabric of life. As such, the only adequate response to God's grace is gratitude that finds its political expression in the struggle for social justice.[71] When standing for social justice alongside the urban poor and powerless, Christians can experience the city as a locus of theological epiphany, a place to meet the risen Christ at. In this process, the aspect of interhuman encounter is of crucial importance. As Elaine Graham puts it: "Cities, as human dwelling places which somehow prefigure and point to the presence of God within them, are always 'under construction', and need the active and continuing participation of all parts of the community to fulfil their potential."[72] Grace thus becomes a political principle as the city is, like the rest of the reality, under Christ's rule, obliging Christians to work

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64   See Chad Thralls, "Spirituality in the City: Encountering the Other," *The Way* 54, no. 2 (April 2015): 83–89, here at 89.

65   See Davey, "Better Place," 33.

66   See Andy Merrifield, *Dialectical Urbanism: Social Struggles in the Capitalist City* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2002), 17.

67   See Davey, "Better Place," 33.

68   See Míguez, "A Theology of the Urban Space," 566.

69   See Míguez, "A Theology of the Urban Space," 568–569.

70   See Míguez, "A Theology of the Urban Space," 570.

71   See Gorringe, *A Theology*, 18 and 20.

72   Graham, "What Makes a Good City?," 19. Elaine Graham refers to two Anglican documents on urban life and faith, namely, Archbishop's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation* (London: Church House Publishing, 1985) and Archbishops' Commission on Urban Life and Faith, *Faithful Cities: A Call for Celebration, Vision and Justice* (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 2006).

alongside others in construction of the city.[73] It is the thesis of this paper that to pursue such cooperation, which also means – from a Christian perspective – to pursue shalom, is to develop a holistic theological anthropology. A sketch of such an anthropology is now going to be introduced.

Toward a holistic theological anthropology

My proposal consists of three essential concepts that this anthropology should be rooted in, namely, corporeality, relationality, and storiedness. To start considering the first concept, corporeality, however, one must note that the notion of the body, and especially its fleshly dimension, has posed a major challenge for Christians throughout the history.[74] Ultimately a physical religion with its center being around the human flesh of Christ, many spiritually minded people have tried to refine and "spiritualize" the Christian faith.[75] Nevertheless, despite and, at the same time, because of all these circumstances, it is key to underscore the fundamental claim of Christianity, namely, that the incarnation, God's embodiment in the human Jesus, was a "fleshly event," as especially John's Gospel strongly maintains.[76]

Unsurprisingly, Jesus's incarnation as divine enfleshment also has ramifications for human enfleshment. To put it differently, the way Christian theology interprets Jesus's incarnation and its effects influences the ways Christians are summoned to think, speak, and act in their fleshly existence. This dynamic can be understood in terms of continuous incarnation. Being Christian means taking seriously our human being in the body before God, other people, and creation.[77]

The doctrine of incarnation, therefore, represents the fundamental departure point for Christian thinking about the body. Humans not only have bodies, they are bodies. Moreover, bodies are not mere receptacles for a disembodied soul or mind.[78] In incarnation, corporeality, or physicality, has ultimately been acknowledged and honored by God. Further, in Paul's anthropology, it is the redemption of the body, rather than the salvation of the soul, that is ascribed the major importance (Rom. 8:23–25). The redemption of the body is inherently connected with the restoration of the purpose God has with creation of which justice and beauty are necessary components.[79] Since bodies need home, as we have pointed out, this process of redemption and restoration involves a quest for a "vital place" since everyone wants to flourish.[80]

This brings us to my second point – relationality. With reference to 1 Cor. 6:19–20, one can maintain that a believer does not belong to her or himself but rather to God. Through this attitude, that person is, in fact, led to "glorify God in their (individual and collective) body,"[81] the latter being the church as the body of Christ. Thus, Paul the Apostle can be taken as considering the body to be relational and interdependent, rather than an independent monad. Christian tradition perceives human life as "eccentric existence," that is humans as bodies seeking to transcend their

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73   See Gorringe, *A Theology*, 19–20. See also Ellul, *The Meaning*, 162 and 180.

74   See Robert E. Goss, "John," in *The Queer Bible Commentary*, ed. Deryn Guest, Robert E. Goss, Mona West, and Thomas Bohache (London: SCM Press, 2006), 548–565, here at 550.

75   See Rosemary Haughton, *Beginning Life in Christ* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1969), 38.

76   See Goss, "John," 550.

77   See Pavol Bargár, "Relating to Others: The Coronavirus, the Imagined Body, and Enfleshment," *Communio Viatorum* 62, no. 1 (2020): 46–66, here at 54.

78   See Jacob Meiring, "Theology in the Flesh: A Model for Theological Anthropology as Embodied Sensing," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 71, no. 3 (2015), Art. #2858, 8 pages, here at 4. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2858.

79   See also Míguez, "A Theology of the Urban Space," 577–578.

80   See Grey, "The Shape," 101.

81   Holly E. Hearon, "1 and 2 Corinthians," in *The Queer Bible Commentary*, edited by Deryn Guest, Robert E. Goss, Mona West, and Thomas Bohache (London: SCM Press, 2006), 606–623, here at 615.

bodily existence by relating to other people, their context, creation, and God.[82] As a result, a theological view of human existence is one of living enmeshed in various contextually contingent relationships that make the flourishing of human – and, for that matter – non-human life possible.

A result of shalom, flourishing presupposes relationality as it perceives all dimensions of life as always interwoven and present at every moment. Flourishing is rooted in bodily life and concerns urban ecologies. Rather than on utopia, it is focused on, as Mary Grey puts it, modest, humble *eco-topias* in the here and now.[83] These *eco-topias* represent endeavors aimed at going beyond the absolute minimum for social survival by way of establishing relationships of mutuality, provision of well-being for all, just employment, self-esteem, and the esteem of the community.[84] Thanks to their potential to build trust and relationships, faith communities play a significant role in the process of giving rise to the *eco-topias*, serving as "incubators of civic skills"[85] and social cohesion. Furthermore, creating such *eco-topias* requires a more relational imagination of space. What emerges is, as Andrew Davey says, "a new ethical understanding of both place and individual identity in relational space."[86]

Another theological way to understand the dynamic of relationality is to speak, together with Tim Gorringe, of *ec-clesia* as a community of those who recognize the giftedness of all life and promote God's reign, not as an other-worldly entity but, to the contrary, as the world being called home by grace from the alienation of sin. The "ec-clesians" refuse to be controlled by both plausible structures and determinist views that admit no alternatives, confessing that it is Jesus's reign, rather than the logic of "empire," that is worth betting one's life on.[87]

This understanding, finally, leads us to appreciate the concept of storiedness. From a narrative perspective, to promote God's reign and thence to pursue shalom is to let one's own story become part of the broader story of God's ongoing engagement with creation. The storiedness of Christian existence reflects the radical storiedness of human existence as such; we all are rooted in some wider stories that transcendent our life as an individual. Nevertheless, for Christians, this insight has a very particular focus in the story of Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus's story, divine infinity has become the source for human participation in the transformation of creation.[88]

In this perspective, Christian identity represents an embodied story. The story of the Christian community is a continuation of the incarnation – the life story of Jesus the Christ with all its aspects. One enters the biblical story by entering the church's performance of that story. One is, in other words, baptized into the biblical and ecclesial drama. From this perspective it is not so much about "being written into a book as taking part in a play, a play that has to be improvised on the spot."[89]

However, storiedness in this perspective should not be conceived as a unilateral process. It is not simply a Christian being molded by the biblical and ecclesial story. The opposite dynamic is simultaneously at play here as well, meaning that every individual and every community make a unique and irreplaceable input to this story. God's story is shaped by the stories of God's creation. In addition, all these manifold stories at the same time interact with each other. Their bodily existence situated in concrete places and contexts, people rub their shoulders and beliefs with each other to shape and enrich their identities. The categories of corporeality, relationality, and storiedness are thus brought home as integral for developing a holistic theological anthropology.

Conclusion

On their journey toward the New Jerusalem, Christians are called to pursue shalom as flourishing and the fullness of life for all, characterized by peace, justice, and beauty. This task archetypically, albeit not exclusively, applies to the city as the model of human dwelling that will ultimately be redeemed. To pursue this task faithfully and creatively, Christians need to go beyond the impasse of the wide-spread pietistic-materialistic anthropology to take seriously the fact that human existence is bodily and besouled; that people are necessarily relational beings who live in complex webs of bonds and interactions; and that they are a worthy and indispensable part of God's story of transformation of the whole creation so that shalom can reign, both in urban settings and everywhere else. This article has suggested that a theological anthropology that seriously considers the categories of human corporeality, relationality, and storiedness offers one way how Christians can contribute to the flourishing of human and non-human creation in the city and beyond.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

82 See Bargár, "Relating to Others," 59. The term "eccentric existence" was coined by David Kelsey. See David H. Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology*, vol. 1 & 2 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

83 See Grey, "The Shape," 103.

84 See Grey, "The Shape," 102.

85 The phrase comes from John Pierson, "Faith and Politics in the Public Square: Citizen Organizing in Urban Neighbourhoods," *Political Theology* 3, no. 1 (2001): 80–87, here at 82.

86 Davey, "Better Place," 43. Davey refers to Doreen Massey, *World City* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2007), 216.

87 See Gorringe, "The Shape," 81.

88 See Lois Malcolm, "On David Hart's *The Beauty of the Infinite*," *New Blackfriars* 88 (2007): 594–599, here at 598. With regard to the theme of this article, it is essential to underscore that this participation is a correlate of beauty, goodness, and truth. Further on this point, see also Malcom, "On David Hart's," 597.

89 Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 20. See also Bargár, *Narrative*, 31.

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LIVING IN THE DEEP HEART. EXPERIENCE OF INTERIORITY IN THE WORK OF VIKTOR E. FRANKL AND NICOLAE STEINHARDT*

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Pavel Pola ✉

Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague (CZ)

Abstract

Background: The article is based on Olivier Clément's statement that the "deep heart" – which is another expression for human interiority – is accessible to humans only in flashes; in situations of love, beauty and death. I try to illustrate this experience based on the example of two figures – Viktor E. Frankl and Nicolae Steinhardt. They both lived and resisted situations of death in hard regime prisons, respectively under the Nazis and the communists. I have analysed their experiences as described in their autobiographies. For Frankl, contact with his own interiority connects him with his inner freedom, which is inalienable, and which also enables him to adopt the right attitude in unalterable and absurd situations. According to Frankl, in adopting this attitude, everyone is free in every situation. They can fill their life with meaning. Steinhardt uses the situation of prison, the suffering, and the nearness of death as triggers for his inner transformation. The key question for him is whether God is present. He begins with Jesus' experience and the words he shouted from the cross: "My God, why have you abandoned me?" From this he reaches the discovery of God's presence in the most unlikely place, as he says, in his own heart.

Conclusion: For both authors the experience of the touch of death opened the way into their interiority and at the same time the contact with their deep heart enabled them to resist those situations and to find meaning and even happiness in them.

Keywords: Deep Heart – Interiority – Meaning of Life – Transformation – Presence of God.

Introduction

"The deep heart is closed to ordinary consciousness; it opens only in flashes, in situations of love, beauty and death,"[2]. These were the words of the French Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément (1921–2009) when speaking about human interiority. What does it mean to live in the deep heart and what impact does it have on the whole of life? These questions will be examined in the following text.

First, I will explore in a little more depth what Olivier Clément means by his expression "deep heart" and the ways that lead into a life reflecting one's interiority. Then I will attempt to show how this shapes human life. For this purpose, I will introduce two quite different authors and I will examine their understanding and especially their experience of inhabiting the heart: an Austrian psychologist and the founder of Logotherapy, Viktor E. Frankl (1905–1997) and a Romanian lawyer, intellectual and later Orthodox monk, Nicolae Steinhardt (1912–1989). They lived at the same time but in different life contexts. Despite these differences, their life stories had something in common, be it their Jewish roots and especially their confrontation of totalitarian regimes and experiences of imprisonment, in a Nazi concentration camp and in a Communist prison in Romania respectively. The main sources for this analysis will be the two autobiographies of these two authors – which are completely different, as their lives were different.[3] However before exploring them I will briefly dwell on the topic of the Clément's deep heart, which will be researched in these texts.

Olivier Clément's Deep Heart

In this part I will briefly introduce Olivier Clément's concept of the deep heart. In fact, his reflection inspired and directed me to seek the deep heart in the autobiographies of the two chosen authors. Frankl and Steinhardt lived in conditions that Clément describes as favourable for contact with one's own heart. Frankl and Steinhardt do not speak a lot about the heart and not at all about the deep heart, but in contrast Clément reflects it explicitly and makes it a concept.

The idea of the heart is present throughout all Clément's work.[4] He speaks about the deep heart to distinguish – but also to join – the symbolic usage of the heart and its primary anatomical meaning. Clément was influenced by the theology of the heart in hesychast tradition,[5] so he understands the heart in its psychosomatic dimension; meaning the place where the body and the soul meet together.[6] According to that tradition, Clément describes the deep heart as an abyss

2   Olivier Clément, *Corps de mort et de gloire: petite introduction à une théopoétique du corps* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1995), 44.

3   Viktor E. Frankl, *… trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen: Ein Psychologe erlebt das Konzentrationslager* (München: Dtv, 1998) and Nicolae Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, trans. Gabriella Bertini Carageani (Milano: Rediviva, 2017). Diary of Happiness of N. Steinhardt still doesn't have English translation. The formal aspects of the two works are so completely different that one could ask if they allow any comparison. While Frankl's Autobiography has cca 100 pages, Steinhardt's text more than 700. Frankl wrote his in a few weeks or months, Steinhardt worked on this for many years, having to rewrite it due to the confiscation by the communist regime. Frankl approaches his experience from the point of view of a psychologist. Steinhardt's work reflects his extensive education and competence in literature, history and law. Frankl's narration has a predominantly chronological order, Steinhardt chose a completely different structure, following mostly associations - so his work seems at first sight chaotic. The more formally different their works are, the more interesting it is to look for similarities, parallels and complementarity.

4   Clément as an Orthodox theologian is much more familiar, (compared with the western theology), with the concept of heart as used for describing human interiority. This idea has its roots in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament (Deut 6,5; Jer 17,10; 1 Sam 16,7; Ezek 36,25–27) but also in the New Testament and in Jesus' teaching (Matt 5,8; Matt 15,19; Rom 2,15; Acts 7,51). The Bible considers heart a seat of the inner life of human beings, it is a source of feelings, memory, thinking, intentions and decisions. Cf. Xavier Léon-Dufour, *Vocabulaire de la Théologie Biblique* (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 176–179.

5   The idea of the heart and its connection to prayer is essential for the Hesychast tradition (from the Greek word hesychia which means stillness or quiet, and which according to this tradition constitutes the inner disposition for prayer). Hesychasm started in Syria, Palestine and Egypt in the fourth century, and was then developed in the Byzantine church in 14th century mainly by the monks on Mount Athos. See Ivana Noble, *Tracking God: An Ecumenical Fundamental Theology* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2010), 203–207. See also Tim Noble and Ivana Noble, "Hesychasmus", in *Mnohohlas pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západě,* Ivana Noble, Tim Noble, Kateřina Bauerová and Parush Parushev (Brno: CDK, 2016), 61–118. Ivana Noble, "An Experiential Approach to Deification: Lessons Learned from Hesychasm, Ignatian Spirituality and (Post) Modern Philosophical Mysticism", in *Theosis/ Deification: Christian Doctrines of Divinization East and West*, eds. J. Arblaster and R. Faesen (Leuven – Paris – Bristol: Peeters, 2018), 75–80.

6   "The heart is the centre of the human person, the domain of depth, where the body as well as the soul intertwine their roots. The heart is the vital source of being." Olivier Clément, Jacques Serr, *La prière du coeur* (Bégrolles en Magues: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 2011), 15.

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of the person, where the person desires the other and also thirsts for God; where the encounter with the others (i.e. other people) or the Other (i.e. God) happens. "The bottom of the heart is the place where we encounter God."[7] In his description of the heart Clément also refers to the idea of Dostoyevsky – a fight between light and darkness taking place right here in the heart.[8]

The deep heart could resemble the unconscious mind in its psychoanalytical meaning. The unconscious mind is also closed to ordinary consciousness, just like the deep heart - as mentioned in the introductory quote. It is also the kind of internal depth with which people are not in daily contact. To compare these two approaches to the interiority would be interesting, but it is not the goal of this article. I would only remark that unlike the original Freudian concept of the unconscious mind as a place of displaced desires (during the defence mechanism process) or as a kind of a dump for consciousness, deep heart is a positive reality and shows the greatness and mystery of the human person. It is place of "integral knowledge",[9] meaning knowledge in its completeness, which includes the intellect, will, love, and the awareness of beauty, as the hesychast tradition teaches. Deep heart is the inner source of the human's own self-being,[10] because the relationship with the source of life takes place right there.[11]

Living from or in one's own heart therefore looks very useful and according to Clément all human life seeks this "place of the heart".[12] But Clément points out another important characteristic of the deep heart. As mentioned at the beginning of the article, he adds that the deep heart is usually unattainable. The way to it "opens only in flashes, in situations of love, beauty and death."[13] Both of the authors that I will now explore, Frankl and Steinhardt, lived and experienced very intensely these situations of the nearness of death, which, according to Clément, enable and facilitate their contact with the deep heart. Thus, their insights may be helpful for those who desire to discover their inner source, whether they live in situations of crisis, or their external resources dry up, or they experience some degree of dehumanisation, fear or darkness.

Frankl's Discovery of Freedom and Meaning

Frankl reflects the reality of the deep heart – even if he does not call it that – not just through his own introspection, but also through observation of other people, both in the concentration camp and in his psychotherapeutic practice. He expresses the conviction that inside every

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7   Olivier Clément, *On Human Being: A Spiritual Anthropology,* trans. Jeremy N. Ingpen (London, NY: New City, 2000), 64.

8   This theme plays a central role in most of Dostoevsky's writings, see e.g. "The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and the devil are fighting there, and the battlefield is the heart of man." Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov,* trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (New York: Random House, 1992), 91.

9   The idea of integral knowledge (celnoie znanie) originally comes from Ivan Kireyevsky (1806–1856). See Tim Noble and Parush Parushev, "Celistvost, svoboda a solidarita v ruské filosoficko-teologické praxi", in *Mnohohlas*, Noble, Noble, Bauerová and Parushev, 125–129. See also Kateřina Bauerová, "Setkání hésychasmu se sofiologií u Solovjova, Florenského a Bulgakova", in *O Filokalii: Kniha, hnutí, spiritualita*, ed Karel Sládek (Velehrad–Roma: Refugium, 2013), 121.

10   Czech phenomenologist Anna Hogenová uses the expression "to live from the one's own source". This expression describes in another way what it means to be in contact with one's own heart. This thought is mentioned even in the title of one of her books: Anna Hogenová and Michal Slaninka, *Žít z vlastního pramene*: *Rozhovory o životě a filosofii s Annou Hogenovou* (Praha: Malvern, 2019).

11   "It is the source, dark and deep, from which springs all the psychic and spiritual life of man and through which he is close and communicates with the very Source of Life." Clément and Serr, *La prière du coeur*, 15.

12   Cf. Clément, *On Human Being*, 66.

13   Clément, *Corps de mort et de gloire*, 44. Richard Rohr develops similar idea: "I think there are basically two paths that allow people to have genuinely new experiences: the path of wonder and the path of suffering." Richard Rohr, *The Divine Dance* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 2016), 124.

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human being is something he calls "the power of the defiant spirit".[14] In my opinion, this power of defiant spirit, this power of resistance, can be understood as the manifestation and an attribute of the deep heart. This power of resisting spirit for Frankl brings and guarantees to a human his or her inner freedom. The power of resisting spirit resembles Clément's inner source present in the deep heart, which makes people free and no longer exclusively dependent on outer sources.[15]

It is important to underline that Frankl speaks about inner freedom. Our outer freedom – freedom of movement, action, speech or choice – is not absolute, it can be lost or taken away, as clearly shown by the experience of prison. Inner freedom is the attribute of the deep heart and is absolutely inalienable. As Frankl says, it cannot be taken away even in a place with the ultimate loss of freedom; a concentration camp. He speaks of "the kingdom of spiritual freedom",[16] where nobody else can make decisions or give orders other than the person himself; the person is as sovereign as a king there.

> Ultimately, what happens to a person internally, what the life in the camp 'does' with him, is the result of an inner decision. In principle, therefore, everyone can, even in such circumstances, somehow decide what (spiritually seen) will he become in the camp: a typical prisoner, or a person who even here still remains a human being and retains his or her human dignity.[17]

This freedom appears in the basic life-choice: Who does one want to become? According to Frankl everyone has a choice, regardless of their outer conditions; will they remain courageous, brave, dignified and selfless or will they lose their humanity? Will they try only to survive or vegetate, or will they transform this situation into inner victory? Will they remain human, or not?[18] As Frankl emphasises, nobody's decisions or attitudes can be determined by outer conditions or by other people. Nobody can be deprived of his or her human dignity from the outside.

When we compare this position with Clément's concept, Frankl's human being seems to be somewhat alone in his heart. Even if Frankl speaks about the relationship with transcendence, he accentuates freedom as autonomy, independence. For Clément, deep heart is a place of encounter, he emphasises the relationship. These two positions are not in contradiction, but they differ in tone and give rise to other types of objections, as we will see below.

To demonstrate the power of this freedom–autonomy, Frankl says that the prison guards were able to force the prisoners to do anything imaginable – to do humiliating work in inhuman conditions, to get up in the middle of night, to march in the frost and the snow without clothes and good shoes, to recite Nazi slogans, to stand for hours in the Appellplatz, etc. They could force them to do anything, but they could not force them to hate them. In taking this attitude the prisoners also remain absolutely free.

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14   See Viktor E. Frankl, *Bergerlebnis und Sinnerfahrung* (Innsbruck-Wien: Tyrolia, 2008), 11.

15   Gabor Maté, author of one of the best and most complex books about addiction, points out the basic reason for any kind of addiction, i.e. the inner emptiness and at the same time the inability of the person to live from the inner source, which leads to seeking fulfilment only from the outside. See Gabor Maté, *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010), chapter 23: The Social Roots of Addiction, Kindle.

16   Frankl, *... trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen*, 46.

17   Frankl, *... trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen*, 75–76.

18   Cf. Frankl, *... trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen*, 82.

The real cause of inner deformation of the person, as Frankl reminds us, is not pressure from the outside, but an inner decision. Frankl believes so much in the power of the human heart, that he considers inner freedom absolutely inalienable. But does everyone really have this power and is everyone able to defend and exercise their own inner freedom? Is everyone able to resist outer pressures? Frankl himself describes people in the concentration camp who failed, who resigned, who reacted with hatred or paralysing fear. We can ask; where was their inner freedom at these moments? And if it was lost or suppressed, did these people also lose their human dignity, as Frankl says?[19] Are they no longer human beings because of this failure? We do not need to go to a concentration camp to see this. Most of us have experienced a lack of inner freedom in smaller daily situations of pressure and hated, reacted with fear, or resignation. The question is therefore a current issue for everyone today.

I will try to respond to this objection, which points to evidence of failure, when it seems we do not have full inner freedom. I will do this in two ways. First, we need to remember that we are not able to truly judge the inner attitudes of others. We cannot see into their hearts (we cannot even see perfectly into our own) and we cannot see what really happens there. The human being and his or her deep heart will always remain a mystery. It is an abyss, as Clément says, and this expression suggests something without a limit. Frankl's approach does not seem to take this impenetrable human dimension sufficiently into consideration. Perhaps what we see as a defeat, may in reality be heroism and victory We can never pass final judgement on others.[20]

Second. I believe it is really possible for us not to exercise our inner freedom. I agree with Frankl that we cannot be determined only by external conditions, we cannot lose this freedom (otherwise we would stop being human, because freedom is one of the basic characteristics of humanity), but we can be ignorant of it and so not exercise it. Frankl's attitude undoubtedly helps us believe in our own inner freedom in hard and hopeless situations. It reminds us all that we have this freedom and dignity. But is knowledge of the existence of our freedom enough to allow us to exercise it? Is it only a question of knowledge? Another reasonable objection is that even if someone has their inner freedom and knows that they have it, he or she might not have enough power or motivation to exercise it. Here the theme of liberation appears,[21] and I will come back to this in the section analysing Steinhardt's experience.

The second point related to the heart in Frankl's thoughts is the meaning of life. The search for meaning happens in the heart, or as Frankl prefers to call it, in the conscience, which he defines as a "means to discover meanings".[22] I think that in general we can consider the heart

and the conscience as a single entity.[23] Frankl himself leaves the definition of conscience open; inner dialogue with one's own conscience happens according to the beliefs and world-view of everyone.[24]

According to Frankl, the meaning of human life is based on values. Here, I will only briefly recap Frankl's basic division of values into three categories: humans can find meaning first in creative values, that is, "by what he or she gives to the world in terms of his or her creation"; second in experiential values, that is, „ by what he or she takes from the world in terms of encounters and experiences „; and third in attitudinal values, that is, „ by the stand he or she takes when faced with a fate which cannot be changed."[25]

Implementation of creative or experiential values directly changes our outer reality. In the case of the attitudinal values, the situation is different. The external reality remains the same, unchanged. Only something in the heart changes: one can freely choose one's attitude when face to face with unchangeable situation – courage, hope, acceptance, or fear, refusal, hatred, etc. For Frankl, this attitude is the greatest of all human acts, even if not visible. It is of higher value than any outer work that can be done, because it evidences the most human of all human abilities: the ability to transform suffering into human action.[26] Of course, this change, which has happened in the heart, will also change the world outside – but not in a direct way and not immediately.

The extreme situation facilitates and accelerates the externalization of this process of exercising inner freedom and search for meaning, it unveils and makes apparent what really happens in the human heart. Frankl comments on it in this way:

> Life in a concentration camp caused a breakthrough into the deepest abysses of the human heart: there is again the human, a mix of good and evil. [...] Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. He is a being who always decides what he is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips.[27]

19   Frankl speaks about the loss of humanity, the possibility of ceasing to be human. See Frankl, ... *trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen*, 74–77.

20   Thérèse of Lisieux provides a beautiful example of this non-judging, when she describes a small event of her monastery life. Sisters from her community judged her attitude as unwilling and lazy, because she reacted too slowly to a request for help. But in reality, she wanted to give precedence to her neighbour, who also wanted to do that work. "The whole community surely thought that I acted in accordance with my nature, and I cannot express how this little thing benefited my soul and made me tolerant to the weaknesses of the others. It also protects me against arrogance, when the others judge me favourably; I say to myself: When they consider my little good acts as imperfections, they can be also perfectly wrong and consider my imperfections as a virtue." (MsC 13r) Thérèse de Lisieux. *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 251.

21   Cf. Rom 7,14–25.

22   Viktor E. Frankl, *The Feeling of Meaninglessness: A Challenge to Psychotherapy and Philosophy*, trans. Alexander Batthyány (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 45.

23   The conscience is more connected with ethics in the recent theological discourse. But both terms already appear in biblical terminology and it seems the Bible uses them as synonymous. The Old Testament uses the world heart primarily, and only under the influence of Greek thought starts to use the word conscience. The New Testament uses both. See Léon-Dufour, *Vocabulaire de la Théologie Biblique*, 176–179 and 204–208. Tomáš Špidlík is of the same view. "While the eastern authors speak about 'the voice of the heart', in the West the world conscience is used. ... They call the conscience 'the voice of God in the heart'." Tomáš Špidlík, *Prameny světla* (Velehrad: Refugium, 1995), 75. Karl Rahner also speaks of the conscience in the way that seems to be identical to the concept of deep heart, when he says: "In this way we allow God to be a person in the way in which he in fact wants to encounter us and has encountered us in our individual histories, in the depths of our conscience, and in the whole history of the human race. [...] God's word of forgiveness can be heard in the depths of conscience." Karl Rahner, *The Content of Faith*, transl. ed. Harvey D. Egan (New York: The Crossroad Publishin Company, 2000), 249 and 544.

24   "An atheist would say: "it's funny, it's an inner monologue, I'm talking to myself". A psychoanalyst would say we have a dialogue with our superego. Someone else will say we are talking with our conscience. And a religious person will add to that, "I call it God". Viktor E. Frankl, *Gottsuche und Sinnfrage* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2005), 95. It is important that human being can enter into inner dialog with the conscience and I think this can be seen as a characteristic of the heart.

25   Frankl, *The Feeling of Meaninglessness*, 179.

26   See Viktor E. Frankl, *Recollections: An Autobiography*, trans. Josef and Judith Fabry (NY: Basic Books, 2000), 66.

27   Frankl, ... *trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen*, 96.

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Frankl points to the main goal in human life, which according to him, is to find unique meaning in individual situations – whether by creating, receiving or by taking an attitude.[28] Our ability to find meaning in situations that cannot be changed and to take the appropriate attitude is possible thanks to our inalienable inner freedom.[29] We saw however that freedom seems not to be the only condition for taking the attitude of heart. I suggested there are other influences that contribute to the movements and processes in the heart, as we will see in the next part dedicated to Steinhardt's experience. Now I will follow in more detail this process which happens in the deep heart, as reflected by the Romanian Orthodox author.

Steinhardt's Transformation and Questioning of the Presence of God

Nicolae Steinhardt, like Viktor Frankl, experienced situations of imprisonment, suffering and unjust persecution, and his experience and its reflection also show what it could mean to live in and from the deep heart in times of darkness and face to face with unchangeable situations. We will find some common features but also differences in the approach of the two authors[30] and I will try to show how their positions may complement each other.
One of the most obvious differences is the religious language and an explicit testimony of faith that comes across in Steinhardt's writings. We will see that it is not only a question of different language but also of different experience.[31]

Steinhardt describes his life in the prison in the retrospective *Diary of Happiness* and he points to transformation as one of the most important topics. He completed his conversion to Christianity and was baptised there, in the prison, and this event influenced him for the entire remainder of the life. But this formal conversion is not the only benefit the stay in prison brought him. Steinhardt speaks about more radical transformation, which was caused and facilitated by this terrible experience, and which he realised and reflected on in retrospect, after he had left prison conditions. He describes it like this:

> If you come out of prison and, as a result of the suffering you have received, long for revenge and feel anger, imprisonment and suffering have been useless for you. But if, on the contrary, the result is peace, understanding, and resistance to all violence and meanness, then suffering and imprisonment have been useful to you and have been part of the mysterious paths that the Lord loves to walk.[32]

In Steinhardt's narration his explicit and living faith appears, intensified by his vivid memory of baptism – in contrast to Frankl who does not reveal his faith. But that does not mean that

there are no similarities in their experiences and their insights. As we will see, Steinhardt's approach resonates with that of Frankl when they speak about inner attitude as a value. Steinhardt offers concrete examples of this attitude – a prisoner could choose between the desire for revenge or feelings of anger on the one side and peace, understanding and resistance to violence on the other.

In describing the final goal, which is the inner transformation leading to a good attitude, Frankl's and Steinhardt's insights converge. But the process is different. Steinhardt describes the way of meaningful suffering as a suffering, which "is a part of the mysterious paths of the Lord".[33] For him, God's intention is something that accompanies him, that shows him the possibility of meaning in these situations. This step is missing in Frankl's reflection. Frankl evaluates the process only from the perspective of its result, which he describes very well: Suffering makes sense if it changes you.[34] While Steinhardt – if I paraphrased him – would say: Suffering makes sense, because it is "part of the mysterious paths that the Lord loves to walk",[35] and thanks to that you change.

I would like to stay for a while longer at this process of transformation that leads to a good attitude and to see how this transformation happens according to Steinhardt's experience. This process is not evident and automatic. Steinhardt assumes that not all suffering is useful for the person who suffers, and it does not automatically lead to positive transformation. As we have already seen in Frankl, not every human discovers and activates their inner freedom. The situations of darkness and suffering are always only opportunities, which can be grasped or not.[36]

So how can we grasp suffering and non-changeable situations in a good and fruitful way? And how can we understand this as a mysterious path of the Lord? As we saw with Frankl, this inner decision is a manifestation of inner freedom and is not determined by outer conditions. It seems that Steinhardt also agrees with this position, but he connects it to another question which lies on the level of the motivation for the decision. One of his most insistent existential questions in prison is that of God's seeming absence and how to interpret it.

The interpretation of this absence is like a crossroad in Steinhardt's description. In fact, it will influence the attitude which he will point toward. I am convinced that this is the real and biggest struggle for Steinhardt.[37] If he interprets God's seeming absence as lack of interest, contempt, or even malice (as he was tempted to do), it will provoke rejection, a sense of injustice and unfairness and all the consequences of this choice. The situation would lose all its meaning. In contrast, a positive interpretation of God's absence, the preservation of a positive image of God and of His intentions, enables man to take a positive attitude. It is in this field that faith plays its role, because these things are not evident and visible or accessible to pure reason. Not just faith in its primitive meaning, whether God exists or not, whether He is present or not. But faith that

28   See Frankl, *The Feeling of Meaninglessness*, 178.

29   See Frankl, *The Feeling of Meaninglessness*, 108–110.

30   One interesting question is whether they knew each other. Steinhardt does not mention Frankl and his thoughts anywhere in his huge autobiography although he quotes more than 300 authors, which suggests he did not know him or not well. Frankl's knowledge of Steinhardt is even less likely because Steinhardt was relatively unknown outside Romania before the revolution in 1989.

31   It would not mean that Frankl was unbeliever. On the contrary: his discreet faith, or discreet speaking about faith could be sign of a very deep and personal relationship to God. His discreet statement could make believers reflect on what it really means to believe. But neither is the language of Steinhardt fully theological, even if it is much more explicitly religious. He was not originally a theologian, his formal studies were at the Faculty of Law and Letters, so his language is influenced much more by the literature than by theological writings. This connection between theology and literature is not only in the language but also in the content of his work. See Pantelis Kalaitzidis, „Theology and Literature: The Case of Nicolae Steinhardt." *The Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 69, no. 1-2 (2017): 93–94.

32   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 361.

33   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 361.

34   See Viktor E. Frankl, *The Unheard Cry for Meaning: Psychotherapy and humanism* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 46.

35   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 361.

36   Some of them remain without any response and become useless; in contrast, some of them provoke a negative attitude – Steinhardt reminds us of the suffering of the thief crucified to Jesus' left, which was not smaller than that of the thief crucified to the right, which led him to denial and hate speech; some of them can even become harmful to the person, become a source of egoism and lead to self-pity, selfishness, and the cult of one's own suffering. Cf. Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 319.

37   Of course, he also led outer struggles, combating the conditions of the prison and prison guards. But in these outer struggles he usually preferred the tactics of passivity, resistance, non-violence. See for example Steinhardt's "Three Solutions" how to escape a concentrationist universe. Cf. Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 25–29.

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gives insight into God's intentions. This insight opens for Steinhardt in prayer.[38] Prayer is the way of understanding but also a way of opening oneself to God's presence, as we will see below.

Let us now look at the way Steinhardt tries to accept and interpret God's absence in the midst of suffering:

Above all, I understand that in this world we are completely forsaken by God, as Simone Weil says, and this abandonment is also the greatest sign of the 'existence' and the love of God. She says that God 'withdraws' in an absolute way to allow us to exist (His presence would otherwise mean our destruction), to give us absolute freedom, and to secure the full merits (or rather the meaning) of our courageous act of faith.[39]

Steinhardt sees the God's absence as a condition for human freedom and even existence! He uses similar vocabulary to Frankl: absolute freedom, meaning. Steinhardt grasps God's absence as "an occasion for the courageous act of faith" in similar way to Frankl[40] but in contrast to him he also sees it as "the greatest sign of his love".[41] This interpretation is surprising. The natural objection could be: isn't the withdrawal of someone a sign of lack of interest? If an omnipotent God withdraws in the situation when man needs him and asks his help and comfort, is that not a sign of His indifference?

To answer this objection some offer the following interpretation: God did not withdraw by His own will but was expelled and He himself respected the decision of the humans who did not want His presence. Paradoxically, I think that the only place God can be expelled from is the deep heart, the place where human beings can encounter God.[42] He respects human freedom to that extent, in that He does not want to violate it by entering uninvited. "The Lord is constantly present, but He does not rape our absolute freedom for a moment. He stands at the door and knocks. He does not enter uninvited."[43] Steinhardt also describes it in this way when he speaks of God's omnipotence: "There is only one thing God cannot do: Save us without our consent."[44] Another possible way of considering this question is offered in the book *Sophie's choice* and its famous response by the question, which returns responsibility

38   We can suppose that Steinhardt, being Orthodox, was familiar with the prayer of the heart, even if he does not speak much explicitly of his own prayer practice. However, he mentions the prayer of heart as "the great ultimate secret of Orthodoxy". Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 296. He also speaks about three steps in prayer, that we could consider his practice: 1) recitation of prayers as a preparation phase, 2) one's own and true prayer, individually created, 3) the most important part: the phase of listening, the listening heart. Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 523. And finally he reflects the prayer as the way to understand God's intentions, inspired by the thought of Kierkegaard. "The goal of prayer is not for God to hear what we want, but for us to hear what God wants". Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 383.

39   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 132.

40   Frankl also considers the concentration camp as an occasion for strengthening or weakening faith. "The small flame goes out with a storm, the big one blows. It is the same with those who love at a great distance. True love grows, the little one goes out. I state this and claim that I think I can say that the weak faith in the concentration camp has gone out, but the strong faith, we could literally say the true faith, only strengthened. True faith strengthened and weak faith died down." Frankl, *Gottsuche und Sinnfrage,* 98.

41   See Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 132.

42   See Clément, *On Human Being,* 64.

43   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 264.

44   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 464.

to humans: "The question: 'At Auschwitz, tell me, where was God?' And the answer: 'Where was man?'"[45]

Another way of interpretation is brought by Steinhardt himself, when he connects this experience to the experience of Jesus on the cross and his shouting: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Mark 15,34) Steinhardt often comes back to this cry "Eloi, Eloi" which as he says was the favourite topic of discussions in the prison cell. He contemplates it as a proof of the authenticity and reality of Jesus' life and passion, proof that Jesus donated himself to humanity in an absolute way.

Only the cry 'Eloi, Eloi' proves to us that the Crucified was not joking. [...] Something symbolic did not happen on the cross, but it was real suffering. Only if we combine physical suffering and moral suffering will we get the final product: the greatest pain.[46]

And let me add that Steinhardt also notes that God's absence was one of the biggest causes of suffering, worse than physical pain or any kind of discomfort. Christ proved, according to Steinhardt, by this shout that he did not come into the world for a mercenary reason and that he really meant it.[47]

For Jesus, the experience of God's absence was an occasion to demonstrate the virtue of courage – one of the most appreciated virtues in Steinhardt's view, a virtue which is a basis for all other virtues.[48] In the light of this biblical episode Steinhardt understands his experience of abandonment as an invitation to exercise courage.[49] This is similar to Frankl's approach; seeing unchangeable situations as an occasion for taking attitudinal values.

We can interpret this experience also in the light of kenosis, which describes the approach of withdrawal in order to create space for the other.[50] In this way we can understand kenosis as an expression of a love that loves the other more than oneself. This interpretation of God's absence or His silence can be helpful in seeing the meaningfulness of this experience and going through it, even if it remains dark and painful. We can speak also about Christ-like kenosis of the human being, which makes him or her similar to Christ, Christ-like.[51] As the Son followed the way of God the Father, so believers are invited to follow the way of Christ. This way to God is not only the way of cognition and knowing, but of complete transformation, as we will see below. That is why the experience of this absence is an inevitable part of the life journey.

Let me introduce one more point of view that could help us to understand this experience of the absence and presence of God and to see its positive impact to human life – the dynamic

45   William Styron, *Sophie's Choice* (New York: RosettaBooks LLC, 2000), 537.

46   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 90.

47   Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità,* 499.

48   "Without courage, other human virtues risk remaining just feelings or thoughts, without turning into deeds." Camelia Isaic, "Courage in Nicolae Steinhardt's Life and Theology" (Bachelor thesis, Charles University of Prague, 2016), 34.

49   Regarding the main topic of this article, courage is the very virtue of the heart. In some languages courage etymologically comes from heart. See Italian cuore–coraggio, French coeur–courage.

50   The Greek word *kenosis* in its reflective form (*ekenosen heauton*) appears in the hymn from the Paul's Letter to Philippians (Phil 2,7) and describes Christ's emptying, giving himself for the sake of others.

51   This Christ-like kenosis not only makes us similar to Christ but restores the unity of love between us and all the creation. Cf. Noble, "An Experiential Approach to Deification", 81.

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of kataphatic and apophatic ways towards the mystery of God.[52] The apophatic way excludes who God is not. But not only at the intellectual level but also on the existential and relational level of human person.

It takes us through the process of intellectual as well as moral and spiritual katharsis to the darkness illuminated by the love of the One whose nature is unknowable. [...] [It] is a way of personal conversion, a change of heart. It includes the letting go of idols, of our partial images of reality that claim completeness but cannot deliver it, and makes space for the Holy Spirit, instructing us towards ever greater plenitude of life, towards a 'personal presence of a hidden God'.[53]

In addition, this way was a part of Steinhardt's experience – as already mentioned. We can see the difference between speaking about God's withdrawal and the approach of the kataphatic way. God's withdrawal could create an impression of a strange God's invention, even if we explain it as His pedagogic approach towards humanity. But the necessity of the kataphatic way lays deeper and corresponds to the true God's nature, which is inaccessible.[54] On this way to this inaccessible God a human loses his partial or imperfect images of God and it is felt as God's absence. The kataphatic and apophatic way which are inseparable and have to be taken in consideration together introduce us to the mystery expressed in antinomies–paradoxes. God's presence and absence could be true at the same time. Steinhardt expresses the paradox in this way: "We only really suffer when we are far from God, but this suffering brings us closer to God."[55]

Abiding with this paradox of presence and absence requires an approach of patience and could be called faith itself.[56] This abiding led him to his own depth, to the contact with his own deep heart and "to union with God, to *theosis*".[57] Steinhardt likens this inner pilgrimage to putting together a "puzzle". This means putting the different (and if isolated, perhaps meaningless) parts together and in so doing finding a new meaning, the meaning of the whole.

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52 This approach is familiar to Orthodox theology and was developed mainly by the Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky. See Ivana Noble, "Words and Music Born out of Silence. Liturgical and Hesychast Influences on lex orandi and lex credendi in Vladimir Lossky and Fr Dumitru Stăniloae", *Questions Liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy* 96, no.1-2 (2015): 88–90. The kataphatic way, based on the presence of divine energies in the world and on the reality of incarnation, gives us the ability to speak about God, of course in a symbolic way, and to live the authentic experience of his presence. This first way resonates with many phases of Steinhardt's life even in the prison. For example, when he speaks in the autobiography about his baptism, which is for him the unquestionable sign of God's acting in his life. See Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 452.

53 Noble, "Words and Music Born out of Silence", 89–90. Ivana Noble is paraphrasing Lossky. See Vladimir Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), 32–33.

54 It is also in some way accessible, otherwise the apophatic way or any speaking and thinking about God would not be possible. "The divine nature ... must be called at the same time incommunicable and, in a sense, communicable; we attain participation in the nature of God and yet he remains totally inaccessible. We must affirm both things at once and must preserve the antinomy as the criterion of piety." The citation comes from Palamas, Theophanes PG 150, 932D, in: Noble, "Words and Music Born out of Silence", 88.

55 Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 365.

56 Patience with God – this would be the definition of faith according to Adel Bestavros. Adel Azer Bestavros, "Personal Meditations", accessed January 20, 2021, http://www.bestavros.net/adel/Meditations.html

57 *Theosis* is according to the Orthodox theology the goal of the human life. See Noble, "Words and Music Born out of Silence", 90.

And at the end of this puzzle we find a hidden God – where? In the least likely place, though the most obvious – where we would never have thought He was, as in the Poe's Letter – inside our hearts![58]

This presence in the heart means the closest nearness possible. However, it is not a possession or total comprehension of God – that is why at the same time this presence is experienced as an absence. For Steinhardt, this discovered presence of God is a source of his inner freedom and also reason – but as well, as a result – of his deep transformation. Transformation from an attitude of the fear and hatred to an attitude of courage and kindness.[59] He himself presents this transformation as the most important gift he received in the prison.

Conclusion

We have seen two examples of life in the deep heart or – to be fair to the language of our two main authors we should say – in the deep interiority. We started with Clément's note about the usefulness and at the same time certain unavailability of contact with the deep heart. Then we took one of the three ways Clément indicates as an entrance gate to the heart – the situation of death, in all its variation and manifestation. And through these glasses we examined the experience of Frankl and Steinhardt, both living in horrible situations and both succeeding in managing these situations for transformation and growth. Their approaches were not the same. We saw the differences given by their different religious faith, by their life context, professions and personalities. But both were successful in their life research.

Frankl believed in human inner freedom which for him was absolute and inalienable. According to him, this freedom allows every person to take the appropriate attitude, which can fulfil his or her life by meaning. He did not indicate any universal attitude, neither did he indicate how it should be identified. He said it was in the dialogue with the conscience, the means to discovery of the meaning, that the uniqueness of every single situation and corresponding attitude was found. The meaning is the goal of life every person in his or her inner depth. However, he did not answer the question where we find the strength for such attitudes in situations of huge outer pressure or darkness, or what to do if someone fails.

Steinhardt brought to this discussion the theme of God's presence or absence, which was a key question for him as a believer. I tried to explore it through his own interpretation. That was that God's absence can be seen as a withdrawal, which is not a sign of indifference or disinterest on the part of God, but rather an expression of love and trust towards humanity – and so it should be an occasion for humans to respond by exercising courage and faith. I developed Steinhardt's interpretation by applying the approach of the apophatic and kataphatic ways and also by connecting it to the theme of kenosis, which helped us to better place it in the whole of the human way to God. Steinhardt himself used religious arguments and the Christian faith as an important part of his worldview. Led by a situation of suffering, persecution and also inner darkness, he lived the experience of God's presence in the heart, which for him became a source of strength and cause of transformation.

Living in the deep heart is not the goal in itself. Life should not finish by closing ourselves to our hearts. For our authors, this inner world with God's presence does not become a refuge where they escape from the outer world and its difficulties.[60] On the contrary, it leads to

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58 Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 355.

59 See Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 535.

60 In fact, this discovery shouldn't mean closing in one's self. Meeting God in the abyss of one's heart leads to more adequate activity and building of human relationships. We are reminded of this by the great mystics, for example Teresa of Avila in her description of the journey to the Interior Castle. When she arrives at the last,

activity and coming out towards other people. But this activity and these relationships are transformed and liberated from ego-centric motivations. For Steinhardt this presence is the source of a transformation towards kindness and courage – which summarises the relationship to himself and to neighbour.[61] Frankl, in contrast to Steinhardt, is not able to name this source, even if he arrives at a similar conclusion. For him the contact with the deep interiority also brings incredible power of resistance and freedom.

This is the reason that even today we remember the reality of concentration camps, a reality so distant from the man of our time, or better: we remember the experience of someone who lived there and survived.[62] I am convinced that everybody encounters situations of darkness and suffering which can in some degree be similar to Frankl's and Steinhardt's experiences, situations that cannot be changed or situations that are oppressing. Extreme situations work as a particle accelerator: many processes happen faster and in an amplified way there. And the testimony of someone who was tested by conditions like that is also more credible, it is cleansed of naivety and illusions.

"Only suffering and death make human existence complete."[63] Because it gives occasion to exercise certain kinds of values that would otherwise stay idle, as Viktor Frankl would say, or because it leads to the discovery and experience of God's presence, as Nicolae Steinhardt would add, and because it opens the way to our interiority, to the inner source called deep heart, in the worlds of Olivier Clément. People today also pose similar existential questions as did the people in Nazi or communist prisons. The example of these two personalities could be of inspiration. We saw that contact with the deep interiority was decisive in their experiences. On the one hand this interiority opened to them thanks to the difficult situation – "it opens only in flashes, in situations of love, beauty and death,"[64] – on the other hand they succeeded in these situations only thanks to contact with their own interiority – it became a source of power for them. As a result, their lives were meaningful and happy.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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seventh mansions, that means to the highest intimacy and connection with God, she accentuates the necessity not to abide there, but to go back to the world, to serve God by acts, to come out to people. See David Peroutka, *Pramen: Vnitřní život podle Terezie z Avily* (Kostelní Vydří: KNA, 2013), 182–185.

61 "'Kindness in another's trouble / Courage in our own.' Simple verses, but their ideal — kindness in the misfortune of others and courage in our own — is not as modest as it seems." Steinhardt, *Diario della felicità*, 535.

62 It is remarkable, that both the authors, Steinhardt and Frankl, reflected and spoke about this experience for the rest of their lives, i.e. forty and sixty years after this experience respectively. Of course it was something unforgettable, but it was also probably something that permanently revealed new meaning and insights to them.

63 Frankl, *... trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen*, 76.

64 Clément, *Corps de mort et de gloire*, 44.

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BENEDICT'S CONCEPT OF "HEARTFELT CONCERN" IN HIS DEUS CARITAS EST SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF FRANCIS' LAUDATO SI
AND THE NEEDS OF CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL PRACTICE | Ondrej Fischer

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Ondřej Fischer ✉

Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague (CZ)

Abstract

Background: This paper poses the question of how, if at all, encyclical letters Deus Caritas Est and Laudato Si may jointly contribute to further refinement of the concept of professionalism within Christian Social Practice. In the former, the concept of "heartfelt concern" is used to qualify the helping attitude and the spirituality of a professional, who is engaged in Christian social praxis. In the latter, mutual responsibility for both human beings and nature is seen as central to aiming to a balanced social action, that which cannot be real "if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings". While the concept of professionalism is often used to denote a kind of discipline in market driven relationships, it could also, in its more fundamental sense, denote basic traits of a worker, who would in her work give well balanced attitude to the self, society and nature.

Conclusion: The paper would endeavour to argue not only that these two papal documents deal with the common agenda of the place of human individual in the society, but also contribute to further specification of the meaning of a "professional" in the light of today's requirements on Christian Social Practice.

Keywords: Christian social practice – Professionalism – Heart – *Deus Caritas Est* – *Laudato Si*.

Introduction

In my paper I offer a reading of pope Benedict's concept of "Attentive Heart" in his Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (2005) as seen in the context of pope Francis' *Laudato Si* (2015), where the concept of heart is also used. The reason for utilising these papal letters comes with an agenda of Christian professional social practice, which tends to benefit from both these documents. Though they may do so each in their own right, one could suspect, that both pontiffs in the documents may jointly contribute to the refinement of the concept of professionalism. Not in a sense, that these encyclicals deal directly with professionalism, which especially in the case of *Laudato Si* is particularly not the case. However, they may deal with this concept indirectly, through our relationship with the universe, with creation or with life in general, comprising of social relationships as signs of God's giving love.

✉   **Contact on author: Ondrej Fischer, Ph.D. – e-mail: fischer@jabok.cz**

To start with the concept of heart in a broader sense, rather than to focus only the Benedict's "heartfelt concern"[2], sometimes interpreted as "attentive heart"[3], one should note, that the term "heart" will serve here as a hermeneutical tool for my reading of the two letters. This will then lead me to the concept of "attentive" heart on the part of pope Benedict and to the concept of heart which does not lack "tenderness, compassion and concern"[4] on the part of pope Francis. To sharpen my reading of the two encyclicals, my reading shall be related to the adjective "professional" or to the noun "professionalism", as it is seen in both academic and practice-related concepts. The papal documents may affect the content of the concepts of professional – professionalism in their effort to form justified attitude to others which comes directly from our way of life and horizons we tend to find ourselves in. Those horizons, which penetrate also our social bonds and values and which are apparent also in the social dimension of our work.

I can see at least two reasons for which the strategy of my reading the encyclical letters could be seen as a sign of wishful thinking rather than a genuine academic proposal. The first one, to jump at the expression "heart" without proper exegesis of the related context, be this in the encyclicals, or in literature on Christian social teaching, needs to end up in rather vague conclusion. The second one aims at the difficulty with *Deus Caritas Est* and *Laudato Si*, as these two documents do not seem to have neither the same agenda or the same points of attention, nor that they deal with their objectives in a similar way. Benedict focuses on God's loving act to us and on our response both to God and to the less advantaged, as these become a resource for our social action. Benedict's first encyclical letter deals with our practical response as inspired by revelation of God's love to us, which is analytically transformed to practical implications of the command to love one another. In the latter, Francis reflects our land as our household. Reflection of "our Sister, Mother Earth"[5], as inspired by Francis of Assisi, also serves as hermeneutical hints for the way how to read the gospels and how to understand their initial and final praise of the Lord. One should not be captured only by the broadly ecological Franciscan approach, but ought to take on board that, at least Francis, sees his first encyclical letter as integral part of social teaching of Catholic Church.[6]

Yet, in spite of the differences in methodologies of the documents, we may see common ground for reading both these documents as offering further insight into the anthropological features, which might be relevant to the concept of professionalism. The concept of professionalism in itself can be seen as a construct and one of the key terms of social ethics. So whatever impact these encyclicals may have on our understanding of a variety of social issues, such as justice, responsibility or inter subjectivity and relationships, they might become even more apparent when discussed in the context of professionalism. For the purpose of this paper I will use the term professional as denoting a particular social engagement, which represent a commitment of an individual worker to certain standards and attitudes which are transparent and acceptable to the broader society. This commitment is often related to a particular kind of work and to particular group of those, who perform the work for the good of the society. On the basis of this understanding of professionalism it may become apparent that it is not only ethically loaded concept, which brings about ethically oriented thoughts and feelings, but also

2   *Encyclical Letter Deus* …, par. 31a.
3   Alois Křišťan, and Libor Musil, Nezodpovězená otázka vztahu 'pozorného srdce' a 'odbornosti' v křesťansky zakotvené praxi sociální práce (Unanswered Question of Interrelation between 'Professional Competence' and 'Attentive Heart' in Practise of Christian Social Work. *Sociální práce/Sociálna Práca*, no. 4, (2008): pp. 94 and 99.
4   Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* of The Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home (May 24, 2015), par. 91.
5   *Encyclical Letter Deus* …, par. 1.
6   *Encyclical Letter Deus* …, par. 15.

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that there is much room for the role of human heart, regardless the way it has been employed by the pontiffs. While the concept of professionalism is often used to denote a kind of discipline in market driven customers' relations, it could, in its more fundamental sense, denote basic traits of a worker, who would follow in her work the ideals of human attitude to self, society and nature.[7]

That is why our understanding of professionalism could benefit from the encyclicals. In conclusion I address the difference in Francis' thinking as compared with Benedict's, which could then contribute to more sophisticated understanding of what it means to be a professional today. It might contribute to opening up some space for further studies of Francis' theological anthropology and of his more optimistic model of a person within pluralistic society today.

1. Reading *Deus Caritas Est*

In his *Deus caritas est*, right from the start Benedict acknowledges many factors which influence our use for the word "love". He lists some occurrences of the use of „love". In the first place he mentions "love of country" and immediately after that he places love of one's profession, love between friends … and gets back to love of work. He distinguishes love for work and love for profession in a sense of love for one's vocation. Only after that comes love "between man and woman, love to children"[8]. His account of love he distinguishes between "*Eros*" and "*Agape*". Without much hesitations he sides with *Agape*, placing *Eros* to its more appropriate place within genuine relationships between man and woman, in the atmosphere of respected human dignity to each.[9]

In a very simple reading, we may acknowledge, that *Eros*, as the drive towards our aiming to the other, as that which does not let as stand by, but rather causes a concern which makes us move. And also, as *Agape* as that which shares with others, that which aims at encounter with others as its end in itself are both fully joined together only in God's love to us. Only in the *Agape* is the room for mutual sharing of the relationship called love, that which requires both the feeling of mutual relationality and the action towards others. This action is seen by Benedict as an act of commandment, of love. By this it is meant a sign of love for a group of people, rather than for the individual. "Conversely, as we shall have to consider in greater detail below, the "commandment" of love is only possible because it is more than a requirement. Love can be "commanded" because it has first been given."[10]

In this light we may then read the word "Heart" as Benedict uses it. When speaking of the formation required in training of professional workers, who are engaged in helping professions, such as in Diaconal, Caritas etc., he suggests that their work should stem from this commandment of love. The work should be based on personal experience of God's love to us. A paradigm story which illustrates this, is the story of Good Samaritan.[11] There is also Benedict

anthropology there, especially the anthropological assumption of "... the fact that the command of love of neighbour is inscribed by the Creator in man's very nature."

In reality, Benedict's driving force of a professional attitude requires, that

"(t)hose who work for the Church's charitable organizations must be distinguished by the fact that they do not merely meet the needs of the moment, but they dedicate themselves to others with heartfelt concern, enabling them to experience the richness of their humanity. Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a "formation of the heart": they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others. As a result, love of neighbour will no longer be for them a commandment imposed, so to speak, from without, but a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love (cf. *Gal* 5:6)."[12]

His concern for the professional worker translates to a requirement, that these workers have to be, first, "professionally competent",[13] and only subsequently, second, these should have their hearts open to God. This attitude enables them to open their spirit to others, to see in them the fullness of humanity. Which is the way how their action can flow out of the properly understood command of love.

To conclude, on the one hand Benedict places the professional action of a Christian professional – i.e. of an ideal worker, how has all the competences required by the professional status, as if enriched with the recognition of humanity of others, as inspired by the reflection and appreciation of God's love to us. It starts with the so called "high" theology, which enables the workers to acquire the necessary concern, as a result of one's appropriate response to God's love to us. It has to be a concern, which may become as if a complement to their professional erudition. This leaves us with two queries. First, the professional is the one who does the primary, the fundamental, but not the whole; "while professional competence is a primary, fundamental requirement, it is not of itself sufficient."[14] Second, the ideal attitude requires the experience of God's love to us a starting point. Which in itself is valuable, but it is something, that can be hardly acquired by appreciation of the story of the Good Smartian alone.

To conclude, the term "heart" in Benedict's *Deus Caritas Est* serves as if something "extra", an additional disposition, which only for those familiar with God's activity towards his people, those who are able to generate in human eyes adequate response. Even though it is not mentioned explicitly, it is essential part and parcel of professionalism, as long as the right way of seeing things is counted as one of the traits of professionalism. As Benedict concedes, it is the heart which "sees things rightly". And "this heart sees where love is needed and acts accordingly".[15]

2. Reading *Laudato Si*

In some respects, the two problems with Benedict's view on the ideal professional action just mentioned above, which in Benedict's view entails as if a double demand, the demand on the competencies of an expert and the demand on the attentive heart of the ideal Caritas worker, formed through an extra process of formation, seem to disappear when we get to *Laud-*

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7 The common concept of professionalism can be seen as one of unifying features of control and restrictive attitude to professions-to-be occupations. It is not used to promote the professions-to-be and their positive specific values. Cf. e.g. Evetts, Julia. "Short Note: The Sociology of Professional Groups. New Directions." and Evetts, Julia "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism … ", p. 399. For more structured account of professionalism in its historical format, as it becomes a challenge for contemporary profession of social workers, see Greenwood, Ernst. „Attributes of a profession. "*Social Work*. Vol. 2, July, (1957), pp. 44-55. For more substantial account of professionalism within helping professions c.f. Fischer, Ondřej, *Profesionalita, ctnosti a etika povolání (Professionality, Virtues and Ethics of Vocation)*. (Praha: Karolinum, 2021).

8 *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 2).

9 *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 3).

10 *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 14).

11 "Following the example given in the parable of the Good Samaritan … " *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 1a.

12 *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 31.

13 *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 31.

14 *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 31.

15 *Encyclical Letter Deus …*, par. 31b.

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ato Si. This could be down also to the way Francis uses the concept of heart. "Heart is a place where we praise the Lord."[16] A place, where God's grace is "deep within us at work"[17], and where lies our freedom and our "dignity" as well as "our ability to repent"[18], to "change of heart".[19] Heart is the point of our reception of the world seen as a communion. Our heart is the point which makes us to call for meaning, which grants our unity, our inner (subjective) togetherness. It signals the need of "high theology" to still remain as a source for Christian social action and, on the other hand, hope that we will not mistreat each other as human beings. This would go down as a diagnosis of a divided person. It is this point, which would support the view, that human person, be this a professional or a "lay" person, have her profession and all the qualification it requires, as well as one undivided unit. Her heart will be the centre point which contains the expert qualification and the right way of seeing things as a whole - and not that the right way of seeing things, the heartfelt concern, is an additional icing on the cake, as we noted in the *Deus Caritas Est.*

In the same vein, heart is seen as a point of unity, a point, where the symptoms of evil we leave as a footprint on our Earth come from. Perhaps, Francis goes even further than Benedict in the way he understands the imperative of our humanity; it is our openness, that is perhaps the most significant symptom of humanity, that, which is in the very heart of what is it to be human. Francis uses the term "openheartedness." Referring to St. Francis, humanity is not an arbitrary concept, no matter how well supported through the Biblical story of creation or through the Good Samaritan parable. For Francis, it is that which shows itself in our fundamental openness, "self-giving … open-heartedness".[20] It is a resource of our "integral ecology" which goes "beyond language" to the "very "heart of what it is to be human".[21]

Perhaps we may be more specific in interpreting what Francis means when he refers to human heart, i.e. our capacity for openness to the universal communion, in fraternal sharing – with anything and with anyone. What is more interesting, that this openness, seen as an ideal attitude stemming from our humanity, stays in contrast with cruelty and our indifference. As if our cruelty is seen on the same level as is seen our indifference, or our ignorance of things around us.

This brings us back to the value of concern, as a contradiction of indifference. Concern which has been attributed as a key feature of our hearts, which have been properly formed in the light of Benedict's requirements on professional Christian workers. Hence it is not only our seeing things rightly, but perhaps more fundamentally, our basic concern as such seems to be the key message conveyed by Francis reference to our hearts. Concern for things and people seen as belonging to our fraternal communion. This communion is further qualified again with reference to the quality of our hearts and the emphasis on the requirement of our "concern". In Francis' words "the deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings" … if they are "completely indifferent …" or "unconcerned about the poor".[22] Francis goes even further and suggests, "that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good".[23] When we mention engage-

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16 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 64.
17 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 205.
18 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 218.
19 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 218.
20 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 10.
21 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 1011.
22 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 91.
23 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 229.

ment, … "(w)e are speaking of an attitude of the heart, one which approaches life with *serene attentiveness,* which is capable of *being fully present* to someone without thinking of what comes next, which *accepts each moment as a gift* from God to be lived to the full ".[24] This anthropology, no matter how basic may be seen, sets out the starting point of our relationship to the world, and, consequently, to each other in our social action.[25] And finally, it is the same anthropology that allows Francis to see that that "in the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present …".[26]

Hence the first impressions from Francis, the concept of heart is taken there, where Benedict has abandoned it. In Benedict's view, it was something that required our further formation in order to gain the ability to see things in the right way, to generate concern as a result of our understanding of love God has to us. And in our wholehearted concern to respond to it in Christian agape, translated to the service of others as a service to humanity.

Francis, as if already assumed that the heart got its formation, its ability to see things rightly, even before learning explicitly of God's self-giving love. Francis counts on human ability of fraternal communion and on fundamental concern for that which surrounds us, our fundamental concern that reaches beyond our words, arguments and imperatives. Our ability of being present, of being in fraternal ecological communion arising from the openness of our grace-filled hearts, this is what triggers our social action. It follows, that should the professional worker turn her reading of *Laudato Si* to her professional action, she would be authentic, she herself should stay engaged in the appreciative and reflective relationship to the world of humanity.

Now is there any room for taking this consequence of reading this Pope Francis' text, just to take an example, to the concept of professionality? If we took a popular and wide spread concept of professionalism, such which is linked especially to one's following rules and standards, keeping in safe distance of the person we offer our service to, there may not be much to learn from *Laudato Si.* Perhaps, more likely we may find some inspiration in Benedict's concept of caritas, which he finds in his encyclical essential for professionals, as an attitude which complements the professionals' expertise, expert knowledge and skills, which would as if wrap them up into more human understanding of those whom they serve. This additional sensitive attitude would stem out of Christian professional experience of God's love to us, His manifestation in the salvific act of incarnation and inspiration of Christ like attitude to others, e.g. those socially excluded for all sorts of reasons (culture, nation, health, religion etc.). However, it is important to note, that there are other concepts of professionalisms, esp. those based on virtue ethics, which count with the notion of human quality of a person. These concepts of professionalism take on board motives and goals of the worker and link them with the context of personal subjective attitudes of the worker and with her context and environment.

3. *The role of Heart in the concept of Professionalism*
Virtue ethics, one of the methods of professional ethics, often claims that professional performance of a worker depends on her or his commitment to the good end (purpose) of her or his professional role. Virtues of the worker should be conducive to its fulfilment. Virtue ethics attitude to professionalism should account for both good human qualities of practitioners and their ability to overcome institutional and bureaucratic constraints, and focus purely on the

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24 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 226, italics mine.
25 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 87.
26 Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'…*, par. 245.

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good ends of the professional role, followed through the commitment of the worker.[27] An interesting example can be taken from Jacques Derrida's analysis of the term professor. In English it means to 'declare publicly'. To be a "professor of philosophy" is not only to be committed to teaching, lecturing and giving papers etc. It is about „professing ", i.e. proclaiming to the public that I *believe* in my subject, philosophy, and that philosophy serves me as if an alternative way of life. It comes from a tradition of "profession of faith" during final wows of a member of religious order. To make such a profession is to "declare out loud what one is, what one believes, what one wants to be, while asking another to take one's word and believe its declaration."[28] For Derrida, to be a professor is not primarily about the body of knowledge or skill expected in such positions. It is a public pledge of one's own commitment and responsibility he or she wishes to be taken on board by the public, that, which "can be reduced neither to theory, nor to practice."[29] Derrida's idea represents an important ethical criterion of professionalism, of personal motivation of the worker and its place in his or her life. The worker sees himself as being *called to* work that has been entrusted to him by the society and *for* the society and that he would take up the work as a challenge requiring his full personal involvement. Only those, who can assure the public about their commitment to work within a particular profession, can be expected to act *qua* professionals. To be a professional under this concept means to be concerned, engaged, obviously also with the qualification of an expert knowledge, which is here assumed as a condition *sine qua non,* yet the professionalism comes up with the need of the attitude to work as if it was my own unique calling to do whatever I as-if "live for", as linked with the value which dominates to the professional role.

4. *Joseph Raz on values and the role of engagement in ethical action as a source of professionalism*

There could be a range of objections against this concept of professionalism. For instance, that recognition and the active pursuit of values makes the professional engaged with the situation of others, perhaps in a way which is not welcomed, as it could interfere with the requirement of impartiality of the professional. Especially in the popular sense of its meaning, which is often linked with of managerial style of professionalism, the professional is the one who has the expert knowledge and who performs his professionality as if from a safe distance, as "being detached" from the client. This attitude to work is sometimes referred to as "value free" professionalism. Such a professional focuses only on the task as such, and does not interfere with further aspects of that work, such as what the client thinks about it, what feelings he or she leaves behind when the work is completed, apart from meeting the criteria laid out by the standards of quality for the job. This attitude to professionality makes it then easier to follow the success rate of the job by simple testing the indicators of quality or quantity against the standards of the services rendered. On the contrary, the professional of Derrida's style can be seen as a value-based, person-centred, concept of professionalism. It becomes a sign of personal subjective engagement with values related to a particular professional role, values one gets engaged with also in a form of heartfelt concern. In support of this view we could argue, that this *person-centred* professionalism is the appropriate one, especially in helping professions.

27 Sarah Banks and Ann Gallagher, *Ethics in Professional Life: Virtues for Health and Social Care.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). pp. 5-10.

28 Jacques Derrida, The future of the profession or the university without condition (thanks to the "Humanities," what could take place tomorrow). in: Jacques Derrida and the Humanities; *A Critical Reader.* Cambridge: (Cambridge University Press, 2002). pp. 36-37.

29 Derrida, The future of the profession … , pp. 36-37.

Justification of this fuller concept of value-based person-centred professionalism can be elucidates by the concept of value given by Israeli moral philosopher Josef Raz.[30] His concept of value is directly linked with motivation for our action and with the way our actions are performed to achieve not only the appropriate ends, but also to achieve them through an appropriate manner. Among the usual concepts of professionalism these concerns are not explicitly dealt with. But precisely these concerns were at least implicitly present in both encyclicals through the concepts of "heart" or "heartfelt concern". The relationship between our reasons for action and our values - one of ongoing controversies in ethics – offers good explanation, that proper action requires reflected engagement with value. Raz's account of the relationship between action and values may help to support our use of value laden concept of professionalism and its relation to justice, while not having to give up our concern with the requirement of impartiality.

One of the undisputed attributes of professionalism in general is the requirement that professional activities be transparent. Among other things this may mean, that we should be able to know reasons for every action of the professional. The same applies to ethics; within professional context ethics has to deal not only with values, but with reasons, which can often be regarded as motives. Reasons for action are in Raz's view related to values, seen as objects of our desire, or as foundational values (principles). In this, however, Raz starts with following Thomas Aquinas in suggesting, that values are not determined by desires, but that they are "indicated" by our intentional actions that have been directed towards that what is found worthy.[31] When we understand a value of something, it is the value which gives us a reason to act (we call it a practical reason). Conversely, if we are aware of a reason to act, it is because we can see the reason as a value.[32] Hence our not seeing a reason to act does not allow us to see a valuable thing. However, Raz's position of 'value' seems to be richer than this. Value is not only a 'practical reason'. Raz goes further in suggesting, that value can be, at least partly, seen also as independent of reasons for action and may not be linked with action! Hence our usual saying 'values are reasons' may need modification. Ulrike Heuer, one of commentators on Raz's work, suggests, that „(i)t is an aspect of things of value that they are practical reasons."[33] But it is not the whole story – not all, but only some aspects of values could be seen as reasons for action. What are the aspects of reasons for action that may supervene on *some* values and on some values not?

Raz describes four kinds of features that can be found on our perceiving values, those, which help us to realise what counts as values and what does not. Should some of them become reasons for action, they would have to do with four kinds of our attitudes to values. These attitudes are „preserving the value, not destroying the value, *engaging with the value*, and getting to know the value. Only those four kinds of our attitudes to value provide us with reasons for

30 For an overview of his work c.f. R. Jay Wallace, Philip Pettit, Samuel Scheffler, *Reason and Value: Themes from the Moral Philosophy of Joseph Raz.* (Oxford: OUP, 2006).

31 C.f. „intentional actions are actions that we perform because we … believe about them, and that means that we must believe that they have features that make them attractive, … features that give them value". Joseph Raz, On the Guise of the Good, in: *Desire, Practical Reason and the Good.* Ed. Erio Tenenbaum: (Oxford, OUP, 2010). p. 116.

32 "The good of what is of value determines for what conduct it provides reason, understanding the value depends on and leads to understanding the reason". Joseph Raz, Respecting People, in: *Value, Respect, and Attachment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). p. 165.

33 Ulrike Heuer, The Reasons that Can't be Followed: Comment on Joseph Raz's From Normativity to Responsibility. *Jerusalem Review of Legal Studies* 8, no. 1 (2013): p.133.

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action".[34] For Raz, the most important is the third one, as the first two (preserve and not destroy) are only to passively keep the value preserved and alive, and the fourth one provides us with its description. But the third one, the engagement, is precisely what indicates our concern, something that initiates all our other performative and cognitive processes. „Ultimately", Raz says, „value is realized when it is engaged with"[35] and our concern for this engagement with the fact makes the fact fully valuable. Raz puts it even more strongly: "[O]ur lives are about engaging with value, the rest being mere preliminaries".[36] It is not any sort of engagement, but the value comes in only when speaking of engagement in the appropriate way. „The key to understanding the necessary connection between reasons and values is this notion of 'appropriateness'."[37] Heuer refers to Thomas Scanlon's negative example of what it means to engage with value in the appropriate way: to have Beethoven's music played in an elevator would show that I do not really engage with Beethoven music in a way that is appropriate; hence I do not know or do not appreciate its value.

5. *The role of engagement in the attitude of a professional*

So what counts as the right reason for action which allow us to engage with value in an appropriate way? Raz does not offer any general description of how to identify the appropriate way of engaging with value, but describes it as follows:

"We … [engage with value in appropriate ways] when we listen to music with attention and discrimination, read a novel with understanding, climb rocks using our skill to cope, spend time with friends in ways appropriate to our relationships with them."[38]

It seems that engaging with value in the appropriate way stems from our engagement in (practical) reasoning about appropriateness of the way one would act. The intensity of value one sees in music would become apparent in the effort given to the choice of venue to listen to that kind of music.

Raz is regarded as moral pluralist when it comes to values. This means, among others, that values or value related principles, such as justice, are not given *per se,* but they need to be discovered with some care. Discovered also has to be the way how to relate to them. Therefore, Raz has the imperative to keep finding "the appropriate way". However, there is a condition of success of such effort, namely that "our inclinations and taste are present in our engagement*".* Raz explains, that

„obviously no one has reason to engage with all valuable objects. We need not read all the novels, listen to all the music, climb all the mountains, go to all the parties, and dance in all the dances, which are worthwhile … [W]hile in one way ultimately our lives are about engaging with value ... in another way the reasons of … recognition, preservation, non-destruction are more basic. They are also more categorical, in not depending to the same degree on people's tastes and inclinations".[39]

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34   Heuer , The Reasons … , p. 133.

35   Raz, Respecting People … p. 163.

36   Raz, Respecting People… p. 164.

37   Heuer , The Reasons … p. 138.

38   Raz, Respecting People …p 162.

39   Raz, Respecting People … p. 164.

To be sure, a reason for action does not come from inclination, but inclination and taste are conditions for engaging successfully with whatever is related to value. As a result, through this engagement we may be able to discern what action to regard as ethically right action.

To use of Raz's views on our understanding of ethically acceptable action and on the nature of ethical values, be this commitment to justice or to some form of professional standards, we need to put our attention to finding the *appropriate way* of relating to values in particular work situations. Yet, this would not function properly without *engagement*, which, in Raz's view, seems to be more important than other concerns professionals may have in order to maintain the status of their professional practice. In his view, then, other usual concerns related to values, such as concerns for preservation or non-destruction, i.e. also for impartiality, for equal treatment etc. are not so important.[40] It is our engagement in finding the *appropriate way* how to carry out our actions, where presence of inclinations and tastes as expressions of our subjective engagement (call it our mission, heartfelt concern, or proclamation that our own profession is something worth living for) is *sine qua non.*

6. *Plato's concept of Justice as a call for self-mastery within*

To draw on Raz's views on how are we moved by a value to action, which also includes an ethically desirable action, we may see now in more detail what it means to act with the ideal of justice, which could be seen as a problem when social action is focused on an individual rather than being detached from the person we tend to serve. Namely, to follow Raz, we should be subjectively engaged in ethically acceptable action also in pursuit of justice. Yet this is not enough, as in doing so, the requirement of our engagement calls for our involvement in a painful process of finding the „appropriate way ", in which to carry out our action. This process, no matter how complicated it could be, surprisingly resembles the process of attaining justice according to Plato's account of justice. Plato's description of the process of reaching justice is as if a description of practical reasoning we go through when attaining justice in our actions. The most important part of this engagement process is our look within us. It is a condition of successful recognition of an appropriate action, which leaves things in harmony. The ideal of justice is to achieve the state of things, where the things are as they should be and how these things should be, as Plato emphasises at the end of his discussion on justice.

"It really was, it seems, Glaucon, which is why it helps, a sort of adumbration of justice, this principle that it is right for the cobbler by nature to cobble and occupy himself with nothing else, and the carpenter to practice carpentry … But the truth of the matter was … that justice is indeed something of this kind, yet not in regard to the doing of one's own business externally, but with regard to that which is within and in the true sense concerns one's self, and the things of one's self—it means that a man must not suffer the principles in his soul to do each the work of some other and interfere and meddle with one another, but that he should dispose well of what in the true sense of the word is properly his own, and *having first attained to self-mastery* and *beautiful order within himself*, and having … made of himself a unit … self-controlled and in unison, he should then and then only turn to practice if he find ought to do either in the getting of wealth or the tendance of the body

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40   It does not mean the goal does not matter, nor does it mean that some sort of concern for self-preservation or non-destruction does not matter, but Raz does not allow these concerns to be placed among the top reasons for action. A seat at his top table is reserved to the concept "engagement".

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or it may be in political action or private business, in all such doings believing and naming the just and honourable action to be that which preserves and helps to produce this condition of soul, and wisdom the science that presides over such conduct … "[41]

This Plato's rich deliberation about the concept of justice, which Plato uses not only to describe what he thinks justice is about, but especially describes the process of discernment which leads one to attain justice. Perhaps, the most important is Plato's emphasis on the engaged process of discernment within the self, with the context of things as they are and should be. Though we may be used to draw upon the concept of justice as something learned from outside, which applies also in Christian social practice where we may draw it from the command to work towards social justice, this Plato's account of justice points our attention within. Plato suggests, that we look within, that we are engaged to discover things within ourselves, and in a way, which would allow us to see their right places, whether particular situation, or the place of things in relation to their nature and their purpose.

Conclusion: Professionalism in the light of Benedict's and Francis' encyclicals

The point of our reading both social encyclicals was to see, if there is a hint as to how to resolve a dilemma what does it actually mean to be involves in Christian social practice as professional workers, e.g. in Caritas, CRS, Diaconia, Adra and such organisations, which struggle to provide high quality of their services within Christian ethos on the one hand, and survive in the market driven competition of other relief organisation on the other. This has already been noted by Benedict in his *Deus Caritas Est,* that not only because of a competition among organisations, but the basic openness of a particular Christian worker within Catholic Church has to be present in its every organisation, which through various means serve people in their needs. It is also one of the features of professionalism, that it lays common grounds on the basis of which purposeful social action is offered to the society without partial concerns that would stem from religious diversity.

Yet the crucial point of the brief comparison of the two social encyclicals focuses on the concept of professionalism as such; what does it mean to be involved in professional Christian social action, e.g. along similar kind of professional work delivered through secular organisations. In some sense, the answer should be clear when we base it on Benedict's encyclical. The Christian worker does the same as the professional worker in his or her partner organisation, but, in addition, her work gains the heartfelt concern, which is rooted in her experience of God's love to us – something that the fellow social worker may not have, at least not in a way it could be gained through intentional "formation of the heart". As a result, it will not be something from outside, but will come from within, from one's faith. However, the faith as such serves as a call to be engaged, to focus on the proper delivery of the service in every individual case. But this call to becoming engaged is still seen as something extra, something which is not in itself part of professionalism – as if the professional would still be the one who does the expert-related "hardware", rather than the one who would do both, the expert work and the personal engagement into whatever the particular situation may offer to the one who is both fully and appropriately engaged to the service to others.

To encounter Pope Francis' concept of reflective Christian when looking at the world through the agenda of *Laudato Si*, we seem to read a different story the professional employed in an organisation which runs social or charitable services to the less advantaged. The starting point is not the story of Jesus, neither is it the Biblical narrative, but the engaged reflection of our

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41   Plato, *Republic*. Perseus Digital Library, 1999. 441c-444a.

experience with creation, seen as a room for caring attitude. The appeal to togetherness, the appeal for appreciation, for communion and sharing whatever can be shared, makes room for an attitude of a worker, who is called to see what is the right place of things, the right form of relationship. The engagement is apparent in the feel of responsibility for the living space entrusted to us, whether in terms of natural space, or a social space. One of the key assumption Pope Francis places right in the outset of our reflection is the call for engagement, our natural concern for things. This clearly resembles both Derrida's model of being personally involved with the way how one lives out her or his profession, and the call for engagement in an appropriate way as voiced by Raz's account of values and practical reasons. There is also no place for an extra motivation, for some added narrative, which would offer reasons for tenderness, compassion and heartfelt concern. It is something that is central to one's life and to what inspires every action.

In *Laudato Si* we come across an assumption, that integral ecological view of the world will be based on everyone's willingness to share one's own space. This basic openness naturally brings about the concern for others, for the individuals who are in need, whether me being a Christian or of a different or no religious faith. As long as the existential drive is within the individual, then the Christian Caritas worker takes her own engagement in dealing with things in an appropriate way as a part and parcel of her task, whether expressed as following one's vocation or simply as being concerned with our living environment. At the end, it seems that Pope Francis' anthropology allows for an optimist view of human nature, that, which is both grateful and eager to turn the gratefulness of being part of the Universe to engaged action. Action, which whether oriented towards social ends or other ones, whether performed as top-class professional service or an individual initiative, it would tend to express one's joy inspired by the ability to share in the benefits as well as in the responsibilities our common living brings about.

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The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE: A SEARCH FOR A HUMANE SOCIETY*

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Jiří Dosoudil ✉

Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague (CZ)

Abstract

Background: The article explores the biblical understanding of humanity and how this understanding shapes social relations. The meaning of the key concept of the image of God is recognized in the motifs of human power, dignity, and essential relationality. In the New Testament, humanity is also portrayed as a dynamic construct oriented to a certain kind of perfection.
Conclusion: Two claims are made: firstly, the unique status of humans within creation is based on their special relationship with God, and thus, secondly, the concept of the image of God should not be primarily understood in terms of rights or dignity, but of love. It is argued that the Bible understands love as a way both to a humane society and to human self-fulfillment.
Keywords: God's image – Society – Social relations – Love.

Introduction

When describing religion as the heart of a heartless world, Karl Marx presented the world as a place not only heartless but also godless. Though it would be problematic to treat Marx as an atheist in the strict sense of the term,[2] in his work he proposes to shift the focus away from God towards human and secular reality. In Marx's understanding, religion represents an illusory projection of human society. The religious quest for God he would accept only as a transitional phase in the pursuit of a just society. There is no God in Marx's soterio-eschatological vision of a blissful future; he does not need God there.

Yet the idea of God being inactive, distant, or even absent predates Marx's work: there is a somewhat similar concept already in the Old Testament. There is no God in Sheol, the empire of death (Ps. 30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17; Isa. 38:18). No one praises the Lord there; no remembrance of Him remains in the abyss (Ps. 6:5). Indeed, the place of God's distance is grim and gloomy. Human beings do not enjoy any happiness or satisfaction there, their shadow existence is nothing but a silent persistence. It is a purely negative vision. The loss of life means the loss of God, the loss of God means the loss of life in the Old Testament.

These two views of God's absence are, therefore, entirely contradictory, and we should pay attention to them. We will not be specifically concerned with the details of Marx's social theories, but with a more general conception of a society without God that the architect of modern social science has introduced. Massively adopted, it remains a challenge even for contemporary theo-

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2   See Charles Devellennes, "Marx and Atheism," in *Marxism, Religion and Ideology: Themes from David McLellan*, ed. David Bates, Iain MacKenzie, Sean Sayers (New York: Routledge, 2016).

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logical reflection. What makes the religious seeking of God important for human life and society? As Marx did, we can either refuse it as illusory or marginalize it in favor of the secular struggle for social justice. However, is it really possible to negate the sphere of God without also eliminating much from the human sphere? What does such negation or separation of the two realms imply? This paper will introduce the biblical concept of the image of God as an important basis for social relations. We will point out several occasions when the spheres of God and the human fundamentally overlap and explain what makes the concept of the biblical God still important today.

1. The image of God in the Old Testament

It is not necessary to show in detail how deep the relationship was between the human being and his Creator in the biblical world. Let us only acknowledge that God is both the source (Ps. 36:9) and the giver of life (Gen 2:7; Ne. 9:6; Jer. 38:16; Job 33:4) in the Old Testament.[3] All human existence is subject to His will (Job 12:10; Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7) as to the highest good (Jer. 29:11; Mic. 6:8). Humility before the Lord and "walking in his ways" (Deut. 8:6) are found to be the most natural, wise, and beneficial program for human life (Gen. 24:40; 2 Ch. 7:17-18; Prov. 3:5-6). There is a deep, inalienable affinity (Gen. 9:6) between the pinnacle of creation and the Creator inscribed in human nature itself: humans are created in the image of God. Let us now discuss this concept in more detail.

The *locus classicus* of biblical anthropology is represented by three passages of Genesis. Firstly, on the sixth day, God crowned His work, expressing His own likeness (Gen. 1:27):

> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

In the genealogy in the book's fifth chapter, there is another mention of the human being's likeness to God (5:1-2):

> … when God created humankind, he made them in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them "Humankind" when they were created.

Finally, the motif of the image of God is mentioned in close relation to God's prohibition of killing. The verse is found at the end of God's blessing of Noah and his sons (9:6):

> Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind.

There has been a rich discussion of the above passages in recent decades. Though both words employed in the pericopes, image (צֶלֶם, *tselem*) and likeness (תּוּמֶד, *demut*), are synonymous, they are not mutually interchangeable.[4] They are not to be understood in visual terms as the image does not necessarily apply to physical objects.[5] The similarity between God and the human

being does not lie in corporeality, but neither can it be identified with any human attributes or brain activity.[6] Instead, it presumably touches the very essence of man. Indeed, motifs of image and likeness speak more about what humans are than what their quality is.

One of the most significant aspects of the motif is dignity, though its significance should not be overestimated. In the book of Genesis we find described the order of the world where humans have an exceptional and privileged role (Gen. 1:26-30; 2:15-17). However, considering the use of the motif of the image of God in ancient oriental civilizations, Old Testament scholars also stress its representative and authoritative functions.[7] Humans are desired by God and therefore they represent God's goodness. In addition, they resemble God in His power. Human rule over creation makes the glory and majesty of God visible, which provides a basis for their mandate to conquer the earth and all that belongs to it (Gen. 1:27-28). We find the elements of human value and dignity in an organic connection in Psalm 8 (vv. 5-7):

> what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor

Furthermore, as mentioned above and as the rich history of biblical exegesis shows us, several other approaches to understanding the biblical motif of God's image have been developed. During the twentieth century, scholars attempted to associate it with various aspects of human nature.[8] The most fruitful approach turned out to be the one that focused on human relationality. According to some scholars, the divine is to be found in the ability of humans to establish relationships with everything that surrounds and transcends them. The most prominent proponent of this approach, Karl Barth, recognized both the relationships between people and God and between man and woman as a reflection of the trinitarian I-You relationship. A human person resembles God in its self-transcendence and in its ability to leave its interiority. According to Thielicke, humans have such an ability only thanks to the entrustment of power to rule over creation.[9] Relationality is considered by some scholars to be an integral trait of human nature and they also characterize it as a specific kind of calling: people resemble God only to the extent to which they faithfully respond to His self-revelation.[10] A similar interpretation, likeness to God as a human duty, emphasizes again the Creator's commission to human beings to care for creation.

All the mentioned interpretations of the concept of the image of God are found abundantly in the works of contemporary scholars. Though Barth's conception is sometimes criticized for a lack of exegetical support,[11] his relational model of human existence has undeniable biblical grounding and enjoys considerable popularity within the contemporary systematic reflection.[12] Depictions of the unique value and dignity of human beings are found, often intertwined, throughout the whole of the Old Testament.

3   See also in the New Testament John 1:3-4; Acts 17:25.

4   John Piper, "The Image of God: An approach from biblical and systematic theology," *Studia Biblica and Theologica* 1 (March 1971). Accessed March 17, 2021, https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-image-of-god.

5   Michael S. Heiser. "Image of God." In *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. (Edited by John D. Bary et al. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2014).

6   Heiser, Image of God.

7   Cf. Richard J. Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis* 1 (Grand Rapids: BrazosPress, 2005), 24-26.

8   See Bernd Oberdorfer, "Human Dignity and ,Image of God'," *Scriptura* 204 (2010): 234-35; Heiser, Image of God.

9   Cf. Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*, 22-23.

10   Oberdorfer, "Human Dignity and ,Image of God'," 235-37.

11   Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*, 22-23.

12   Oberdorfer, "Human Dignity and ,Image of God'," 237; Piper, *The Image of God*.

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2. The image of God in the New Testament

Though the New Testament generally does not question the great value of human beings (Matt 12:12; Lk. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 2:4-7), in the Pauline corpus we find a different meaning of the image of God motif. The phrase εκν το θεο represents Christ (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15). Humans should conform to Christ's image (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 11:7; 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10) since Christ is recognized as χαρακτήρ, a reflection of God. Through him God's glory and very being are discovered (Heb. 1:3).[13] Christ is both the image and the imager of God for Christians: "as Jesus imaged God, we must image Jesus".[14]

We see a significant shift here. The concept of God's image as a form that is to be gradually achieved, not already possessed by humans, is foreign to the Old Testament.[15] People do not entirely lack God's likeness. A man should not, according to the Apostle, cover his head during prayers "since he is the image and reflection of God" (1 Cor. 11:7); the same is true for woman, who is "the reflection of the man" (1 Cor. 11:8). In the Letter of James (3:9), we read explicitly of humans "made in the likeness of God" (καθ' μοωσιν θεο). However, the concept of becoming the image of the heavenly, εκνα το πουρανου (1 Cor. 15:42-49) suggests a movement towards a full adoption of such likeness. A person should become "incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual",[16] become like Christ (2 Cor. 3:18):

> And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

Given the human condition it is not possible to reach the future glory in its fullness. The human being as he or she is, "flesh and blood", "cannot inherit the kingdom of God" as the perishable cannot inherit the imperishable[17] (1 Cor. 15:50). Nevertheless, by following Christ in his suffering (Rom. 8:17) and constantly renewing one's mind (Rom. 12:2), it is possible to attain it partially. The work of the Holy Spirit plays a key role in this endeavor. The Pauline tradition describes the process as a renewal of the original image of God in man corrupted by sin. The Letter to the Colossians thematizes knowledge of God in this context. It is essential for the Christian to recognize "who he is in terms of Christ and what that understanding means for living rightly" (Col. 3:9-10):[18]

> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.

In the Letter to the Ephesians, a life in Christ means taking on a new way of being human characterized by God's supreme attributes of justice and holiness[19] (Eph. 4:22-24):

You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

All three characteristics – knowledge of God, justice, and holiness – describes humanity in the state of its original creation. In Christ, the new Adam (1 Cor. 15:22; 15:45), they have become fully visible (Rom. 5:19; 5:12–21).

To sum up, in the words of Gerhard Muller, the Bible presents God as "the measure and the norm for being truly human".[20] The true worth of the human person is recognized. People are endowed with power and dignity, but also, and most importantly, with the unconditional love of the Creator. In their relationality, they resemble the Trinitarian God. The New Testament introduces a new concept of humanity: a person is defined as a dynamic construct oriented towards perfection. Believers are to be conformed to Christ and the perfect image of God he represents. Such transformation will never be completed under the conditions of the ruling age (Eph. 1:21); however, with the help of the Holy Spirit lives of justice and holiness can already develop and lead, in turn, to harmony in social relations.

Yet the most important element in the process of adopting the image of God is still to be explored: love. Together with holiness and truth, it has "its origin in God's attribute of perfection" and shapes the very essence of the human being.[21] God Himself shares His love with people through His Spirit (Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:7), enabling them to become like Him and to find their true selves. We will now discuss this key element of biblical anthropology in more detail.

3. The Image of a loving God

The Old Testament shows love as an essential trait of God's personality (Deut. 32:36; Hos. 11:8; Jer. 31:3,20; Ps. 135:14). Though God loves His people unconditionally and independently of their qualities (Ex. 32:12-14; Deut. 7:7-8; Ezek. 16:59-60), He requires from them, in turn, faithfulness (Deut. 4:29; 5:7; 6:5), obedience (Ex. 19:5; 20:6; Deut. 7:9-13; Jer. 7:23), righteousness (Deut. 26:18; 1 Sam. 15:22; Hos. 6:6; 10:12; 13:4; Mic. 6:6-8), and also love towards others (Lev. 19:18).[22]

The New Testament further develops the concept. Rendering the hebrew בהא, aheb, as γαπάω or φιλέω,[23] avoiding synonymous ράω related more to the erotic or passionate type of relationships,[24] it presents love as a total commitment of the person to God (Matt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13) manifested in concrete acts (1 Cor. 16:14). According to Jesus' teaching, there is no more important God's command than, „first, the command to love God with all one's being, and, second, the command to love one's neighbor as oneself" (Matt. 22:36-40) – „all other biblical commands are to be understood in light of these".[25] That reflects God's nature and His relationship with man.

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13 Cf. David Allen, *Hebrews* (Nashville: B & H, 2010), 118-19.
14 Heiser, Image of God.
15 Heiser, Image of God.
16 Cf. Piper, *The Image of God*.
17 See also 1 John 3:2.
18 Cf. Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 269.
19 Peter Thomas O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 331-33.

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20 Gerhard Müller, "The Christian Understanding of the Human Person," *Principles* 3, no. 4 (2017): 5.
21 Cf. Richard D. Patterson, "Faith, Hope and Love," Bible.org, accessed March 17, 2021, https://bible.org/article/faith-hope-and-love.
22 See also Lev. 19:34; Deut. 10:19; Prov. 25:21.
23 Thought the latter generally refers to unimpassioned love, more a liking between friends, we can find the two verbs used synonymously in the New Testament – see Matt. 6:5; 10:37; Jn. 5:20; 11:36; 12:25; 15:19; 16:27; 20:2; 21:15-17; 1 Cor. 16:22; Tit. 3:15; Rev 3:19; 22:15.
24 See Walter Bauer, Frederick W. Danker, William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). See also the στέργω.
25 Karl Paul Donfried, Mark Allan Powell, "Love" In *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary*. Edited by Mark Allan Powell et al. New York: HarperOne, 2011.

Love is the very meaning of any act of God. God Himself reveals to the people in mercy and grace (2 Cor. 1:3; Eph. 2:4; Titus 2:11-12); out of His love for the world, He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Jesus, being the image of his Father (2 Cor. 4:4), expressed His love, in turn, throughout his life, even to the radicality of the cross (Phil. 2:6-11). Love then is established as the most important requirement for the follower of Christ (John 13:34) and represents an authentic human response to God. In the First Letter of John (1 John 4:7-8), we find a close connection between the love of God and the love of people:

> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

Living true and active[26] love makes people similar to God whose image they bear. The love of God "is perfected in us" only if we "love one another" (1 John 4:12).

Finally, it is love that "binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Col. 3:14) in the sphere of social relations. It brings all into one body (Col. 3:15). In this same Letter, the Lord's love is presented as the living principle of all community relationships (vv. 12-13):

> As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

This pericope follows the aforementioned call for a renewal of humanity (Col. 3:9-10) and establishes a new identity where there is no distinction between „Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free" anymore, but "Christ is all and in all" (v. 11). It is no coincidence that the Letter to the Colossians does not end its quest for true humanity with the climax of a vision of unity; instead it continues with a call for respect and forgiveness. The church, a seed of the new mankind, is not simply an egalitarian society, but a society of love.

It should be emphasized that the two dimensions are inseparable from each other: love of neighbor is the natural response to God's love. Following Christ, the perfect image of God, means to choose love and life for others as the highest life principle. Many inferences have already been drawn from the biblical concept of God's image into various fields of philosophy, ethics, politics, ecology, and others throughout the history of theological research; but we have also touched here on our original question. Let's investigate it in detail - what does the concept of the loving God tell us about human nature and social relations?

4. Love and human relationality

First of all, let us stress that human beings, regardless of their uniqueness and power, are part of creation. They do not find themselves situated between heaven and the earth, but as an integral part of creation they firmly stand on the earth. It should also be emphasized that they do not outclass the rest of creation by their essence, but, primarily, by the measure of attention and

love that the Creator gives to them.[27] It is not a question of who human beings are that determines their position in the world: the question is what human beings are *for God*.

Indeed, people are endowed with extraordinary value that can be derived from the notion of God as Logos, "the creative reason from which the world came forth and which is reflected in the world".[28] By creating human beings, the creation's ultimate meaning and reason, God follows a certain rational plan which demonstrates that they "shares in the inviolable dignity of God himself".[29] However, its dignity shows more clearly when we focus on the biblical perspective of the God-human relationship. God cares for the human race and he never revokes his special relationship with His people. He has blessed them (Gen. 1:26-28) and endowed them with exclusive privileges; cares for them throughout history and saves them from their enemies, even when they have fallen into disobedience or indifference.[30] As recipients of the Creator's blessing (Gen. 1:22) and promise of eternal favor (Gen. 8:21-22), people have a very special value for God. Precisely for this reason, any individual has, in accordance with the modern concept of human rights, "a fundamental, unconditional, and unalterable claim or value that entails an attitude of respect on the part of every member of the human community".[31] This view finds its solid grounding in the Bible.[32] People possess an inalienable value and dignity. As they are not indifferent to God, they also should not be indifferent one to another.

However, the bond between love and one's dignity is even deeper: it touches the structure of the human being. Showing that dignity cannot be seen as the person's attribute, nor as a consequence of one's or others' behavior, Claudia Welz argues that it principally can be only understood, *recognized*.[33] Dignity's visibility is "not a visual appearance, but a hermeneutical one".[34] It encompasses the person's history, deeds, intentions that only respectful, loving interpersonal relation can fully reflect and appraise. Only in God's relation toward human beings, their dignity can be granted from their birth until death and even afterwards.[35]

Furthermore, relational structure of the human being shows the alterity of individuals and groups within a society not only to be a natural social phenomenon, but also a fundamental prerequisite for human development. Only in Eve, his alter-ego, can Adam find his rib: a part of himself he misses deeply (Gen. 2:23).[36] Such imagery can be widened to a metaphor for any human relatedness.[37] One can find himself or herself only in harmonic relationship with the Creator and other people. Isolation is a portrayal of hell in the Bible.[38] The story of the fall also shows us a link between the two types of relationships: once the bond to God is disrupted, relationships

26   D. Moody Smith, *First, Second and Third John* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 109.

27   See e.g. Deut. 7:9; Jer. 29:11; 31:3; Ps. 86:15; 136:26; John 3:16; 1 John 3:1; 4:7-8.16.18; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 5:8; 8:37-39; Eph. 2:4-5; 1 Pet. 5:6-7.

28   Pope Benedict XVI., *Europe Today and Tomorrow* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 97.

29   Ibid.

30   See e.g. Ex. 3:10; 6;6-7; 14:13-14; Isa. 43:11; 46:4; 52:10; Jer. 3:23; Ezek. 34:12; Judg. 2:16-18; 2 Kings 13:5; 1 Sam. 17:37; 2 Sam. 22:1-3.18; Ps. 3:8; 18:2; 77:19-20; Hos. 13:4.

31   Agnes Cunningham, Donald Miller, James E. Will, "Toward an Ecumenical Theology for Grounding Human Rights," *Soundings* 67, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 210.

32   Ibid., pp. 213-214.

33   Claudia Welz, *Humanity in God's Image: An Interdisciplinary Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 233-38.

34   Ibid., 238.

35   Ibid., 241-43; 249-52.

36   Pope Benedict XVI., Peter Seewalt, *God and the World: Believing and Living in Our Time* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 78-80.

37   See also Matt. 22:36-40.

38   Cf. Benedict XVI., *God and the World*, 111.

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between people also become heavily damaged. It is immediately after their revolt against God that Adam and Eve start to blame and unload their guilt onto each other.[39] God's love towards His Creation represents an important pattern for any human interaction.

In this chapter we have shown the crucial importance of relationality for human existence: it allows people to establish relations of love. Only in God's love can their dignity and rights be solidly grounded, only in a continuous self-transcendence are people able to live their full lives. The necessity of love becomes even clearer in a broader perspective, in the sphere of social and political relations.

5. A society of love

Two of the aforementioned aspects of the motif of the image of God we see vividly present in contemporary post-Christian society. Firstly, there is an unconditional respect for human value and secondly, a premise of equality between people expressed in a continuous effort to overcome various social barriers.[40] Though not explicitly grounded in the Bible, protection of the human person, its rights and freedoms, seems to be an always present topic in the political agenda and civil sector initiatives. Today's largely secular society cannot even be accused of lacking a third aspect of the theme, love in interpersonal relations. In the form of an active pro-existence for other people it is sometimes seen even more truly present in the secular sphere than in Christian communities. However, it is still true to say that love is often understood more as an ideal there than as a necessary basis for any social coexistence today. Although there is respect for every human life's value and though human needs and rights are recognized, love is considered an "extra quality", not the base and fabric of interpersonal relationships. Secular values seem more to be based on the principles of justice, fairness, or equality. But do we not find right here the place for the heart of the world which Marx missed so much?

Paul's answer to this question would apparently be positive. In his "more excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31) he shows us that even the most altruistic work is rendered futile if it does not have love (1 Cor. 13:1-3).[41] He touches the very basis of human nature when explaining his call for good interpersonal relationships: in love the Creation finds "both the fundamental rule and the ultimate aim of life".[42] It "always lays claim to eternity"[43] and finds its absolute horizon in the eternal relationship of love, in God. "Poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:1-5), love invites us to participate in God's life.[44] It is an integral part and the most fundamental principle of the Christian life. However, it is to be said in the same breath that biblical love does not constitute a mere theoretical framework but always calls for concrete acts. It can never be only abstract or less explicit than how God's mission of His son explicit was (John 3:16). God's love is binding and yet, God also remains a guarantor of justice. Everyone must someday give an account of the immense love he or she has received, and be judged by how it was passed on others. Justice is then "not abolished by love", but the responsibility for one's deeds is, on the contrary, "fully validated by the Christian faith".[45] For Paul to love is to act; "anything short of action is not love at all".[46]

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39   Cf. Benedict XVI., *God and the World*, 87.

40   Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 270-72.

41   Cf. Müller, "The Christian Understanding of the Human Person," 3.

42   Benedict XVI., Seewalt, *God and the World*, 185.

43   Benedict XVI., Seewalt, *God and the World*, 185.

44   Patterson, "Faith, Hope and Love".

45   Patterson, "Faith, Hope and Love".

46   Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 628.

Though in the Bible the necessity of love seems to be clearly articulated, in the secular sphere it is not. Without the biblical grounding, we sometimes see love being replaced by other motifs. As the history of the twentieth century shows us, there is an ever-present temptation to switch the focus from the person to a material profit or to egalitarianism only, or to play various groups of society off against one another for some supposed higher good.[47]

It seems that the world cannot gain its heart through any purely social or political program. Eliminating social inequalities and enforcing the law makes the world more just, but not necessarily more humane. There always must be more. A struggle for equal opportunities to attain high social status, wealth or social influence would never fulfill the human "mission of loving".[48] Gerhard Müller speaks of Christianity as a project of the world that cannot be simply identified with philanthropy, as the Kingdom of God is not a mere non-governmental organization.[49] It is rather a grace, by its essence touching the whole human person; it should be expected with repentance (Matt. 4:17) and transformation of the human heart. Being an eschatological quality, it is not yet here, but it still may be lived in faithful expectation making it already present in our midst (Lk. 17:20-21).

It should be once again emphasized that this study did not want to accuse post-Christian society of lack of love. Rather, it sought to show the bond between love and the biblical concept of God, the Creator of man: losing the latter, the former moves to the sphere of the individual. It would be a matter of further research to identify the common points between the biblical demand for love and love visible in modern secular humanism.

Conclusion

There seems to be a crucial element missing in the ideal of a just society without God. As we have shown, the biblical God calls for love as the highest principle of human existence: losing sight of this call, the ideal of social justice may simply be reduced to a striving for equality. The necessity of love in social relations is clearly articulated in the Bible.

Humans are bearers of the image of God according to the Old Testament. They reflect God's power, dignity, and essential relatedness, but also and more importantly, the capability to establish relationships of love. In the New Testament writings, believers are encouraged to become the ideal reflection of God. They are to follow Christ who reflects God's love perfectly.

It is only God's love of a human being that can provide solid grounding for the claim of fundamental human rights: God loves all people unconditionally and without distinction. Their dignity is grounded in His plan with every single individual and reflected in loving and respectful interpersonal relationships. Only the harmony of loving relationships with God and others can bring human life to its fulfillment. Love lets the Creation conform to the loving Creator whose image it bears. As such, it may turn the understanding of differences between individuals and various social groups as a danger into an opportunity. In the social sphere where the only legitimate expression of love is in real, concrete acts, it allows us to go beyond a mere egalitarianism towards what is truly just.

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47   Benedict XVI., *Europe Today and Tomorrow*, 97.

48   Benedict XVI., Seewalt, *God and the World*, 190.

49   Müller, "The Christian Understanding of the Human Person," 3.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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A STUDY OF THE VALIDITY OF MARX'S DREAM OF SPIRITUAL SECULARISM*

Gilija Žukauskienė ✉

Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague (CZ)

Abstract
Background: This article raises the question of whether Marx's dream of humanized and spiritual secularism is justified. It focuses on theoretical approaches that emphasize the interrelationship between physical and spiritual life, in particular on two concepts: André Leroi-Gourhan's operational chain and Marcel Mauss's techniques of the body. Marx's philosophy of praxis is presented for two purposes: to explain the essential aspects of his critique of religion, and to legitimize the question of the positive role of religion in today's world.
Conclusion: The insights of all thinkers will help to understand more clearly how human actions are related to spirituality, which is extremely important for Christian churches in their efforts to become part of the transformation of the world (in a positive direction).
Keywords: Religion - Techniques of the body - Operational chain - Praxis.

Introduction
The reason why Marx did not struggle against religion was because he strongly believed that the main goal of theological doctrines and religious practices is "to provide a solution (albeit one that is false and ultimately unworkable in the case of religion) to the 'problem' of the world."[2] As a result, he sought to ensure that the spheres influencing the formation of language and consciousness — morality, religion, metaphysics, philosophy, politics, law — represented transparent real-world languages, rather than forming alternative worlds and explaining the real from their standpoints.

Despite the fact, that Marx regarded religion as a matter of the passing world, he did not deny the spiritual need of the people at all. On the contrary, he was looking for spiritual needs to be fulfilled! Marx speaks about the humanized and spiritualized secularism.[3] This is by no means a degradation of spiritual needs. In his opinion, the inability to meet spiritual needs results in the

2   Kenneth Surin, "Marxism and religion," *Critical Research on Religion* 1, no. 1 (2013): 9–14, p. 10.
3   Kevin M. Brien, "Rethinking Marx and the spiritual," *Rethinking Marxism* 21, no. 1 (2009): 103–116, p. 111.

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alienation of the spiritual nature, the essence of man, from his or her body, as well as from the nature beyond man.[4]

Starting with Marx's assertion that spiritual life is of the same origin as physical life, and that the human life is closely related to nature (see the opening quotation above), I will look for other scientific frameworks that could support this idea. I will present the ideas of two French anthropologists, André Leroi-Gourhan and his teacher Marcel Mauss, who both emphasized in their own way the role of physical movement in human development and generously provided insights into religion for future generations.

After examining the origins of human spirituality and its relationship to the human movement, I will return to Marx's aspiration about the realization of spiritual needs. I will look at his understanding of praxis and seek to determine how it could be complemented by a vision of secular spirituality. Finally, I will present the results of the juxtaposition of these ideas, which could prove useful churches and Christian practice.

Operational chain

"This reverses the order of priority articulated in traditional humanisms — religious, atheist, or scientific — where the biological human emerges fully formed from the mind of God or the matrix of nature, as the agent and originator of culture rather than the evolved product of culture." [5] This is how Christopher Johnson describes the effect of André Leroi-Gourhan's investigation of human evolution.

Leroi-Gourhan (1911–1986) was a French anthropologist, archeologist, ethnologist and paleontologist, whose original ideas influenced many French philosophers, such as Gilbert Simondon, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida or more recently Bernard Stiegler. This section will focus on his major work *Le Geste et la Parole* (Gesture and Speech), published in 1964 and 1965,[6] where the concept of *chaîne opératoire* (operational chain/ operational sequence) is at the heart of this work as a means of investigating "the human phenomena in its totality."[7] It serves as an analytical framework that allows the bringing together of materials, tools, actors and their actions within technical time.[8] After focusing on Leroi-Gourhan's ideas about the role of mobility in human evolution, the dominant theme of this article, I will briefly discuss *chaîne opératoire* as a framework, which emphasizes relations between things which, as stated above, emphasizes relations between materials, tools, actors and their actions (according to Françoise Audouze, relations, connections and links were what interested Leroi-Gourhan the most, much more than evolutionary stages, categories or levels).[9]

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4   Brien, "Rethinking Marx and the spiritual," p. 106.
     "For the fact that the secular foundation detaches itself from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm is really to be explained only by the self-cleavage and self-contradictoriness of this secular basis." Friedrich Engels, and Karl Marx, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959), p. 244.
5   Christopher Johnson, "Leroi-Gourhan and the Limits of the Human," *French studies* 65, no. 4 (2011): 471-487, p. 476.
6   Due to two volumes of *Le Geste et Parole* together with *Les Religions de la Préhistoire*, published in 1965, and the first monograph on the famous Magdalenian site of Pincevent *Préhistoire de l'Art occidental*, published in 1966, Leroi-Gourhan was recognized as a major social anthropologist as well as a major prehistorian, and specialist in art. Françoise Audouze, "Leroi-Gourhan, a philosopher of technique and evolution," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 10, no. 4 (2002): 277-306, p. 280.
7   André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1993), p. 141.
8   Christophe Delage, "Once upon a time… the (hi) story of the concept of the chaîne opératoire in French prehistory," *World Archaeology* 49, no. 2 (2017): 158-173, p. 158.
9   Audouze, "Leroi-Gourhan, a philosopher of technique and evolution," p. 288.

Leroi-Gourhan's main argument is that it was bipedalism that led to a whole set of evolutionary changes. In his work *Gesture and Speech*, he makes the following contentions:

It is possible to regard mobility as the significant feature of evolution toward the human state. […] The „cerebral" view of evolution now appears mistaken, and there would seem to be sufficient documentation to demonstrate that the brain was not the cause of developments in locomotory adaptation but their beneficiary. This is why locomotion will be considered here as the determining factor of biological evolution, just as […] it will be seen as the determining factor of modern social evolution.[10]

Between the evolution of the brain and that of the body there has been a dialogue from which both sides have benefited.[11]

This dialogue, as it becomes apparent, is inspired by movement. One change in locomotive mobility was leading to new adaptations, in other words that new movements led to corresponding anatomical changes. Thus, Leroi-Gourhan maintains, it was bipedalism that catalyzed major evolutionary change — changes in the size and the organization of the brain, that had evolutionary consequences for language and cognition. Liberation of the face from the functions of searching for and processing food, and the front limbs from traveling functions caused structural language specializations and the production of tools. Leroi-Gourhan's investigation of human evolution (which "did not begin with the brain but with the feet"[12]) leads to understanding that all human activity (he distinguishes three main directions – technics, language and aesthetics)[13] is of biological origin ("*a part of nature,*" if we go back to the introductory quote from Marx). For example, language share the same operational sequences as other techniques:

Techniques involve both gestures and tools, sequentially organized by means of a 'syntax' that imparts both fixity and flexibility to the series of operations involved. This operating syntax is suggested by the memory and comes into being as a product of the brain and the physical environment. If we pursue the parallel with language, we find a similar process taking place.[14]

The "syntax" of the various techniques is inspired by experience and required preservation in memory. This is where the mutual benefits of body and brain[15] evolution come from. Tool and memory are the keywords of human evolution. The concept of *chaîne opératoire* envelops them — it emphasizes gestures, their multiplication and multifaceted nature (related to the possibilities of articulation of liberated parts of the body), and also shows the presence of intentional, predic-

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10   Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 26.
11   Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 47.
12   Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 229.
13   Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 275.
14   Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 114.
15   "Since the brain is ultimately the physical seat of thought, and since it is in this area of evolution that the human being has been most successful, there are formal grounds for believing that the increasing size and complexity of the cerebral apparatus exactly reflect the steady progress made by living matter in its striving for conscious contact." (Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 59).

tive thinking in early humans. Animals do not possess a brain capable of making comparisons nor predictive thinking towards future goals.[16] This seems to be a fundamental feature of humanity.

Human brain development was connected with action, with operational sequences stored in memory. Although we know little about it, animal memory, according Leroi-Gourhan, is formed through experience within narrow genetic channels pre-specialized by the species. Human memory is constituted through experience based on language. Here we face a paradox: "the individual's possibilities for comparison and liberation rest upon a potential memory whose entire contents belong to society."[17] The whole of our evolution, Leroi-Gourhan reveals, has been oriented toward placing outside ourselves what in the rest of the animal world is achieved inside by species adaptation.[18] "The characteristic capacity of human societies to accumulate and preserve technical innovations is connected with the collective memory. Our role is to organize our operational sequences consciously toward the creation of new processes."[19]

In fact, when Leroi-Gourhan speaks of the social body as an extension of the anatomical body, it does not sound entirely metaphorical. "Human is both a zoological individual and the creator of social memory" and it is "uniquely human two-way traffic between the innovative individual and the social community that makes for progress."[20] Dynamic changes in society are determined by this unique feature of humanity. Our societies can never become imprisoned in behavior resulting from ethnic traditions we encounter at birth, and such adaptation is biologically necessary as a genetic condition for other species. The facility for change is a prerequisite for individual freedom.[21]

Leroi-Gourhan pays a lot of attention to aesthetics within the process of human development. He comments that "everything humans make tools, gestures, and products alike – is impregnated by group aesthetics and has an ethnic personality which even the most superficial visit to an ethnographical museum will reveal. Individuals introduce their personal variations into the traditional framework and, safe in the knowledge of belonging to the group, draw some of their sense of existing as individuals from the margin of freedom allowed them."[22]

Leroi-Gourhan pays a lot of attention to aesthetics. It is a sphere, where individual expression (individual liberation) may occur best.[23] Also, the aesthetic sphere is important for the domesti-

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16 On the other hand, despite the "biological" interpretations of human behavior, Leroi-Gourhan distinguishes it very clearly from that of animals. However, this boundary does not fall in the traditional place. According to Leroi-Gourhan, the traditional oppositions of nature to culture, zoological versus sociological, etc., were determined by the earlier opposition between the material and the mental. (Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 275.) "Society of both animals and humans would be seen as maintained within a body of 'traditions' whose basis is neither instinctive nor intellectual but, to varying degrees, zoological and sociological at one and the same time." Ibid., p. 220. Neither instinct nor intelligence, according Leroi-Gourhan, can be regarded as causes but as effects. The difference between animals and humans lies in the different mechanisms of the brain, the neurophysiological difference. Leroi-Gourhan makes it clear that the behavior of many animals is characterized by deeply embedded operational sequences, and sociological as well aesthetic features are present in them.

17 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 228.

18 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 235.

19 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 233.

20 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 228.

21 "Ethnic survival relies on routine, the dialogue taking place produces a balance between routine and progress, routine symbolizing the capital required for the group's survival and progress the input of individual innovations toward a better survival." (Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 229).

22 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 253.

23 Still, Leroi-Gourhan does not believe in the uniqueness of an individual genius. Every genius is the heir of a certain ethnic group, of certain aesthetic traditions. Favorable collective environmental conditions are important for human development, especially for artists. (Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* pp. 225, 283).

cation of time and space, for cosmic integration. Summarizing this important part of Leroi-Gourhan's thought (which deserves a separate article in its own right) there are two chief imperatives for human well-being that should be noted: creative activity and social and spatial integration.[24] Both requirements relate to the meeting of human and matter. The creative dialogue between matter and the actor describes all the "doings," in Leroi-Gourhan's view. Therefore, Bernard Stiegler's critique that Leroi-Gourhan leaves very little room for the meaning of human creativity in the process of human evolution is not entirely correct.[25] The connections between material and biological progress in the early parts of human evolution, revealed by Leroi-Gourhan, undoubtedly imply creativity. "The making of anything is a dialogue between the maker and the material employed."[26]

Reading Leroi-Gourhan, it becomes clear that not only the human evolutionary past, but the present and future relies on human mobility. The reduction of the human physical activity (activity understood in a broader sense, as "adventures" in the world) means a decrease in creativity, disability in solving problems. It is because,

Whether animal or human active individuals have their being within a network of movements that originate inside or outside their body mechanism and whose form is interpreted by their senses. […] With human beings the situation clearly remains the same, with the difference, however, that it can be reflected in a network of symbols and held up for comparison with itself. Over the period of human evolution, rhythms and values thus reflected have tended to create a time and a space proper to humankind, to imprison behavior within a checkerwork of scales and measures, to assume concrete form in 'aesthetics' in the narrower sense. Yet the biological infrastructure – our body – still uses the same means and has none other to put at the disposal of the artistic superstructure.[27]

Leroi-Gourhan talks about religion mainly in terms of its relationship (similarity) to art. He states, "The basic link between art and religion is emotional, yet not in a vague sense. It has to do with mastering a mode of expression that restores humans to their true place in a cosmos whose center they occupy without trying to pierce it by an intellectual process… "[28] Thus, it follows that religion can play an important role in the spatial and social integration of people (one of the two basic requirements of human well-being), which is a very important condition in a situation where humans appear in an increasingly passive state with respect to the things in the world. However, the expression "mastering a mode of expression" necessitates the existence of a certain operational chain (*chaîne opératoire*) in religious practice. Or maybe we could say, the existence of *techniques of the body*? The concept of *techniques of the body* will be discussed in the next section.

Returning to the operational chain as the analytical framework, which allows to see the materials, tools, actors and actions together and notice the connections between them, it has already been demonstrated that Leroi-Gourhan's investigation of humankind transcend the divisions between biology and sociology, between biology and culture, between technical and mental activity. He draws connection even between nature and spirituality, explicating that human reality is lived between the two complementary situations — one in which operating sequences lead to mate-

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24 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 342.

25 Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time: The Fault of Epimetheus,* vol. 1 (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 157.

26 Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 306.

27 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* pp. –282-283.

28 Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 200.

rial mastery over the organic world, and one "in which enfranchisement from the organic world takes place through the creation of the intuitive situations in which human spirituality consists." [29]

However, Leroi-Gourhan was not the first to establish connections between different facts and show how they were related to each other. Moreover, he was not the first to have an encyclopedic mind and a good knowledge of various intellectual fields, capable of studying phenomena across a number of disciplines (without denying that he could have been the last.[30]) According to Christophe Delage, it is problematic to attribute the authorship of the concept of the *chaîne opératoire*[31] to a particular person, as the dynamic and systematic vision of human behavior with a full theoretical and methodological range of descriptive and analytical tools was already present in the world of science at that time.[32]

Although Leroi-Gourhan considered himself a self-taught thinker who did not belong to any intellectual school, we might recall his own idea that "individual genius needs substantial soil to grow"[33] and become acquainted with Marcel Mauss, one of Leroi-Gourhan's teachers and supervisors. This should help us to further understand the relationship between human spirituality and movement hinted at by Leroi-Gourhan, and how this might subsequently contribute to Marx's call for spiritual need to be fulfilled within real-world praxis.

Techniques of the Body

Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) was a French sociologist, ethnologist and anthropologist. He lived in a very intense environment — in the "witch's cauldron" to use his expression[34] — in the center of the intellectual and political life of his country and the whole of Europe. The political situation and the situation of science were very demanding. Sociology distinguished itself from philosophy and psychology of the individual,[35], claiming to do sociological research of religious phenomena[36] as well as of encompassing the sociology of cognition.[37] Mauss was the backbone of the French School of Sociology, a very dedicated member during its emergence and formation,[38] saying of himself that "it is impossible to detach me from the work of a school. If there is any individuality here, it is immersed within a voluntary anonymity." [39]

"The pretentious quest for originality" contradicted Mauss's priorities — he worked rather as a member of a team and was convinced that "every science is the product of collective work."[40] Is this saying that according to the writing of his contemporaries, of students, biographers and

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29   Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 227.

30   Delage, "Once upon a time…," p. 166.

31   What is meant is not an expression but a vision.

32   Delage, "Once upon a time…," p. 168.

33   Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech,* p. 173.

34   Marcel Fournier, *Marcel Mauss: a Biography* (Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 2.

35   Fournier, *Marcel Mauss*, 115.

36   Fournier, *Marcel Mauss*, pp. 37-38.

37   Fournier, *Marcel Mauss*, p. 119.

38   Although he worked in what we would today call the interdisciplinary field, it should be noted that he saw the differentiation of the three disciplines — sociology, anthropology and ethnology — at least at the first stages of the school, as problematic. (Fournier, *Marcel Mauss*, p, 234).

39   Marcel Mauss, " An intellectual self-portrait," in *Marcel Mauss: A Centenary Tribute,* ed. Wendy James and N. J. Allen (place of publication : publisher, 1998) : 29-42, p. 29.

40   Mauss, " An intellectual, p. 30. It was connected with scientific methods of the school, which required the collaboration of numerous specialists.

researchers, the idea of Mauss being unoriginal is somewhat questionable. The latter agree that Marcel Mauss certainly had a major influence on Leroi-Gourhan.[41]

One of the original research methods developed by Mauss is marked by the notion of *les techniques du corps* (techniques of the body). By this expression Mauss means "the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies."[42] He continues, "The body is man's first and most natural instrument. Or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man's first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is his body."[43]

It is important to stress that, according to Claude Lévi-Strauss and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, it was the way Mauss opened up the relationship between the individual and the social in a particularly consistent and complex way that comprises a very important area of Mauss's contribution. He stressed the role of bodily movements in this relationship, but also showed that techniques of the body must not be seen in isolation from other socio-cultural, historical and geographical facts (in other words, it must be viewed in the matrix of total social facts, which encompasses Mauss's methodological efforts to study both — the interrelation of social phenomena within the dynamics of "social system as a whole," and the interrelation of the social and individual — at the same time[44]). Deliberate avoidance of generalization allowed Mauss to study phenomena in detail and to expound specific relationships in a very new way. The tendency to study all social facts as a totality goes together with the consideration of them as specific entities, distinct from other social facts, or, as Lévi-Strauss puts it, "grasping an object from outside and inside simultaneously.".[45] According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, with this notion, Mauss opened the new territory of body techniques to ethnological research in such a way that emphasizing its role for cultural integration did not overshadow the intrinsic importance of body techniques as a complex social-biological-psychological phenomena.[46] Mauss expresses something of the way we encounter and experience this complexity. "[…] we are everywhere faced with physiopsychosociological assemblages of series of actions. These actions are more or less habitual and more or less ancient in the life of the individual and the history of the society."[47] The investigation of the techniques of the body seen within the matrix of the total social fact made it possible to discover and emphasize individual freedom in the acquisition and mastery of bodily technique: "There is no technique and no transmission in the absence of tradition. This above all is what distinguishes humans from the animals: the transmission of their techniques and very probably their oral transmission."[48]

Techniques of the body are transmitted in close social contact. They find their effectiveness in a particular tradition, and individual variations of efficiency search are highly relevant. This is how philosopher Merleau-Ponty writes about the complexity of Mauss's ideas:

And this reading always consists in grasping the mode of exchange which is constituted between men through institutions, through the connections and equivalences they establish, and through the systematic way in which they govern the use of tools, manufactured or alimen-

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41   Olivia Rivero, "Master and Apprentice: Evidence for Learning in Palaeolithic Portable Art," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 75 (2016): 89-100, p. 89.

42   Marcel Mauss, *Techniques, Technology and Civilization* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), p. 78.

43   Mauss, *Techniques*, p. 83

44   Alexander Gofman, "A vague but Suggestive Concept: the Total Social Fact," in *Marcel Mauss: a Centenary Tribute* ed. Wendy James and N. J. Allen (place of publication: publisher, 1998), 63-70, pp. 66-67.

45   Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction to the Writings of Marcel Mauss* (London: Routledge, 1987), p. 31.

46   Lévi-Strauss, p. 6.

47   Mauss, *Techniques*, p. 92.

48   Mauss, *Techniques,* p. 82.

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tary products, magical formulas, ornaments, chants, dances, and mythical elements, as a given language governs the use of phonemes, morphemes, vocabulary, and syntax. This social fact, which is no longer a massive reality but an efficacious system of symbols or a network of symbolic values, is going to be inserted into the depths of the individual. But the regulation which circumvents the individual does not eliminate him.[49]

Social anthropologist Wendy James claims that Mauss was the first to denote this level of material or corporeal life and its public face with the Latin term habitus, which later was developed by his disciple Pierre Bourdieu.[50] According Carrie Noland, in general Mauss was the first thinker to be so aware of the coordination of articulated motions by which the human body functions and by which it conveys meaning.[51] He was the first to emphasize the role of movement in the forming and maintaining of "a social idiosyncrasy"[52] as well as movement's role in the inflection of the meanings it bears, which can lead to the transformation of cultural regimes.[53]

Could this approach focused on techniques of the body be applied to the investigation of religious phenomena? The answer is definitely! Mauss did not distinguish the religious sphere from other spheres of human life. He was deeply convinced that there are techniques of the body at the bottom of all mystical states,[54] in other words, that our actions form our mental and spiritual states. In reasoning about the role of spirituality in the heartless world, Mauss's ideas are very helpful – they allow the investigation of religion as a set of actions, as techniques of the body (within the complexity outlined above). The quality of effectiveness is very important here — it promises, that if technique of the body in particular religious environment lacks effectivity, it can be modified. Despite his view that techniques of the body precondition religious feelings and mystical states, Mauss saw religion as more focused on abstract ideas than the immediate sphere, and that religion is a sphere in which individual creativity does not have the capacity to express itself properly.[55] Nevertheless, I suggest that it is important not to lose a focus on techniques of the body in search of an answer to the question of the positive role of religion in today's world. Thus, having offered a framework within which we can credibly connect the spiritual with embodied practice, we now turn to Marx's own understanding of praxis and his critique of religion with respect to this, arguing that by engaging with the thinking of Leroi-Gourhan and Mauss, we might begin to find a response to Marx.

Praxis

"To say that man is a corporeal, living, real, sensuous, objective being with natural powers means that he has real, sensuous objects as the object of his being and of his vital expression, or that he can only express his life in real, sensuous objects." So states Karl Marx in his *Early Writings*.[56]

The philosophy of praxis conceives history, the social world, all being of humans as the products of human action. The history of humanity is understood as an occurrence of the whole of

nature, and Marx[57] followed Hegel's idea that human liberation means that people acquire complete understanding and mastery of both their nature and nature as a whole. Yet he rejected the idea that it could take place in the realm of the mind. Marx deemed that because the enslavement of people was a product of human activity, the liberation of man required a fundamental change in that activity, which would lead to changes in human society.[58] The active human subject is the protagonist of Marx's philosophy, while action takes on a universal significance.

However, Marx saw human activity as reduced to a means of a person's physical existence as problematic. It is an alienated work that degrades the spontaneity and freedom of human action, alienates a human from their own body, as well as from nature, from their spiritual being, from their essence.[59] The essence of humans as a species, according Marx, is their capacity for conscious creative activity. Our creative productivity is not limited to material objects — language, ideas, symbolism of all kinds and so forth are only examples of the heritage that cannot be listed, of human intellectual and socio-cultural creation. Marx was concerned as to how the creative nature of humans could be realized. Marx's detailed analysis of the human situation falls outside the scope of this article, but we might summarize it in terms of capitalism as the arrangement of society,[60] with the solution to this situation being the communist form of society:

> This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man, the true resolution of the conflict between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be the solution.[61]

Marx describes people not so simply as thinking beings, but as active beings. He saw thinking as an integral part of everything that people do, as part of the practice. Moreover, human activity (it is important to stress, that he is speaking of objective activity: the activity directed towards objects, towards things in the world) is the site where thought meets the world.[62] On the other hand, the abstraction of thought from human activity in the world can be treated as a deviation. It is in this way that Marx looks at religious thinking. In his view, it is in religion that we can find ideas that have ceased from having any dependence on the brains of human creators: "In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race."[63]

If human activity is so concerned with thinking, alienated work seems dangerous because of its effect on the worker's perception of themselves and the world. The same could be said about religion. According to Marx, "Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of human imagination,

49 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs* (place of publication: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 115.

50 Wendy James, "'One of us': Marcel Mauss and 'English' anthropology," in *Marcel Mauss: a Centenary Tribute* ed. Wendy James and N.J. Allen (place of publication: publisher, 1998), 3-26, p. 20.

51 Carrie Noland, *Agency and embodiment* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 18

52 According to Mauss, all movements "form a social idiosyncrasy, they are not simply a product of some purely individual, almost completely psychical arrangements and mechanisms." Marcel Mauss, *Techniques, Technology and Civilization,* p. 80.

53 Noland, *Agency and embodiment,* p. 20.

54 Mauss, *Techniques,* p. 93.

55 Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 111, 174-175.

56 Karl Marx, *Early Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 288.

57 Karl Marx (1818–1883) was a German philosopher, economist, political theorist, sociologist and historian. He was one of the most influential thinkers of 19th century.

58 Gavin Kitching, *Karl Marx and the Philosophy of Praxis (RLE Marxism)* (place of publication: Routledge, 2015), pp. 18-19.

59 Kitching, *Karl Marx,* pp. 19-21.

60 "All this arose from the act of exchange, in which he exchanged his living labour capacity for an amount of objectified labour, except that this objectified labour [. . .] now appears as posited by himself, as his own product, as his own self-objectification as well as the objectification of himself as a power independent of himself, which moreover rules over him, rules over him through his own actions." Ibid., p. 23.

61 Marx, *Early Writings,* p. 651.

62 Kitching, *Karl Marx,* p. 29.

63 Marx's quotation (from *Capital I*) cited by Kitching, *Karl Marx and the Philosophy of Praxis,* p. 24.

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of the human brain and the human heart, operates independently of the individual, i.e. as alien divine or diabolical activity, so the worker's activity is not his spontaneous activity."[64]

The juxtaposition of religion and alienated work is very important, because religious activity and the activity of the worker is the object of the same critique from Marx. The target of this critique is the gap between the human brain and the heart and the actions in which the person is involved. In Marx's opinion, they must proceed jointly and lead to the creative interplay with the environment for the benefit of all humankind. The degradation of spontaneous, free activity to the level of the means of a worker's physical existence[65] can be compared with the denial of spontaneous, free activity of a believer, degrading it to the means of their existence.

The self-contradictions within the secular foundations of religion are the causes of cleavages, which lead to the detachment and establishment of religion as "an independent realm in the clouds."[66] Marx critique of religion (which is not limited to Christianity) is the critique of conditions under which this "independent realm," which leads to the alienated life, establishes itself. Marx treated religion as "the alienated expression of real alienation," which in turn was the contributor towards its continuance. Religion lacks history, truth and real action, it is the sublimation of practice.[67] Thus action is the way out of the alienation. According to Marx, practice alone can connect humans with the world, create human history, evoke reflection in a way that neither philosophy nor art, nor politics nor religion can do.[68]

> Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter, along with this their real existence, their thinking and the products of their thinking. Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life.[69]

Marx did not recognize any formative role of religion.[70] Practice alone is a formative factor, even if it leads to different forms of alienation (as is the case with religion). However, if so much depends on practice, the question arises as to whether religion can be changed by fundamentally changing its practice (as a result, religion would no longer support alienation but contribute to de-alienation).

To answer this question the insights from Leroi-Gourhan and Mauss must be invoked. Both of these scholars emphasized the role of physical action in all areas of human activity, including religion. They related human actions to many other environmental, historical, biological, social, cultural factors and examined their interconnectedness. Similar to Marx, they argued for the indivisibility of body and mind, action and thinking (the notions of operational chain and techniques of the body emphasize this link). But unlike Marx, Leroi-Gourhan and Mauss do not primarily analyze religious phenomena only from the perspective of their contribution to the preservation of human alienation. Despite the fact that this is a very relevant topic which leads to important

questions, other perspectives are needed as well. In other words, Marx's critique is valuable, but his own argumentation of the philosophy of praxis does not necessary lead to the abolishment of religion (as useless)[71] as the only one possible solution. For example, the "usefulness" of religion, according to Leroi-Gourhan, is the spatial and social integration of the person. Mauss revealed that this integration, even in religion, is based on special techniques of the body, in which physical, psychological and sociological factors are intertwined. This montage has much in common with the phenomenon of spirituality. According Leroi-Gourhan, human spirituality consists of the creation of the intuitive situation. In other words, it is found in states of creative tension between an individual and their society in the overall creative state that exists between the individual and socium[72] (which for Mauss must always be seen in the frame of a particular tradition, and for Leroi-Gourhan is marked by ethnicity). The parallelism of aesthetics and religion at this junction is significant — it is the same intra-cultural, interpersonal state, the domestication of the cosmos. The difference is that the first has an emphasis on individual creativity that is not possible without belonging to particular tradition and ethnic group. Religion celebrates this belonging which may empower artistic (individual) creativity. In addition, engagement (through techniques of the body) with the environment, or, in Leroi-Gourhan's words, material mastery over the organic world, must take place, because only action makes religious or ethnic heritage meaningful, useful, and relevant. I suggest these thoughts should be borne in mind as we return to Marx's critique of religion and the central question of this article about the possibility of reformed[73] religion through practice.

If an abstraction from the concrete conditions is the main reason why religion becomes "a product of the alienation of man on the level of both practice and theory,"[74] the notional reformed religion must be shaped by practice, based on techniques of the body, which would oppose such alienation. The line of thought here is as follows. Every action is accompanied by thinking; the concepts of body technique and operational chains already denote this unity, as well as the perception that action is inseparable from the socio-cultural environment. This "echo" of action, the kinesthetic feedback, as I have discussed elsewhere,[75] in religious experience (instead of its primary purpose to correct, improve our actions in particular geographical or sociocultural environment) is directed back to itself. In other words, religious practices consist of techniques of the body, which do not distract attention from thinking or other mental statuses. The situation does not change — people still act, but their actions are purposefully alienated in order to create alienated states of mind.[76] The alienated state of mind in this way leads to the alienated

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64   Kitching, *Karl Marx*, p. 20.

65   Kitching, *Karl Marx*, p. 20.

66   "For the fact that the secular foundation detaches itself from itself and establishes itself in the clouds as an independent realm is really to be explained only by the self-cleavage and self-contradictoriness of this secular basis." Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, p. 244.

67   Kostas Axelos, *Alienation, Praxis, and Techne in the Thought of Karl Marx* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 165.

68   Kostas Axelos, *Alienation*, p. 165.

69   Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, vol. 1 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974), p. 47.

70   Axelos, *Alienation, Praxis, and Techne*, p. 165.

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71   Axelos, *Alienation*, p. 165.

72   Here one can recall Emile Durkheim's insights into collective representations as a source of religions: "To live, it requires not only a minimum moral consensus but also a minimum logical consensus that it cannot do without either." The content of this necessary logical and moral consensus, according Durkheim, are collective representations: "Collective representations are the product of an immense cooperation that extends not only through space but also through time; to make them, a multitude of different minds have associated, intermixed, and combined their ideas and feelings; long generations have accumulated their experience and knowledge. A very special intellectuality that is infinitely richer and more complex than that of the individual is distilled in them." Emile Durkheim, *The elementary forms of the religious life*, ed. Karen Elise Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995), pp. 15-16.

73   The word must be understood literally — formed by action (because only action, according to Marx, has a formative power).

74   Axelos, *Alienation, Praxis, and Techne*, p. 160.

75   "The Role of Movement in Religious Experience" must soon be published in the volume *Image and Imagination in the Phenomenology of Religious Experience*, Nitsche, M. and Louchakova-Schwartz O. (eds.) Libri Nigri, Bautz.

76   The situation must not necessarily be treated negatively.

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behavior in the world. The gap between thought and action is the ground of religion, which contributes to the continuance of alienation in the world (the axis of Marx's critique of religion). We need a renewed focus on techniques of the body as thinking in action thus far they tend to exist only in 'echo' form, which, while perhaps not entirely negative in itself, is certainly not sufficient to address the challenge as this kinesthetic feedback is turned inward. Alienation still remains and thus Marx's criticism can be seen as valid. On the hand, given the way techniques of the body affect psychological and mystical states, Marx's critique could be taken into account while looking for a way out of an alienated way of life, and whether/ how religion could contribute to this.

However, instead of using "hidden" body techniques to create seemingly independent states (that supposedly have nothing to do with human movements and brain activity), we can rely on them. While it seemed to Marx that learning to perceive ourselves and the world in a transparent way, through actions which lead to thinking that in turn "translates" into actions again, religion would no longer be needed, his own insights about *praxis* do not necessarily lead to such a scenario alone. Mauss's and Leroi-Gourhan's ideas about the relationship between physical and spiritual life and the data from their research suggest that meaningful establishment in space (or, finding one's existential place), without denying nature, our physical, social, psychological, and other factors, is possible.

There is no reason why the same hopeful vision that Marx pointed out in the case of the workers could not be applied to religion. A fundamental change in activity is needed. The statement that we need bodily techniques which lead to a conscious perception of one's situation and to taking responsibility for one's own and others' lives calls for a more detailed explanation, for which there is not enough space in this article. But Marx's words could mark at least the first steps of the re-formation. In his view, the goal of praxis should be the "reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analyzing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form."[77] It would follow that the re-formative activity must go in the opposite direction to the abstraction from the contradictoriness of the world. It must lead to encounter with it. However, this encounter serves as an educator — it helps to evaluate our thinking and actions, to sift good ideas from worthless ones. Only through practice do we discover the truth and power, and only through practice can we evaluate ideas;[78] through the practices of the social life.[79] For "man is no abstract being, squatting outside the world."[80] However, it is precisely because of the confrontation with the contradictions of the world that the free conscious activity promoted by Marx is experienced as intrinsically meaningful, spontaneously creative and joyful, as an end to oneself.[81] Kevin M. Brien argues that suffusing praxis with such a this-worldly mode of the spiritual is very valuable and can bring some real hope of transforming the secular foundation in the direction of social justice and a more human future.[82] The insights from Leroi-Gourhan and Mauss concerning the role of movement in human evolution and the development of humanity, with the emphasis on the creativity of encounter between the individual and social, confirms this possibility.

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77 Thomas C Patterson, *Karl Marx, Anthropologist* (Oxford and London: Berg , 2009), p. 60.

78 "In practice man must prove the truth, that is, the reality and power, the thissidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question." Engels, l Marx, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* p. 243.

79 "Social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice." Engels, Marx, *Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy,* p. 245, thesis VIII.

80 Engels, Marx, *Basic,* p. 262.

81 Brien, "Rethinking Marx and the spiritual," p. 113.

82 Brien, "Rethinking Marx and the spiritual," p. 104.

Conclusion

Marx's critique of religion is based on religion's contribution to human alienation — the situation where human actions are torn from a direct, individual assessment of their effectiveness and efficiency and are reduced to a means of the physical existence. This article, in studying the validity of Marx's dream of spiritual secularism, has sought to both demonstrate that Marx makes a very reasonable criticism, as well as indicate the direction in which religion should be reshaped to meet spiritual needs rather than leading to alienation. Understanding of the role of action for the perception of self and of the world and for the development of society is of primary importance.

Marx, Mauss and Leroi-Gourhan were all scholars who explored the idea of importance of physical action in the history of humanity. All three thinkers examined the movement in detail, touching on virtually all spheres of human activity. It is possible to distinguish the particular accents each bring to the problem: Marx examined the relationship between action and thinking; Mauss the role of movement in the fabric of society; Leroi-Gourhan applied this issue to the history of human evolution. They all emphasized the importance of individual creativity in action, the manifestation of which, on the other hand, requires a sociocultural soil, namely tradition or ethnic affiliation. The sphere of religion for Leroi-Gourhan and Mauss is associated with this soil. As art separated from religion, the contribution of individual creativity to the religious sphere diminished. Combining the ideas of Leroi-Gourhan and Mauss with Marx's critique of religion, one can come to the conclusion that this loss may have led to religion becoming a closed, alienating world.

Marx (in the context of the philosophy of praxis) argues that human alienation is possible to overcome by radical change of activity. Human actions must lead to the evaluation and reflection of one's living conditions, and then to the creative change and improvement of these conditions. In general, this is exactly what all human activity, all techniques of the body are aimed toward. Creative improvement of our actions by constant rethinking of them is the essence of our humanity — what has made and continues to make us human. This understanding of our humanity gives hope that like other spheres of human life, by rethinking the meaning of techniques of the body, evaluating and changing them, the sphere of religion can be reformed in a positive (against alienation) direction.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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AN EXAMPLE OF THE LIVING ECUMENICAL RELATIONS OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX COMMUNITY AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL *

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Daniela Brůhová ✉

Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague (CZ)

Abstract

Background: The article examines the ecumenical impact of a crisis. Concretely, it offers and analyses interviews with a priest and members of the Romanian Orthodox Community in Prague that, due to fire, lost their church, and from day to day had to seek an alternative place of worship. It also offers and analyses insight on an Old Catholic priest now hosting the Romanian Orthodox community.

Conclusion: It shows how the relations of Christians from different communities can contribute to ecumenism, how they draw on mutual recognition of each other's Christian spirit that has already been reached, and where it can and does overtake the ecumenism of official proclamations and dialogues, and thus can serve as inspiration.

Keywords: Ecumenism – Orthodoxy – Lived ecumenical relations.

Introduction: An example of the living ecumenical relations of the Romanian Orthodox community at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel

This article discusses the case of the burned down Church of St. Michael the Archangel[2] and the Romanian Orthodox community that used it as a place of worship but after the fire found a new home in an Old Catholic church where both communities, Orthodox and Old Catholic, are learning to live side-by-side and share a common space. This article looks at the specific manifestations of the relations between the Romanian Orthodox community and the Old Catholic community, focusing on how living relations can contribute to the ecumenical rapprochement of the two Churches. The context of this event will be complemented by a more detailed look at the work of the Romanian Orthodox community in Bohemia, and the text will feature in-depth interviews with representatives of both communities, Orthodox and Old Catholic. From the Orthodox community, the interviews were conducted with Father Ioan Danciu,[3] the priest of the Orthodox

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parish near the Church of St. Michael the Archangel, and with Camellia Isaic,[4] a founding member of the Romanian Orthodox community. From the Old Catholic community, Petr Jan Vinš,[5] a priest who serves as the spiritual administrator of the Church of St. Lawrence, where the Romanian Orthodox community took refuge after the fire, was interviewed.

These interviews and their analysis shed light on the process of transformation of the specific living ecumenical relations. This article shows how the new forms of cooperation that will be discussed herein can contribute to an overall understanding of the goals of ecumenism.[6] At the very outset, it should be mentioned that ecumenism can go in different directions, which may be intertwined and mutually supportive, but sometimes they can also compete with one another.[7] Simply put, the so-called *ecumenism from above*, which focuses on doctrinal consensus, disciplinary practice and institutional compatibility, has allowed for officially recognised opportunities for common prayer and practical cooperation at the institutional level, resulting in, for example, the lifting of previous curses,[8][9] a revaluation of some of the conflicts that had divided Christianity, or the mutual recognition of baptism carried out in other churches.[10] Another type of ecumenism, where the emphasis is placed on a shared life, can be found, for example, at the very beginnings in the Taizé Community[11] or in the ecumenical monastic communities at Grandchamp[12] and

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4   Camelia Cristina Isaic comes from Romania and she defended her dissertation thesis entitled *Courage in Nicolae Steinhardt's Life and Theology* at the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University. She is a founding member of the *Orthodox parish at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel.*

5   Petr Jan Vinš serves as the spiritual administrator of the Catholic parish at the Church of SaintLawrence located on Petřín hill in Prague. Since 2019 he has been a member of the Synod Council of the Old Catholic Church. Since 2016 he has been the Secretary-General of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic.

6   The goals of ecumenism in the fields of mission, social work, peace and justice, human rights, as well as ecclesiology, liturgy, and spirituality are discussed in Uta Andrée, Anna-Katharina Diehl, Benjamin Simon, eds., *Challenged by Ecumenism, Documentation of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute-Berlin 2017*, (Hamburg, Missionshilfe Verlag, 2018) and in Ivana Noble, *The Current Ecumenical Situation in Europe*, pp. 14–27.

7   Different expressions of ecumenism: as an ecclesiological conviction, as a political force, as a missionary and educational principle, and as a principle underlying Christian spirituality. Uta Andrée, Anna-Katharina Diehl, Benjamin Simon, eds., *Challenged by Ecumenism, Documentation of the Global Ecumenical Theological Institute-Berlin 2017*, (Hamburg, Missionshilfe Verlag, 2018) and in Ivana Noble, *The Current Ecumenical Situation in Europe*, p. 14.

8   The lifting of the mutual excommunication decrees of the Christian East and West took place at the Second Vatican Council. The lifting was carried out by Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I on 7 December 1965. This happened simultaneously in Rome and Constantinople. In a joint statement, Paul VI and Athenagoras I stated that it is God's desire that Christians strive to overcome their differences and become united again. See Petr Neuner, *Ekumenická teologie – Hledání jednoty křesťanských církví*, (Praha, Vyšehrad, 2001) p. 146.

9   See, for example, the work of the so-called Hus Commission, full name: Komise pro studium problematiky spojené s osobností, životem a dílem M. Jana Husa, which worked at the Czech Bishops' Conference from 1993 to 2000, or *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, a major ecumenical document jointly signed by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church on 31 October 1999 in Augsburg, Germany, which states in Article 44: "We give thanks to the Lord for this decisive step forward on the way to overcoming the division of the church. We ask the Holy Spirit to lead us further toward that visible unity which is Christ's will."

10   The mutual recognition of baptism between the various Christian churches and the principle of its non-repeatability is a fundamental condition of any Church community. Churches enter into agreements among themselves for the mutual recognition of baptism. For example, the Agreement on Baptism concluded on 25 January 1994, whereby the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and the Roman Catholic Church (represented by the Czech Bishops' Conference), as well as the Czechoslovak Hussite Church and the Roman Catholic Church (represented by the Czech Bishops' Conference), mutually recognised each other's baptisms.

11   Taizé Community, accessed 19 January 2022, https://www.taize.fr/cs.

12   Grandchamp Community, accessed 19 January 2022, https://www.grandchamp.org/

Bose.[13] Forms of shared life can also be found in everyday life and will be addressed further in this article. The specific case mentioned above will be used to show that the ecumenism of living relations can bring something essential that other forms of ecumenism cannot quite bring as well.

The unusual history of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel

The wooden church of St. Michael the Archangel situated in the Kinský Garden in Prague was destroyed by fire on 28 October 2020. The tragedy affected not only the building but also the religious communities, while at the same time it sparked new forms of cooperation in the field of ecumenical relations. Let's briefly look at the unusual history of the church.

The church[14] building made entirely of wood dates back to the second half of the 17th Century. The church was built in western Ukraine and was moved to Prague in the 1920s. The Zakarpatska Oblast was part of Austria-Hungary from 1867 and it became part of Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 1938. In Ukraine, this wooden religious building was moved from Velyki Luchky to Medvedovtsy. The building was then sold to Prague, where it has stood since 1929.[15] It was the intention of the National Museum, which served as the administrator of the church, that services should be held at least once a month in the church so that it could serve as a living witness to the various religious and cultural traditions in Czechoslovakia. Whether this was the case cannot be ascertained. No services were held in the church after 1945, and during the Communist era the church was not taken care of in a professional manner and the building fell into a state of disrepair. It was not until the 1990s that the historic building was professionally conserved. Since 2008, the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia has had the church under its spiritual administration. It was re-consecrated in October 2008[16] and became the spiritual base of the newly established Romanian Orthodox Church community, serving as a place of worship once again. The church was originally built for the Greek Catholic Church, but with its handover to the Romanian Orthodox community, Orthodox liturgy began to be celebrated there. Both Greek Catholic and Orthodox churches are based on the liturgy of the Byzantine (Eastern) Rite and have a similar worship arrangement. Let us now look at the history of the emergence of the Romanian Orthodox community at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel.

Orthodox religion within Czech Christianity

Let us briefly look at the environment into which the Romanian Orthodox community – formed around the Church of St. Michael the Archangel – entered. The roots of Czech Christianity go back to the undivided East and West. The Byzantine mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius, which also sought recognition from the Bishop of Rome, is at the origin of Czech Catholicism and Orthodoxy.[17] After the Great Schism of 1054, the majority of the territory of Bohemia and Moravia leaned toward Western religion. The Eastern rite was celebrated until 1096 at the Sáza-

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13   Bose Community, accessed 19 January 2022, https://www.monasterodibose.it/

14   Jiří Plhák, "Podkarpatské kostelíky převezené do Čech a na Moravu ve 30. letech 20. století, jejich rozdělení a základní konstrukční prvky" in *Roubené skvosty z Podkarpatské Rusi a východního Slovenska*, (Vysoké Mýto, Regionální muzeum ve Vysokém Mýtě, 2010), p. 74.

15   At that time, stone buildings were being built in Ukraine and the church ceased to be used and was only saved by its relocation to Prague.

16   The consecration took place on 18 October 2008.

17   The history of Orthodoxy in the historical territory of Bohemia and Moravia dates back to Saints Cyril and Methodius and their Byzantine mission in 863. They brought Christianity to our territory, translated the Scriptures into the Slavonic language and introduced the Slavonic Liturgy. At the same time, they sought to unite Eastern and Western Christian traditions at a time when they had already begun to drift apart. Learn more in the publication: Ivana Noble, Kateřina Bauerová, Tim Noble, Parush Parushev, *Cesty pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západ*, (Brno, CDK, 2012), pp. 29–36.

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va Monastery, and in the 14th and 15th Centuries, the Slavonic liturgy was celebrated at the Emmaus Monastery Na Slovanech.[18] The establishment of the independent Czechoslovak state in 1918 was an important milestone in modern history. When, after the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Slavic Patriarchates (Bulgarian and Serbian) were being restored and new Patriarchates (Romanian) were being established, the Orthodox believers living in Czechoslovakia began to wonder what their future would look like.[19] The various Orthodox movements in the territory of the newly established Czechoslovak state gradually began to unite. The community of Orthodox believers was very diverse, partially Czech-speaking. It included people who were inspired by Panslavism[20] or those who had strong ties to Russia or other Slavic countries. The Orthodox believers were partly organised into other national groups, especially around embassies. In the 1920s, the Serbian Patriarchate consecrated Matěj Gorazd Pavlík who, after a painful separation from the Czechoslovak Church, began to put together a unified institutional structure of the Orthodox Church on the territory of Czechoslovakia. There were also other important groups that remained there. After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, a large community of Russian emigrants came here thanks to Masaryk's support.[21] The Orthodox Church was decimated during Heydrichiade. The post-war renewal happened mainly due to Orthodox re-emigrants from Eastern Europe. But new problems also arose, among them the forced transition to the Moscow Patriarchate. In 1951, the Patriarchate decided to grant autocephalous status to the Orthodox Church of Czechoslovakia.[22] The fall of communism in 1989 brought change. However, this change was not always positive. The accumulated and suppressed conflicts manifested themselves in a major internal division of the Orthodox Church. This division concerned both the relationship with the past regime and the ideas about where the Orthodox Church should direct its attention: whether to remain under Moscow, return to Serbia or strengthen relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993 into the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, the Orthodox Church in both states remained undivided but under a new name: the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. At the same time, the number of Orthodox believers[23] in the Czech Republic grew with the increase of immigrants from Eastern Europe. Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians and other national minorities retained both their language and their connection to their home churches.[24] According to official statistics, more than forty thousand Orthodox believers currently live in the

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18   Ivana Noble, Kateřina Bauerová, Tim Noble, Parush Parushev, *Cesty pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západ,* (Brno, CDK, 2012), p. 35.

19   Noble, Bauerová, Noble, Parushev, *Cesty pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západ*, pp. 66–71.

20   Noble, Bauerová, Noble, Parushev, „Slavjanofilové", in *Cesty pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západ,* (Brno, CDK, 2012), pp. 90–97.

21   Noble, Bauerová, Noble, Parushev, *'Ruská pomocná akce' v Masarykově Československu*, in *Cesty pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západ,* (Brno, CDK, 2012) pp. 209–216.

22   The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople recognised its autocephalous status only in 1998.

23   Statistical Survey on religious beliefs carried out by the Czech Statistical Office in 2021, accessed 27 January 2022,
https://www.czso.cz/csu/scitani2021/nabozenska-vira?fbclid=IwAR1MA72S92zQQQY0biNRQpQ9CPGXJD-CWhPkEtTX2Rd6Pk3JF20mIWELICNU.

24   Statistics on Migration to Europe, European Commission, accessed 19 January 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_cs#krt-kodob-vza.

Czech Republic.[25] The Orthodox Church is thus the second largest church in the Czech Republic after the Roman Catholic Church.

Among those who professed to be Orthodoxy in the Czech Republic, a Romanian community gradually emerged, but for a long time it had no institutional framework of its own.[26] With the increasing number of Romanians arriving in the Czech Republic, there was a need to establish Romanian Orthodox communities. On the one hand, the fact that religious groups get together based on language and partially on nationality can strengthen the diversity within Orthodoxy and within the whole of Christianity. On the other hand, it can lead to greater isolation of individual groups and less concern for others, which is not beneficial to the vision of Christian unity. The next section of this article will focus on the alternative, i.e. that linguistically- and ethnically-based communities can bring a new dynamic to ecumenical relations.

The Romanian Orthodox community at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel

The Romanian Orthodox community at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel was born out of the need for Romanians and Moldovans [27]living in the Czech Republic to have contact with their countrymen and to meet their spiritual needs. Its creation is proof of the contemporary need to group together within religions according to language and culture. Since 2006, the community has been meeting in the Orthodox Church of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Prague,[28] where it has held services in Romanian twice a month. As the parish grew larger, so did the desire to establish its own proper community. Camelia Isaic was one of the initiators of the request to establish a new Orthodox religious community[29], describing the reasons for this request: "Although at first the parish did not have a church and the priest came from Moravia to attend services, it gradually grew and gained support from the Romanian Embassy. Then we were presented with the possibility of having our own church."[30] Through the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands, the community was offered the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in the Kinský Garden. According to Camelia Isaic, a lot of work had to be invested in putting it into operation:

The parish community needed to put it in order for the services. It was unkempt and dirty because for many years it had been used as a storage area for tools for some construction work in the park. When it was founded in 2006, the community chose St. Stephen cel Mare[31], Prince of Moldavia, as its patron saint. In 2008, St. Michael the Archangel, who is held in high esteem in the Orthodox Church and to whom the wooden church on the Petřín hill was previously dedicated, became the second patron saint.[32]

Since October 2008, services have been held occasionally in the church. Regular services have been held there since March 2009 when, shortly before Easter, Archbishop Christopher of

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25   Population of religious believers – adhering to a church by religion, religious society or faith and region in 2021. Czech Statistical Office – 2021 census results, accessed on 29 January 2022, https://www.czso.cz/documents/142154812/176236044/sldb2021_pv_obyvatelstvo_podle_cirkvi_a_kraju.xlsx

26   Noble, Bauer, Noble, Parushev, *Cesty pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západ*, pp. 350–351.

27   There are currently around 25,000 Romanian and Moldovan citizens registered in the Czech Republic. According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior valid as of 31 December 2020, there are 18,396 Romanian citizens and 6,140 Moldovan citizens. Their mother tongue is Romanian.

28   The Church in Prague 2, Na Slupi, belongs to the Prague Eparchy of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands.

29   The application was submitted in 2006.

30   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with Camelia Isaic on 12 June 2021.

31   St. Stefan cel Mare was a Moldavian prince. His feast day is celebrated on 2 July.

32   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with Camelia Isaic on 12 June 2021.

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Prague[33] ordained[34] a Romanian Orthodox priest, Andrei Ioan Danciu, to serve in this community. Since Easter,[35] regular Orthodox liturgy in Romanian began to be celebrated in the wooden church of St. Michael. Father Andrei Danciu described the community that attended the services:

The current community of the Romanian Orthodox community is mainly made up of Romanians and Moldovans, but Czech believers and people of other nationalities have also joined. Over 100 people regularly attended Sunday services at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel.[36]

The growing interest in Orthodoxy in the Czech Republic is confirmed by the aforementioned statistics from the 2021 census. Orthodox spirituality is a religious doctrine in which great emphasis is placed on the practising of the Orthodox Christian faith in purity and with absolute integrity. Icons have a specific role in Orthodox spirituality and "the entire iconographic tradition is viewed as a source of revelation".[37] One of the roles of the Orthodox community at St. Church of St. Michael the Archangel was to fill the church with icons. As Camelia Isaic said:

One member of our parish, a Romanian who has lived in the Czech Republic for a long time, is an iconographer and the parish asked him to make some icons for us. They were placed at the entrance of the church and also on the side walls, and the parish had a very personal relationship with them. The iconostasis was ordered at our expense in Romania. Several icons were also donated to us.[38]

The Orthodox community sees an icon as "something far bigger than a mere icon. It is not only a 'window to another world' but a witness to this world."[39] Icons in the Orthodox tradition carry within them an eschatological meaning that "is not provided by the one who makes the icon, nor by the one who looks at it, but by the One who speaks through it."[40] Thus, in the Orthodox perspective, God can touch people through material things, which include not only icons, but also water, wine, bread, oil, and also incense and candles, as Camelia Isaic described: "There was no electricity in the church. The light of the candles, and the scent of the incense along with the icons combined to create a deeply transcendent atmosphere."[41] Andrei Danciu also talked about the feelings this place evoked:

A Romanian theologian visiting this church said that he could tangibly feel the prayer there. The place for prayer is not just some space, it is a piece of the body of Christ. The church is consecrated, it is a place for the serving of the Liturgy and everything that is in the church is holy.[42]

In the Orthodox tradition, the church is a sacred space, a place of holy Liturgy, a dialogue in which God meets man and man meets God. In regard to this, Camelia Isaic said: "The church has become our home. Together we built there a piece of our region. It became a tradition that on feast days we came dressed in costumes."[43] The Church of St. Michael the Archangel became a living place of prayer, a meeting place with other people, a space for spiritual communion with God and human communion.[44] The expanding life of the community was caught by surprise by the church fire. The next section will look at how it affected the functioning of the community.

The church fire

The life of all church communities in the Czech Republic has been significantly transformed since March 2020[45] due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[46] Churches were completely closed for a few weeks during the spring. After that, their operation was restricted.[47] The situation improved in the summer but church attendance was low, as people were worried about catching the deadly disease. This is confirmed by Father Danciu: "In the autumn of 2020, few people came to the Church of St. Michael the Archangel due to fear of contracting COVID-19." [48] Moreover, the life of the community was fundamentally affected by the church fire on 28 October 2020,[49] which massively damaged the building. The tragedy affected the entire Orthodox community at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel. During the firefighting work, several parishioners reached the church along with Father Danciu:

When I saw the damage caused by the fire, I didn't even presume we could save anything. But, thanks to the excellent work of the firefighters, we managed to save a lot. For example, there were two wooden icons, the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ the Saviour, which we currently have on the altar during services. An icon of St. John Maximovich and a large cross were also saved and only the picture on it had to be replaced.[50]

33 Christopher of Prague – Archbishop Emeritus of Prague, Metropolitan of the Czech Lands and Slovakia from 2006 to 2013, statutory representative of the Orthodox Church in the Czech lands and Slovakia.
34 The consecration took place on 25 March 2009.
35 At midnight on 19 April 2009, the Easter liturgy was celebrated here.
36 Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.
37 Tomáš Špidlík, *Ruští mystici*, (Olomouc, Refugium Velehrad-Roma, 2021), p. 313.
38 Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with Camelia Isaic on 12 June 2021.
39 Jan Blahoslav Lášek, "Otec Pavel Alexandrovič Florenský (1882–1937)", in Florentskij, P., A., *Ikonostas,* (Chomutov, L. Marek, 2012), p. 7.
40 Noble, Bauerová, Noble, Parushev, *Cesty pravoslavné teologie ve 20. století na Západ*, p. 9.
41 Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with Camelia Isaic on 12 June 2021.
42 Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.
43 Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with Camelia Isaic on 12 June 2021.
44 Cf. 1 Corinthians 12.
45 Government Resolution No. 194 of 12 March 2020. A state of emergency was declared by the Government of the Czech Republic on 12 March 2020.
46 As a result of the emergency measure adopted by the Czech government on 15 March 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19, virtually all public services were cancelled; as of 27 April 2020 a maximum of 15 people could attend the service; accessed on 19 December 2021, https://koronavirus.mzcr.cz/pozadavky-na-boho-sluzby/.
47 Resolution No. 1373 of the Government of the Czech Republic of 23 December 2020 on the extension of the state of emergency in connection with the SARS CoV-2 virus epidemic.
48 Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.
49 Plameny zničily vzácný dřevěný kostel v Praze ze 17. Století. Zřítila se věž, *iDnes.cz*, 30 December 2021, https://www.idnes.cz/praha/zpravy/pozar-kostel-zahrada-kinskych-praha.A201028_151249_praha-zpravy_bse.
50 Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

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Finding the icons intact was a great encouragement for the entire community that found itself in a difficult situation. We also managed to save the cross, which "has a central place in the Orthodox Church, in its theology, liturgy, worship, spiritual life and private prayer."[51] It is seen not only as an instrument of punishment but, above all, it "has become a symbol of the victory of life over death."[52] Its discovery encouraged the community even more. At the same time, they began to ponder why the fire occurred. Father Danciu also ruminated on this issue: "I believe that God allowed the fire to happen. It doesn't surprise me. Homeless people lived in the vicinity of the church and the church was not protected in any way. It's situated in a park, in the city, and it's an old wooden structure."[53] The fire confronted the community with new realities. They needed to take an active role in raising funds to rebuild the church. The city of Prague, as the owner of the building, immediately announced a collection to rebuild the fire-damaged church.[54] Camelia Isaic says: "There was a great wave of solidarity, despite the limitations brought by the pandemic. It's only when you lose something that you feel how deep that loss is."[55] The fire became a challenge. As Andrei Danciu says, the community had to process it in their spiritual life:

The pandemic, as well as the fire of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel, were not foreseen events for us, but they happened, we had to accept them and get on with our lives. It also reminded us that we are mortal, that we had to prepare for death. It is the role of Christians to prepare for it. It is training us for what is to come. I don't see icons as being irreplaceable, either. They are created on the basis of the rules of iconography, they must respect the conditions in order to serve a spiritual purpose for the believers. We, humans, are at the crossroads between God and the world. Everything we have belongs to God and we must bring it back to Him.[56]

After the fire, the community pondered whether the event could have been beneficial in certain ways, and how to respond to the loss of the church. As Andrei Danciu said: "The community needed to talk more about it. It is apparent what the churches mean to us, the faithful. A person with no church may continue to live their faith, but it is in the church that they meet the entire community."[57] The need to meet with the spiritual community was also the reason the Orthodox community immediately began looking for a temporary place to live spiritually. Let us look at how their search proceeded and what it brought to ecumenical relations.

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51   Zdenko Širka, "Kříž z pohledu pravoslavné teologie. Aneb lze mluvit o pravoslavné teologii kříže?", *Křesťanská revue* 5/2018, accessed 19 December 2021, http://www.krestanskarevue.cz/Kriz-z-pohledu-pravoslavne-teologie-Aneb-lze-mluvit-o-pravoslavne-teologii-krize-Zdenko-S-Sirka.html.

52   Cf. Zdenko Širka, „Kříž z pohledu pravoslavné teologie. Aneb lze mluvit o pravoslavné teologii kříže?", *Křesťanská revue* 5/2018, accessed 19 December 2021.

53   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, 12 June 2021.

54   The collection was announced on 2 November 2020 for a period of one year until 4 November 2021, accessed 30 December 2021, https://www.praha.eu/jnp/cz/o_meste/magistrat/tiskovy_servis/tiskove_zpravy/lide_mohou_od_stredy_prispivat_do.html.

55   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with Camelia Isaic on 12 June 2021.

56   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

57   Quotations from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

Ecumenical solidarity

After the fire, the Orthodox community was left without a church and needed to find another place of worship as soon as possible. According to Camelia Isaic, in the immediate aftermath of the tragic event, various parishes got in touch with those offering places to lend them: "It was very surprising and touching how many people reached out to us after the fire with offers of help."[58] According to Andrei Danciu, offers came not only from Orthodox church communities but also from other Christian communities: "The Evangelical Church also got in touch, saying that they could lend us their church for services. We felt the solidarity of Prague's ecumenical community."[59] In the very first days after the fire, it became clear that ecumenical relations in Prague, where the community operates, are not merely formal, but are alive and testify to what was stated in the introduction: ecumenism can take many forms. Ecumenism can be understood not only as a formal matter, not only as documents that deal with relations of rapprochement in an official way, but it can be viewed as a holistic attitude: an attitude of active openness towards other Christians.[60] This attitude can be expressed as "interest, openness, and goodwill toward other Christians and churches".[61] Extending the meaning of ecumenism to go beyond a mere search for mutual agreement on factual matters of faith, but viewing it as a holistic attitude will help us analyse and perceive the specific crisis and distress in which the Orthodox community found itself.

After the destruction of the Church of St. Michael the Archangel, the Orthodox community started to look for a new place of worship. Fast and real help came from the Old Catholic Church community located near the burned church. The first offer to help the Orthodox community secure space came from Petr Jan Vinš, an Old Catholic priest, in the form of the Church of St. Lawrence[62] on Petřín hill. He described what led him to make this decision: "The Old Catholic tradition includes a living ecumenism, where believers of other Christian creeds are always welcome at our services."[63] This was not the first chance encounter; the two communities had known about each other prior to this event, as confirmed by Andrei Danciu: "Father Vinš and I knew one another. He had been to visit us with other parishioners several times after services."[64] The ecumenical relationship between the two communities, already established in the past, allowed the Orthodox community to quickly make themselves at home at the Church of St. Lawrence. For the Old Catholic community, however, sharing a common place of worship was a new experience, as explained by Petr Jan Vinš: "In this case, for the first time, we are sharing our place of worship with another community that does not participate in our services but celebrates their own."[65] It was a new and challenging situation for both communities. It required a respectful approach to the other community and a search for a possible way and method that would allow the ecumenical coexistence of two different Christian communities in one common space. Andrea Danciu's previous ecumenical experience helped find it:

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58   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with Camelia Isaic on 12 June 2021.

59   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

60   See Ivana Noble, *Essays in Ecumenical Theology /by Ivana Noble*, (Boston, Brill, 2019), p. 15.

61   Ivana Noble, *The Current Ecumenical Situation in Europe*, in Andrée, Diehl, Simon, eds., *Challenged by Ecumenism,* p. 14.

62   Since 1994, the church has been rented by the Old Catholic Church. In 1995, it became its cathedral.

63   Extract from email correspondence with Petr Jan Vinš conducted on 30 December 2021.

64   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

65   Extract from email correspondence with Petr Jan Vinš conducted on 30 December 2021.

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From my three-year experience working as a prison chaplain, I gained experience in ecumenical collaboration. As a result, this is not a new situation for me, nor is the ecumenical environment new to me. I recognise our differences and I know what can unite us. The core thing is to understand that we need to respect the private space of each community and strengthen the places in which we can coexist together.

The Orthodox community, under the leadership of its priest, has focused on finding what unites the two Christian communities. The Old Catholic community decided to embrace Christians of a different tradition, and only in the process of coming together and sharing a common space did they begin to realise the difficulty and pitfalls of this coexistence, as described by Petr Jan Vinš:

The Orthodox community takes great care to interfere as little as possible in the operation of the host parish, but even then its presence is clearly evident. However, the believers of our Church consider it natural and positive, especially in areas where we can be inspired by them (e.g. candle lighting). It is beneficial that the Orthodox community is able to adapt the place of worship for their needs simply by placing icons and stands, so the church furnishings do not have to be moved as much.[66]

Both communities are aware of the fragility and uncertainty of the situation. Both are seeking ways of understanding and discovering the possibility of mutual inspiration and spiritual enrichment. They are treading cautiously on the path of ecumenical relations. Both communities are trying to communicate about their mutual coexistence, says Andrei Danciu: "I had the opportunity to talk with the believers of the Old Catholic Church and thank them for their hospitality. They told me that they were happy to help in this way, that they felt it was their duty as Christians."[67] Thanks to these mutually beneficial ecumenical measures, which came quickly in response to the crisis, it was possible to celebrate an Orthodox mass at the Church of St. Lawrence[68] just a few days after the fire. According to Andrei Danciu, the interest of the Orthodox community and the desire to support the new path was manifested by the high attendance at the mass:

Over a hundred people from our community came to express their support and wanted to know how we would proceed. The groundswell of support was great, it made me feel that we could do it. We rescued two icons and they also gave me hope.[69]

A sensitive point in the mutual relations was the different approach of the two communities to the arrangement of the liturgical space. Petr Jan Vinš stated that it was necessary to seek a way of mutual respect and agreement:

Above all, personal understanding between the two priests was essential. It allowed us to set up a level of coordination of activities and communication that would enable both communities (i.e. Orthodox and Old Catholic) to function in the same space without much

difficulty, not only with their regular services but also with feast days, occasional events (weddings, baptisms) and so on. Without this immediate and personal communication between the two priests, it would not be possible in this form.[70]

It has been challenging for the Orthodox community to enter the liturgical space of another Christian religion. The Baroque Church of St. Lawrence[71] was originally built for the Catholic Church, whose liturgy is close to the Old Catholic one. The church that became the Orthodox community's temporary home has no iconostasis and has a different design than the one the Orthodox community knew from the Church of St. Michael the Archangel. For the Orthodox community, this meant arriving in a completely different liturgical space. Andrei Danciu described how they have come to terms with it: "At the Church of St. Lawrence we are guests and we respect a different space. We use only the essential during services, i.e. our two icons, the Gospel and a few books."[72] The Orthodox community is thus learning to experience the liturgy in a new space that is unfamiliar and distant, but is nevertheless trying to find its place in it, says Andrei Danciu: "We are in a position where we have to realise that God wants us and is looking for us. God is the one who found us. Reading prayers or going to church every Sunday does not make one meet God. Man needs to work more on his heart."[73] The people of the Orthodox community are mostly from Romania and Moldova, living and working in different countries, with different cultures and customs, and these differences were highlighted in the new liturgical space. The Church of St. Michael the Archangel felt much more like a piece of home which connected them to their homeland. At present, they are guests in a church whose interior arrangement is distant from their tradition. Andrei Danciu described how they are dealing with the new situation:

The most important thing for us should be that we are serving God. The entire community gathers in the church to serve God, to pray together to Him. God is always looking for us,[74] as the Bible teaches. He wants us all to be saved. The question is whether we understand that. The church is where man seeks God, but we do not know how God approaches man. It would be better if we had our own church. We hope that will happen soon but, for now, we accept the current situation. I am also helping to keep our community active and I don't think too much about what happened because when I think about it my heart hurts.[75]

Sharing a liturgical space requires paying attention to one's own needs as well as those of the host community. It is not easy but, with mutual respect, it can work out and even enrich and become a specific manifestation of ecumenical relations. The final section will focus on the benefits of these relations.

66   Extract from email correspondence with Petr Jan Vinš conducted on 30 December 2021.

67   Quotations from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

68   The mass took place on 1 November 2020.

69   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

70   Extract from email correspondence with Petr Jan Vinš conducted on 30 December 2021.

71   The church acquired its present look during the Baroque reconstruction carried out by Ignaz Palliardi Sr. in 1739–1745, *Památkový katalog*, Národní památkový ústav, accessed on 19 December 2021, https://pamatkovykatalog.cz/kostel-sv-vavrince-15521246.

72   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

73   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

74   Matthew 18:10-14.

75   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

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Conclusion: The benefits of living ecumenical relations

In addition to the many difficulties, the fire at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel brought the Orthodox community the challenge of experiencing ecumenical relations in practice, and the community did not avoid such an experience. It faced it head-on, returning to the beginnings of an ecumenical movement that was rooted in practice. The question of the relations between the Orthodox Churches and the non-Orthodox Christian Churches had already been addressed by Constantinople Patriarch Joachim III. In 1902, he published a *Patriarchal and Synodical Encyclical* addressed to the highest leaders of the local Orthodox Churches. It dealt with relations with non-Orthodox churches. The Patriarch asked them to begin to recognise other religions, as his Orthodox vision was linked to the ecumenical vision.[76] His theology opened a new way of understanding the identity of the Orthodox Church and its relationship to non-Orthodox Christianity. These ideas were examined by the Pan-Orthodox Council[77] in the document *Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World.* For some, however, it fell short of expectations regarding these issues. Its conclusions were also criticised by Camelia Isaic. Even though in her article *Všepravoslavný sněm: musíme se znovu učit dělat to, co kážeme* (Pan-Orthodox Council: We Must Re-Learn to Do What We Preach)[78] she appreciated that "the document on relations with the rest of the Christian world, as well as the Encyclical issued at the end of the Council, reject fundamentalism under the pretext of defending true Orthodoxy,"[79] she also drew attention to certain anti-ecumenical aspects of the document. "The one that has caused the most controversy regards the recognition of the existence of other Christian churches outside the Orthodox Church."[80] We can agree with Camelia Isaic's criticism that "the final version of the document *Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World* remains too liberal for some and still too conservative for others."[81] Thus, the main benefit of the document *Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World* lies in the affirmation of the overall goal of re-establishing unity and the all-Orthodox framework created to advance ecumenical dialogue and prevent isolationism."[82] The Pan-Orthodox Council thus did not live up to the possible expectations promised by the preparatory documents for the Pan-Orthodox Council on the issue of ecumenism.

In the case described above, the practical ecumenical experience at the parish level touches on concrete cooperation between Christian religions, as described by Petr Jan Vinš on behalf of the Old Catholic community: "I believe that practical cooperation is more important for real practical ecumenism than theological theorising – especially when practice in the spirit of mutual trust between Christians goes beyond what should be possible and what should not be possible according to theory."[83] Andrei Danciu described it on behalf of the Orthodox community: "We need to return to our hearts. But we do not have eternity for such a transformation, we have only a limited time and we have much to learn."[84] The priests of both communities speak about the need for ecumenical relations that are not only empty theorising but are a lived practice for which we do not have unlimited time, but which we live out and learn during our lives.

In the aforementioned case of Orthodox and Old Catholic communities, we have seen that practical and spiritual dimensions can demonstrate themselves in a specific case of emergency. Life creates situations in which people must respond immediately, and it is good when living ecumenical relations are preceded by agreements and arrangements. This case also shows that documents cannot precede practical ecumenism but they can draw inspiration from it for further action. The living ecumenical practice described in this case suggests that ecumenical relations can, in some respects, go further than official documents on ecumenism. Such ecumenism can prevent other forms and it can also strengthen them, providing them with important experience and feedback, and even fill in what is missing in the documents.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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76   It is based on the idea that the world is not in a good state, and that, for the sake of values, Christian communities need to stick together and uphold values that will help the world.

77   The Pan-Orthodox Council was held from 20 to 25 June 2016 in Crete under the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew.

78   Camelia Isaic, "Všepravoslavný sněm: musíme se znovu učit dělat to, co kážeme". *Getsemany*, 285 – 28 September 2016, accessed on 7 January 2022, https://www.getsemany.cz/node/3356.

79   Isaic, "Všepravoslavný sněm: musíme se znovu učit dělat to, co kážeme". *Getsemany*, 28 September 2016.

80   Isaic, "Všepravoslavný sněm: musíme se znovu učit dělat to, co kážeme". *Getsemany*, 28 September 2016.

81   Isaic, "Všepravoslavný sněm: musíme se znovu učit dělat to, co kážeme". *Getsemany*, 28 September 2016.

82   Isaic, "Všepravoslavný sněm: musíme se znovu učit dělat to, co kážeme". *Getsemany*, 28 September 2016.

83   Extract from email correspondence with Petr Jan Vinš conducted on 30 December 2021.

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84   Quotation from an authorised interview conducted with the parish priest of the Romanian Orthodox community in Prague, Father Andrei Ioan Danciu, on 12 June 2021.

CHRISTIAN REFUGEES IN THE CZECH VILLAGE: HIDDEN FEATURES OF REFUGEE MEDIA REPRESENTATION

František Burda✉

Department of Studies in Culture and Religion, Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové (CZ)

Abstract
Background: The study focuses on the phenomenon of dehumanization of the image of the refugee against the background of the refugee case in the Czech village of Smilovice, which resonated significantly in public space and in the media. Specifically, it will focus on the media discourse reporting the arrival of several Christian refugees for a temporary stay in this village. The view on the process of dehumanization in a media setting will be approached through the lens of mimetic culture theory and the scapegoating mechanism of the French cultural anthropologist René Girard.
Conclusion: The theoretical underpinning will also be the use of the position theory, the construction of a dialogue network and the social teaching of the Church.
Keywords: Media representation of refugees - Mimetic theory of culture – Scapegoat - Position theory - Dialogue network.

Introduction: Method of Procedure

The main subject of the present study is the question of the manner and consequences of constructing a media representation of Christian refugees who found temporary refuge in the Czech municipality of Smilovice after very complicated negotiations with the government and local councils. While the following study addresses the issue of the media representation of refugees, it does not remain purely journalistic or sociological. It seeks to highlight some of the factors that come into play during constructing a media discourse on socially exposed issues. To this end, we will build on the position theory and the creation of a dialogue network. The fundamental anthropological dynamics of positioning will be further helped by René Girard's mimetic theory of culture which points to a fundamental link between violence and culture. Another analytical tool for us will be van Dijk's theory of binary opposition in the media focused primarily on the question of constructing the discourse of racism.[2]

The criteria for selecting media sources will be, first, the presence of the Smilovice theme of the refugees reported by the media, and then the degree of the reach of the given platforms. In terms of the function of the dialogue network we will be interested in replica multiplication and what forms of positioning they establish. We will then point to examples where we have identified stereotyping mechanisms and overly polarised positioning of subjects of events in simplified reference frameworks. Finally, we will focus on the more general features of the way in which

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✉   **Contact on author: ThLic. František Burda, Th.D. – e-mail: frantisek.burda@uhk.cz**
2   VAN DIJK, T. A. *News as Discourse.* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum 1998).

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the Smilovice case is reported and try to outline where the seriousness or, on the contrary, the tabloid nature of the media message on the subject lies.

Culture and the Scapegoat Mechanism

The world we live in we always grasp, consciously or unconsciously, through a theoretical instrument. How we see facts and how we perceive them is not constructed independently on conceptual thinking or ad hoc. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, we always stick to a code key.[3] This is not to say that the instrument by which we analyse reality is always a consistent system of scientific theory. In this work we will stick to the coding key of mimetic culture theory.[4]

The mimetic theory of culture points to a fundamental link between culture and violence. It does not view violence and conflict as a sort of lateral peripheral phenomenon but reveals it as a cultural-creating element around which cultures are born and accumulate. This gives us a fundamental hermeneutic perspective for examining media communications. In a hermeneutic approach the reader treats the text as a fragment of a larger cultural pattern or mosaic. In other words, it tries to read 'between the lines', looking for meanings that a text, both as a self-contained semantic entity and as a cultural element, hides beneath the surface or refers to explicitly or implicitly.[5]

The mimetic theory of culture is based on an analysis of the mimetic desire of the individual. The subject of mimetic, imitative desire that stands at the heart of psychosocial mechanisms is the subject desiring the object, appearance or being of the other individual that that individual possesses or desires. The other thus becomes the subject's de facto role model.[6] When a subject lives in the same environment as his or her role model, there is tension, rivalry and competition between them. We call this kind of mimetic relationship internal mediation. If he lives in a different environment, competition does not arise because the rivalry imitation that produces it cannot occur. We call this external mediation. As part of the internal mediation, the rivalry is gradually gaining strength through the reciprocity of increasing imitation.[7] Because of the physical and psychological closeness between the subject and the model, internal mediation always seems more symmetrical, and the result is that the subject becomes a model of his idol, imitating the one who imitated him. The rivals gradually become so alike that they become doubles.[8] Gradually, a rivalry develops between them. The object of the dispute fades from view, becoming merely a pretext for a conflict. The only compulsive desire of the doubles is no longer to acquire the object, but to defeat the other. Since one never desires the object of desire alone, conflict gradually escalates into a crisis and turns into mass violence.

To address the crisis, society subconsciously chooses a so-called scapegoat or other object to which accumulated tension and violence are diverted en masse. The scapegoat is chosen on the basis of visible or identifiable signs of difference from the majority. The more specific such a lamb is, the better the placating mechanism of the scapegoat works.[9] The scapegoat is identified as the culprit of a social crisis that may, for example, have the nature of an epidemic, an earth-

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3   Cf. BURDA, F. *O násilí v kultuře: girardovské reflexe.* (Ostrava: Moravapress, 2013). 8.
4   „We understand scientific theory as a system of concepts and propositions that provides abstract explanations for selected phenomena. Theory allows phenomena of the world to be understood, explained, criticised or predicted" (HENDL, J. *Kvalitativní výzkum: základní teorie, metody a aplikace.* (Praha: Portál 2016)). 27.
5   Cf. HÁJEK, Martin. *Čtenář a stroj: vybrané metody sociálněvědní analýzy textů.* (Praha: SLON 2014). 17.
6   Cf. GIRARD, René, ANTONELLO; Pierpaolo; CASTRO ROCHA, *João Cezar de. Evolution and Conversion. Dialogues on the Origin of Culture.* (London/NY, Bloomsbury 2017). 56.
7   Cf. GIRARD, ANTONELLO; CASTRO ROCHA, *João Cezar.* 57.
8   Cf. GIRARD, ANTONELLO; CASTRO ROCHA, *João Cezar.* 57.
9   Cf. BURDA, F. *O násilí.* 13.

quake, political, social instability or even a so-called migration crisis. Chaos accompanies crisis. Inside the chaos, standard cultural distinctions erode, hierarchical structures decline, and order collapses. The masses in crisis do not search the true cause of the crisis but look for a culprit, so that the society can once again come together and consolidate itself. „In the frenzy of the mimetic violence of the mob a focal point suddenly appears, in the shape of the culprit who is thought to be the cause of the disorder and the one who brought the crisis into community."[10] Masses caught in the maelstrom of mimetic swirl then feel an urge and a righteous need to single out the culprit of the crisis, even often kill him unanimously by which the crisis is brought to an end.[11]

Triggering of Persecution

In times of crisis, when normal institutions are weakened, there is collective persecution. It is easy to form dissatisfied masses and crowds then, the spontaneous rallies of people who have the capacity to completely replace weakened institutions or exert decisive pressure on them.[12] They are empowered by a belief based on the fact that people tend to explain social crises to themselves by social and moral causes.[13] Instead of looking for fault in themselves or looking for the natural cause of the crisis, people tend to look for it in the whole of the society which does not bind them to anything or in other people who, for some easily visible reasons, are considered particularly harmful.[14] The crisis thus generates recurring persecution stereotypes. The first is a weakening of the cultural order accompanied by a gradual loss of the ability to distinguish between the human and the inhuman. „The general loss of differences that I term crisis is indicated here in the mother's hesitation between human and dog, and that same hesitation is seen in the children, who represent the community."[15] Girard points out that concepts such as crisis, criminal, criterion and critique all come from the same root, the Greek verb *krínó*, which means not only „judge, evaluate, distinguish" but also „blame" and „condemn" a victim.[16] This brings us to the second persecution stereotype, which is the stereotype of accusation.

In the end, the persecutors (mass, crowd, swarm) always come to believe that „…a small number of people or a single individual, despite their relative weakness, is extremly harmful to the whole of society."[17] The persecutors just want to purge society of the elements that are disrupting and destabilizing it. „The crowd tends toward persecution since the natural causes of what troubles it and transforms it into a turba cannot interest it."[18] Victims tend to be accused of crimes that are in marked contrast to what is acceptable in a given society. This is a violation of the strictest taboos, sexual crimes, rape, incest or consorting with animals. All these crimes threaten the very foundations of the cultural order, the family and hierarchical differences without which no social order could exist.[19]

The third persecution stereotype relates to the universal features of scapegoat selection. The choice of a victim depends on its abnormality and vulnerability, most often an individual or group standing on the social fringe. Especially in times of crisis, the appetite for persecution likes to

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10   GIRARD; ANTONELLO; CASTRO ROCHA, *João Cezar*. 64.

11   Cf. GIRARD; ANTONELLO; CASTRO ROCHA, *João Cezar*. 64-65.

12   Cf. GIRARD, René. *The Scapegoat*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1986). 12.

13   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 14.

14   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 14.

15   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 49.

16   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 22.

17   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 15.

18   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 16.

19   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 15.

target religious minorities[20] or foreigners.[21] In addition to the cultural and religious characteristics of the victim there are criteria purely physical, such as sickness, insanity, congenital visible defects, injury mutilation and physical ailments.[22] „The human body is a system of anatomic differences. If a disability, even as the result of an accident, is disturbing, it is because it gives the impression of a disturbing dynamism. It seems to threaten the very system. Efforts to limit it are unsuccessful; it disturbs the differences that surround it. These in turn become monstrous, rush together, are compressed and blended together to the point of destruction. Difference that exists outside the system is terrifying because it reveals the truth of the system, its relativity, its fragility, and its mortality."[23] Adepts are those individuals who are not sufficiently or at all integrated into the community.

For the scapegoat mechanism to work, people need to believe in the victim's guilt. The process must therefore be unconscious. Through ignorance, everyone can continue to live thinking that the victim is indeed guilty and that he or she deserves to be punished. If the scapegoating mechanism is to work, persecutors must not see the truth about the victim's innocence and thus must not begin to see the culprit as a victim, as a scapegoat, but must see him as a person convicted by right. The moment this scapegoat mechanism is discovered, it ceases to function.[24]

Dialogic Network of Media Representations

Let's now look at how the mimetic mechanism manifests itself in constructing so-called dialogue networks in the media space. The concept of a dialogue network is first encountered in the scientific work of Ivan Leudar, who is profiled in the field of discourse psychology, and the linguists Jiří Nekvapil, an expert in entomethodology and conversational analysis. The dialogue network is the a term for this kind of communication where the contributions (replicas) of the different actors are distributed in different space and time via the massmedia.[25] The term was coined by them while studying newspaper articles and television interviews. At the same time the interaction link revealed the speech patterns of different players in different media events.[26] The contributions of the various actors can therefore be seen as any other dialogue. Networks create chain reactions, have an interactive nature when a reaction/response is expected to come. Any lack of response is also significant for the course of communication and is subsequently interpreted in a certain way.[27]

One important feature of the dialogue networks is that single media replicas multiply under the influence of the mass media (e.g. various newspapers write about the „same" or TV commentators talk).[28] By the word replica in an interview, we mean the meaningfully coherent speech of a speaker.[29] In addition to replica multiplying, there is also reproduction, which is the case when

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20   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 17.

21   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 18.

22   Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 25.

23   GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 21.

24   Cf. GIRARD; ANTONELLO; CASTRO ROCHA, 85.

25   Cf. NEKVAPIL, Jiří, LEUDAR, Ivan, Sekvenční struktury v mediálních dialogických sítích. *Sociologický časopis/ Czech Sociological Review* 38, no. 4, (2002): 483.

26   Cf. P. KADERKA, M. HAVLÍK. Vytváření televizních zpráv: pracovní postupy v systému žánrových norem. *Sociologický časopis / Czech Sociological Review* 46, (2010): 559.

27   Cf. TVRDÁ, Karla. *Mediální dialogické sítě v československém socialistickém tisku*. (Lingvistika Praha, 2014). 1. accessed February 2, 2021: http://lingvistikapraha.ff.cuni.cz/sbornik

28   Cf. NEKVAPIL, LEUDAR, Sekvenční struktury 483.

29   NEKVAPIL, Jiří. Etnometodologická konverzační analýza v systému encyklopedických hesel. Čeština*ř*, 10(3), (1999-2000): 82.

reconfiguration takes place, basing the possibility of significant meaning shifts and, above all, the extension of the dialogue media network to include other posts.[30]

There are also so-called pairing and corrective sequences within the dialogue network. The pair sequences are „pairs of such motions (most often statements) which make a whole as much that the introduction of the first statement in the interview requires the second specific statement, e.g. question – answer, greeting – greeting, request – granting/refusing the request".[31] Corrective sequences are defined as „an act or sub-activity enabling speakers to eliminate various widely understood problems in the conversation (e.g. a slip of the tongue, a mishearing, but also an insufficient amount of information, an inaccuracy, a factual error, or a feeling of factual error, etc.)"[32]

Nekvapil and Leudar demonstrate that dialogue networks are not the arbitrary construct of analysts – they are the communication forms on which the communication participants orient themselves.[33] Dialogue media networks interactively co-create identities of actors and other entities. The coherence of these networks is not only due to a common theme, but to the fact that their players share the same and similar expressions and methods of argument.[34] The wording of the headlines in many articles suggests that the reader knows what is being said and that the journalist assumes it. Mass media decide what social action will have the potential to become mass media content and how replicas in mass media content will be reconfigured.[35]

Positioning Process

Dialogue network participants formulate their communication from specifically established dialogue positions.[36] Positioning of such positions is a process in which an individual or group places itself or others in a particular position/role from which it relates in some way to others and vice versa. It can be a process both conscious and unconscious and can represent a hidden form of, for example, hierarchy or discrimination. It manifests itself by using various adjectives (e.g. 'I, a citizen of the Czech Republic', 'dark-skinned man', 'Christian refugee', 'Vietnamese seller', 'refugees', 'refugees of Smilovice' …). The fact that the author of such indications has a need to use such adjectives indicates that he/she considers them essential. To give an illustrative example: „An unknown assailant attacked a young man after a previous verbal dispute, punching him in the face. The assailant, according to the police, was to be a dark-skinned man in a white T-shirt, accompanied by a dark-skinned woman."[37] The color designation plays no important role here, but it may give readers of the memo the impression that dark-skinned people are more prone to violence than white people. The phrase „white male" is rarely encountered because it

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30 Cf. HOMOLÁČ, Jiří. Dialogická mediální síť, 2017. in Petr Karlík, Marek Nekula, Jana Pleskalová (eds.), CzechEncy - Nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny.
   accessed February 3, 2021: https://www.czechency.org/slovnik/DIALOGICK%C3%81%20MEDI%C3%81L-N%C3%8D%20S%C3%8D%C5%A4

31 NEKVAPIL, Jiří: PÁROVÁ SEKVENCE. in Petr Karlík, Marek Nekula, Jana Pleskalová (eds.), CzechEncy - Nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny, 2017.
   accessed March 15, 2021: https://www.czechency.org/slovnik/P%C3%81ROV%C3%81%20SEKVENCE

32 NEKVAPIL, Jiří: OPRAVNÁ SEKVENCE. in Petr Karlík, Marek Nekula, Jana Pleskalová (eds.), CzechEncy - Nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny, 2017.
   accessed February 12, 2021: https://www.czechency.org/slovnik/OPRAVN%C3%81%20SEKVENCE

33 Cf. NEKVAPIL, LEUDAR, Sekvenční struktury. 484.

34 Cf. NEKVAPIL, LEUDAR, Sekvenční struktury. 487.

35 Cf. NEKVAPIL, Jiří, LEUDAR, Ivan. Sequencing in dialogical networkp. *Ethnographic Studies* 8, (2006): 31.

36 Cf. HOMOLÁČ, Jiří; KARHANOVÁ, Kamila; NEKVAPIL, Jiří: *Obraz Romů v středoevropských médiích po r. 1989.* (Brno 2003): 7.

37 Accessed February 2, 2021: www.hradec.idnes.cz/pobodani-lide-v-trutnove-0xe-/hradec-zpravy.aspx?c=A160920_114903_hradec-zpravy_tuu

seems redundant. We consider white skin color the norm. The term 'dark-skinned man' highlights an abnormality, a destabilising element. „. . . blacks feel no more offended by the pejorative use of the word black than whites do by the similarly thought adjective white. The symbolism of the term „black" may certainly be helpful to racism, but it is not a priori racist."[38] Nevertheless it subconsciously generates a binary opposition because of which we start assuming that there are „we" and „they". Racist tendencies can be born out of this belief. The use of such signs may be motivated by an individual's desire to define and distinguish himself from what he does not see as part of his identity.[39] Psychoanalysis of the distinction between „us" and „them" explains the projection by which we can perceive our own identity.[40] „The more they actually resemble us, the more we feel the need to distinguish ourselves. „They" steal, lie, cheat, stink, don't pay their debts, etc. If we communicate this, then somehow in one blow we emphasize that we are different. In fact, we would hardly find a nation or race that did not have individuals acting like them."[41] The binary opposition was dealt with by T. A. van Dijk in his analysis of the ideology of the media discourse of racism where he focused primarily on the ideological plane of news discourse and the application of journalistic routines that contribute to the spread of racism and discrimination against ethnic and national minorities in society.[42]

The basic binary opposition that T. A. van Dijk decoded are as follows:

We	X	Them
Good	X	Evil
White	X	Black
Safe	X	Danger
Culture	X	Nature
Civilization	X	Barbarism
Order	X	Chaos
Rationality	X	Emocionality
Individuals	X	Types

Only a stark outline of these opposition reveals a number of points of contact with the dynamics of the scapegoat mechanism, as outlined by René Girard, because all the markings in the right-hand column appear to be destabilizing elements and become appropriate criteria for choosing a victim. For this reason, positioning analysis helps us decode the persecution potential of stereotypes of specific media messages. In our case, we will focus on media mediation of the help to Iraqi refugees in the Czech Republic.

Human Dignity as a Criterion for Assessment

When we look at the construction of the binary opposition in media dialogues through the lens of the social teachings of the Church, we find that they run counter to human dignity. For the social teaching of the Church derives from the inalienable, non-transferable, non-reducible and unmistakable nature of human dignity which is inherent in every individual and from which all that is to serve the development of individuals and all mankind emerges.[43] Therefore, the

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38 GIRARD; ANTONELLO; CASTRO ROCHA, *João Cezar.* 168.

39 BURDA, F. *O násilí.* 24.

40 Cf. NOVÁK, Tomáš. *O předsudcích.* (Brno: Doplněk, 2002) 78.

41 NOVÁK, T. *O předsudcích.* 78.

42 Cf. VAN DIJK, T. A. *News.* 42-54.

43 Cf. JAN XIII., encyklical *Mater et magistra* (MM) 192, in: Sociální encykliky, (Praha: Zvon 1996) 160.

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primary consideration of people-to-people relations is respect for and protection of human life, in accordance with respect for the dignity inherent in it and establishing the personnel principle of people-to-people relations.[44] This leads, as a result, to the practical efforts of individuals and entire communities who share such a starting point, to efforts to improve the living conditions of those who find themselves in need.[45] According to the emergency aid principle, two strangers who meet should help each other. They are bound to each other when the emergency is acute and when the risks and costs of assistance for the assisting party are relatively low. At the end of an acute situation, the principle of hospitality implies no obligations and does not oblige permanent admission. Thus membership in a state is governed by principles other than emergency aid and hospitality.[46] The personalistic norm of relations is therefore matched with active solidarity.[47] It leads one to constantly strive for the adequate challenges of the time. The peronalistic conception of humanism cannot freeze in a conventional form, but must constantly seek out new avenues and planes of implementation.[48] In this sense, the encyclical Popolorum progressio speaks of *transcendent humanism*.[49] In the case of refugees, this specifically means that every person has the right to leave their country where their life or their fundamental rights are at risk to a country where they hope to better provide for themselves and their family. In this endeavour, the recipient countries are to assist him in so far as the well-being of their community permits and they are to assist him in integrating into society.[50] Thus, human dignity encourages individual states to reconcile the demands of social life with the universal demands of human rights.[51] This requires sustained and courageous efforts[52] on the part of individual states, postulating a thorough study, goal-setting, determination of means to achieve them.[53]

But accepting people who find themselves in need alone would not be enough. It would not fit the personalistic principle of reciprocity. From the point of view of human dignity, looking at the non deserved misery experienced by refugees at home, a cordial and brotherly hospitality motivated by the highest spiritual values is an adequate response from the receiving community.[54] Related to this is the fact that the nature and quality of admissions in the contemporary world is fundamentally influenced by the media representation of refugees that spreads through society. We live in a *civilization of image* in which the media represents a *new power*.[55] Various forms of discrimination represent one of the most serious problems threatening society. These must be prevented and countered.[56] The enormous force and power of the media representation brings new forms of discrimination.

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44   Cf. JAN XIII., encyklical *Mater et magistra* MM 194.

45   Cf. JAN XIII., encyklical *Mater et magistra* MM 151.

46   Cf. ŠTICA, Petr. *Hranice a státní suverenita*. (Červený Kostelec: Pavel Mervart 2010). 209-210.

47   Cf. JAN XIII., encyklika *Pacem in terris* (PT) 20, in: Sociální encykliky, (Praha: Zvon 1996) 204.

48   Cf. PAVEL VI. encyklika *Popolorum progressio* (PP) 98, in: Sociální encykliky, (Praha: Zvon 1996) 235.

49·   Cf. PAVEL VI. encyklika *Popolorum progressio* 16.

50   Cf. PAVEL VI. encyklika *Pacem in terris* 106.

51   Cf. PAVEL VI. encyklika *Popolorum progressio* 36.

52   PAVEL VI. encyklika *Popolorum progressio* PP 55.

53   Cf. PAVEL VI. encyklika *Popolorum progression* 50.

54   Cf. PAVEL VI. encyklika *Popolorum progressio* 68.

55   Cf. PAVEL VI. apoštolský list *Octogesima adveniens* (OA) 20, in: Sociální encykliky, (Praha: Zvon 1996) 277.

56   Cf. PAVEL VI. apoštolský list *Octogesima adveniens* 16.

Refugees in the Czech Republic

We will now try to outline the background to the case of Iraqi refugees in the Czech Republic. A key role was played here by the Generation 21 endowment fund, whose main project was to ensure safety in the Czech Republic for what was originally just 153 Christians (families, widows with children and individuals) whose lives were threatened by the conflict in Iraq and Syria.[57] The people behind the project were deeply concerned about the situation of Iraqi Christians after Northern Iraq was captured by the Islamic State and the fact that there was systematic torture, rape and murder of the Christian minority. The people who came up with the idea of helping were deeply religious Christians who knew something about the situation there and saw that there was genocide going on, so they decided to help these people. The refugees arrived in a total of four stages between January and April 2016. The first group arrived on January 24, 2016 and headed to a hostel in the village of Okrouhlík. Another seventeen people arrived at the beginning of February. On February 19, another forty-one people arrived from Iraq and a month later a fourth group of twenty-one people arrived. They were gradually housed in Prague, Brno, Okrouhlík near Jihlava and Smilovice in Třinec region.

The media seized on the case with unprecedented interest and reported on it extensively. The case became known as the „case of the repainted cowshed"[58] or the „case of ungrateful Iraqi refugees."[59] It acquired these designations as a result of being reported by commercial TV Prima. On February 11, the foundation fund of Generation 21 drew attention to a dangerous story concerning the integration of Iraqi resettlers into Jihlava society. According to the foundation workers, it contained a manipulated conversation with one of the refugees. According to TV Prima's interpretation, the fugitive complained about the housing and literally called it a „repainted cowshed," according to the translation. He then added that he would go back to Iraq rather than live in a cowshed. According to the HateFree Project, the translation was manipulated and taken out of context to make it sound like a criticism.[60] Prima TV denies such a thing.

In early April, a group of twenty-five Iraqi refugees staying at the town of Jihlava took a chartered bus to Germany, where the local police detained them. On April 7, 2016, another group left the city of Brno for Iraq. These and similar events made Czech society feel that refugees were ungrateful and did not appreciate help enough. These events were also the reason that in April the government shut down the project, saying it had been unsuccessful. The claims made to the Czech media by the Interior Minister Milan Chovanec showed strongly anti-immigration rhetoric. By April 2017, the Czech Republic had taken in 12 refugees and, in the words of minister Chovanec, this is a ceiling. „We have currently taken in 12 people out of about 1,600 we should take in. As we gradually check out the rest, I don't think it's possible to take anyone else. Security clearance is complicated, and those people aren't willing to stay put."[61]

The Smilovice case became a sui generis chapter largely because it was made visible by citizens' protests at a mass convening of Smilovice municipal council. They learned from the

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57   Cf. accessed March 2, 2021: http://www.gen21.cz/

58   Accessed March 28, 2021: https://www.krajskelisty.cz/vysocina/okres-jihlava/12246-poplach-v-ji-hlavske-ulicce-v-premalovanem-kravine-zit-nebudu-kauza-nevdecneho-uprchlika-se-nabaluje-jak-sne-hova-koule-kde-je-pravda-a-kdo-vyresi-ztraceno-v-prekladu.htm

59   Accessed March 28, 2021: https://www.krajskelisty.cz/vysocina/okres-jihlava/12246-poplach-v-ji-hlavske-ulicce-v-premalovanem-kravine-zit-nebudu-kauza-nevdecneho-uprchlika-se-nabaluje-jak-sne-hova-koule-kde-je-pravda-a-kdo-vyresi-ztraceno-v-prekladu.htm

60   Accessed March 29, 2021: http://forum24.cz/hate-free-tv-prima-zmanipulovala-reportaz-o-irackych-up-rchlicich/

61   Accessed March 27, 2021: http://www.info.cz/cesko/stop-uprchlikum-v-cesku-vzali-jsme-jich-12-vic-nepri-jmeme-rika-ministr-vnitra-chovanec-7980.html.

media that about 14 refugees were due to arrive at the Smilovice Carmel centre for a temporary stay for six to eight weeks, to focus on studying the Czech language and learning about Czech culture. In the meantime, they were to be granted asylum in the Czech Republic and subsequently move into conventional apartments and continue the integration process. A few days later, a meeting of the municipal council took place where the citizens of Smilovice were to hear from Mayor Nogol. This meeting brought together an unprecedented number of people compared to previous meetings, also because a large number of those present came from the surrounding municipalities. A video recording was made of the meeting, which was published by several media outlets including iDNES.cz.[62] People in the video collectively chanted slogans such as: „We don't want them here, we don't want them here!" Several individuals gradually took to the microphone and camera to express their concerns about the refugees. The video ends with the words of Mayor Nogol who, with dialectical Moravian geniality, tried to calm the frightened crowd by saying: „...like ignore them, ignore them, they won't be walking around. So that's it." „Each of us has an opinion, it's good, it's good, but believe me, we don't have another way out, we just grit our teeth and show these people that in Smilovice you can hang on and believe me, I will, I will try, I will try too, so I don't have to extend their stay here."[63] An anti-refugee petition was also written in the community a few days before the meeting.[64] To this, Mayor Nogol commented in Třinec Magazine as follows: „Campaign advocates for Mr. Okamura who delivered leaflets around the houses, and if they met someone, a citizen, they like persuaded him to come to the council on Monday to fight."[65] To this, the political party SPD (Freedom and Direct Democracy), of which Tomio Okamura is the chairman, expressed itself February 23, 2016 as follows:

„The SPD strongly objects to the content of the press release of the Municipality of Smilovice dated February 19, 2016 regarding information on disturbance of the public proceedings of the Municipality of Smilovice on February 15, 2016 SPD party members. The participation of SPD members in this meeting was private, orderly and was solely at the request of the residents of Smilovice in the context of concerns for their safety. The SPD party sees the fundamental failure as a result of the lack of awareness among the residents of the municipality well in advance of the arrival of a group of Iraqi Christians in the Carmel centre from the side of the Smilovice municipal council. The requirement of people to express themselves and make decisions on these matters is logical, democratic and natural. State authorities, non-profit organisations and, in this case, the management of the municipality of Smilovicetreat their own citizens as serfs. The SPD party bureau considers the actions of SPD members as absolutely correct and the proposed wording of the petition calling for a referendum as a sign of democracy and respect for the opinion of the citizens. The lies of the media and the Deputy Mayor of the municipality are merely a pathetic attempt to discredit our movement."[66]

But when the refugees arrived in Smilovice, everything went smoothly. They were warmly welcomed by the locals at the joint mass. Generation 21 was releasing ongoing updates on current events regarding how refugees were doing here. The latest report informed that in both places where Iraqi Christians lived in the Czech Republic the last months of 2016 passed relatively

62 Accessed March 27, 2021: https://tv.idnes.cz/my-tady-migranty-nechceme-skandovali-lide-fge-/domaci. aspx?idvideo=V160215_210318_ostrava_jda

63 Accessed March 26, 2021: https://tv.idnes.cz/my-tady-migranty-nechceme-skandovali-lide-fge-/domaci. aspx?idvideo=V160215_210318_ostrava_jda

64 Accessed March 27, 2021: http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/regiony/1706629-ja-jsem-najat-ja-jsem-z-ira-ku-ve-smilovicich-se-uprchlici-uci-cesky

65 Accessed March 26, 2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6DeEoQ1bq8 6:39

66 Accessed March 29, 2021: http://ers.blog.cz/1602/politicke-usneseni-predsednictva-hnuti-svoboda-a-pri-ma-demokracie-tomio-okamura-k-aktualni-politicke-situaci

quietly. Some of the Iraqis found jobs - in a carpentery workshop, in an IT company, as a driver, in gastronomy, etc.[67] In 2018, their children went to school, spoke fluent Czech, and their parents had jobs. One of them worked in Prague as an IT specialist, another as a doctor in a hospital, two as carpenters, etc. The media treated their arrival as a bit like a reality show, because it was happening at a time when the issue of the refugee crisis was highly exposed in society. There was a theme, a story, and they covered it, as was their job. The vast majority of journalists who wrote about it were very positive. Many of them even did not maintain that professional objektivity; you could see they were trying to support the whole thing. They were emotionally involved themselves because they were following the stories of the individual refugees. It was what gave people an extremely one-sided positive image, and so when the problems came, nobody expected it. It might seem that when journalists are positively attuned and report on refugees in such a way as to paint them in a positive light, there are hardly elements of persecution stereotypes in their reporting.

The Most Watched Media and the Smilovice Case

The most important and relevant internet sites appeared to us to be iDNES.cz and blesk.cz. Among other internet sites that reported on the case belong, for example, ceskatelevize.cz, novinky.cz, tyden.cz, denik.cz, polar.cz, ostrava-online.cz, smilovice.cz, iHorizont.cz, cirkev.cz, forum24.cz, parlamentnilisty.cz, rcmonitor.cz and others.

Let's now take a percentage look at which topics were most featured in both news portals. The topics that resonated most clearly in the media were mainly those relating to studying the Czech language and the planned integration of refugees - 8T% in all. In the second place are the topics relating to traveling of refugees and their subsequent temporary residence - 79%. Themes of potential hazards, security clearances and health checks are included in a total of 74% of articles. ISIS and terrorism are represented in 58% and the Smilovice population's protests or opposition total 42%.

These data make it clear that refugees were very often reported in the context of something that is a danger, a threat, a problem, a threat of terrorism or war, etc. This may result in us associating refugees in turn with these themes, even in real life. They threaten to provoke fear in us and to create new anti-refugee stereotypes, because we will be prejudiced against strangers and automatically interpret their arrival as something that may have dire consequences for us or our society in general. The refugee may then most likely appear to be a destabilising element for society, someone who can subvert it even though it is neither in his power nor in his interest. We are not saying here that the media does this intentionally and knowingly. On the contrary, we want to show that even though journalists tried to portray the refugee in a positive light, but as a result, as a part of the position of the dialogue network, they portrayed him as someone for whom we have feelings of fear or threat.

The following may contributed to this. Neither medium in the case gave much thought to the real causes of the refugees' arrival, so their stories were in most cases taken out of the wider context. In the first place, the media focused on attractive, alarming, simple and clear information about refugees, which they presented in such a way that the reader would be tempted to read it after reading the headline of the articles. The media did not make room for discussion with any experts, people from the professional circles, they did not bother to make room for discussion of the options. The nature of all the contributions makes it seem as if their sole purpose is to attract as many undemanding readers as possible.

67 Accessed March 29, 2021: http://www.gen21.cz/aktualni-informace/

As far as constructing an image of the refugees themselves in a dialogue network of media messages, it is clear that the refugees' statements were emotional, describing very traumatic experiences and situations that are difficult for us to imagine. In the background of the dailies analysed, we can say that in both cases there was a dispute among the inhabitants of Smilovice as to whether the refugees were a threat or not. Neither journal put Smilovice residents and refugees in direct interaction. The two camps' side-by-side attitudes had a somewhat paradoxically illogical feeling. On one side there were refugees who had experienced real danger, the death of their loved ones and expulsion from their home on the basis of their faith as a result of the war situation, at the same time finding the strength to show gratitude for the reception with tears in their eyes.[68] On the other hand, there were residents of Smilovice who feared that among these refugees could be terrorists. Emotionally tinged above all were the accounts of those Smilovice residents who feared and distrusted the refugees. There was fear and aggression about them. In some statements, however, there was wilingness to help the refugees. The refugee testimonies gave the impression of being a brief recapitulation of the worst they had been through, something what Czech readers found hard to emphatize with. After reading such statements, the reader was probably especially alarmed, but did not recognize the context and circumstances of the conflict. The negative reactions of opposition to refugees seemed a little irrelevant. They were not based on direct experience with refugees.

Comparison of Two Types of Media

As we have mentioned, the choice of news sites we selected depended primarily on their ratings. Second, it depended on that subtle difference in the category of media types to which it belonged. Blesk.cz is a medium that has been publicly and long considered a typical example of tabloid discourse. It is not influenced by doctrines but by profit. iDNES.cz is not talked about in this way and its chief editor at the time, Petr Pravda, professes to strive for seriousness and define himself against the tabloid media. „We strive for as much readership as possible but we also want to be serious and we want to inform people about what is happening."[69] „We think of ourselves as a mass medium, but we are not a tabloid."[70]

We decided to compare these two media outlets and focus on where they differed in reporting on the case and where they coincided. We also wondered what their seriousness wasand what their tabloidness was.

We have found more common signs and it was very difficult to find differences. The two media published for the Smilovice case about the same number of articles. Both sought to make the headlines of these articles as attractive as possible and immediately intrigue the reader. Another common feature of both media was the emotional nature of the articles and the attempt to be as brief as possible. At the same time, it must be remembered that the importance of the news on the arrival of several dozen refugees is not so much important as interesting, as it resonated very strongly with society at the time of the case. The editors of the servers knew that the articles would evoke emotion and interest in people. The language of the articles was very simple and was directed at non-discerning readers because it did not encourage any deeper reflection. Their writing style required no specific education. One of the last common features was the replication of information, photos, and videos. The case subsequently looked larger than it actually was, as copying of information ensured a greater number of articles and the accentuation of communi-

cations. All the commonalities we have outlined are also typical features of the tabloid media. So in what is their seriousness? Karel Hvížďala mentions the idea of the German philosopher H. G. Gadamer: „Philosophically, one can say that the tabloid operates with hot news and tension, whereas standard media with information, analysis, and context, with hot news being the kind of message whose value declines with the time distance from the event it describes, whereas with information it does the opposite."[71] Even this definition of serious media does not correspond to how the servers behaved within the Smilovice case. Another sign of a serious medium is neutrality, moderation, even bluntness, a small effort to color makeup and referencing official sources.[72] As far as neutrality is concerned, we rate the activities of both servers as highly emotionally charged and alarming, so journalists were not neutral in that respect. Given that both media have done a lot of replicas and other types of information multiplying, there is no question of the terse nature of the news. In many cases, neither server referred to any resources.

If we focus on the differences in how these two servers reported on the cause, we are moving in really subtle nuances. After all, we would like to get back to the way the headlines sounded. Still, all the headlines were written in a way that caught the eye of the reader and made them attractive. However, we rate the headlines of the Blesk.cz site as more scandalous and often misleading. One headline, for example, reads: „ISIS killed their families, terrified them with sexual slavery. They're home in the Czech Republic now."[73] We rate this headline as highly explicit and alarming. He points to the violation of our society's greatest taboos, directly linking the situation to the killing by ISIS. It profiles refugees as someone who comes from the most pathological conditions we can possibly imagine. After this communication comes a sentence that may give the impression that the refugees who carry these horrors to the Czech Republic will now have something in common with us, even a home. Another misleading headline is the following: „Christian refugees from Iraq given a new chance in the Czech Republic. They're killing us because of America!"[74] Refugees have been given a new chance, according to this headline, which is a significant dramatization of reality, plus refugees are looked down on. As if, according to this headline, the Czech Republic was still giving them a chance which the refugees would either take responsibly or not. The second part of the headline is highly misleading, on the very edge of fake news. While Nael, a 54-year-old refugee, talked about how hatred against Christians began to escalate after the end of Saddam Hussein's rule, he said nothing about America being responsible. It was a heavily simplified and reduced form of headline guaranteed to be clicked on by readers, but it was highly tabloid-like and it distorted reality. The iDNES.cz site also generated striking headlines. However, it did not use such explicit terms with the sexual theme or the theme of terrorism and death. This difference could in some cases be traced in the content of the articles themselves, but certainly not in all of them.

Smilovice Case Through the Lens of the Scapegoat Mechanism

Foreigners are one of the groups suited to be a scapegoat. When a foreigner appears in a country, he is easily victimized because there is no large and strong enough group of people to stand up for him. The stranger is also the embodiment of the unknown, something that acts as a destabilizing element for a society that has little experience with outsiders. There is a fairly

68   Accessed March 30, 2021: https://ostrava.idnes.cz/do-smilovic-dorazilo-14-uprchliku-verici-je-vitali-f78-/ostrava-zpravy.aspx?c=A160222_2227432_ostrava-zpravy_woj

69   PRAVDA, Petr. (23. 3. 2016), in: PETRUŠKOVÁ, Veronika. *Rozpravy o dobrovolnictví*. (Brno: Masarykova univerzita v Brně 2016) 112.

70   PRAVDA, Petr. (23. 3. 2016), in: PETRUŠKOVÁ, Veronika. *Rozpravy* 111.

71   HVÍŽĎALA, Karel. Bulvár, to není nadávka, in *Euro* 43/2007, November 2, 2007.

72   Cf. ZEJDOVÁ, Zuzana. Noviny a jejich titulky. in Metodický portál vzdělávání, Accessed April 3, 2021: https://clanky.rvp.cz/clanek/o/z/1826/REC-NOVINOVYCH-TITULKU.html/

73   Accessed April 3, 2021: http://www.blesk.cz/clanek/zpravy-uprchlicka-krize/375200/isis-jim-zabijel-rodiny-desil-sexualnim-otroctvim-ted-jsou-doma-v-cesku.html

74   Accessed April 3, 2021: http://www.blesk.cz/clanek/zpravy-uprchlicka-krize/375330/krestanti-uprchlici-z-iraku-kteri-dostali-novou-sanci-v-cesku-vrazdi-nas-kvuli-america.html

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strong xenophobic mood in the Czech Republic, so one might expect that this is where foreigners can easily become such a victim. „Difference that exists outside the system is terrifying because it reveals the truth of the system, its relativity, its fragility, and its mortality".[75]

In the discourse on the refugee crisis in Europe, refugees become an easy scapegoat. They meet all the criteria for selecting a victim. They are a group on the fringes of society, they have different cultural backgrounds, they often have different religions, they are overwhelmingly different in appearance, their language is not understood by the vast majority of the people of Europe, and in all this they are being blamed for a crisis in which they are in fact innocent victims. Thereby, they also satisfy the conditions of the second stereotype, which talks about the mob's belief that a certain group of people or even just one person can do immense harm to an entire society despite actually being relatively weak.[76] Another criterion refugees meet is accusing them of breaking the strictest taboos, such as sex crimes. Especially at the height of media activity in the refugee crisis, refugees were very often accused of raping women. The refugee crisis has exacerbated xenophobic sentiment in the Czech Republic, and the Smilovice case was a living proof of this. Some merciless citizens, despite having no direct experience with refugees, could not get over the fact that 14 foreigners should stay with them in the Carmel centre for a transitional period. If we focus on the chanting Smilovice crowd, there was a great, disproportionate fear, scare, aggression, collectivity, panic and at the same time ignorance of the background of the refugee crisis. It is telling us that once a crowd is dominated by fear and ignorance, the scapegoat-finding mechanism automatically takes over. The crowd comes together, starts pointing fingers at those it sees as the cause of the crisis, and in the worst case, there will be violence. For the scapegoat selection and mechanism to work, people need to believe in his guilt and the process needs to be unconscious. The chanting people, refusing to accept refugees, at the village council fully believed that they were drawing attention to the real danger. When the refugees arrived in the village, the chanting crowd quieted down, having nothing to blame them for. The reality was obviously different from what they had imagined.

If we take seriously the challenges that come from the social teachings of the Church and apply them to the issue of the Smilovice refugee case, then we cannot overlook that it was the role of the media that played a key role in it. Previous analysis suggests that individual media contributed to the negative image of refugees, even when individual actors sought the contrary. So it means that we are facing a structural form of evil here. The social teaching of the Church encourages sustained, careful and consistent study to achieve the goal, which also means that we need to devote ourselves consistently and courageously to the study of construction, functioning and operation of media images and to find new ways to better reconcile them with the demands of human dignity, so that the resulting media images effectively avoid discrimination. The main goal to which the Church's social teaching tells us to go is not simply to change structures. That is what we are supposed to be striving for in order to bring about change in people's hearts.[77] This study also seeks to contribute to this.

Let us collectively demonstrate some of the specific situations of the case through the lens of the scapegoat mechanism as presented in the media. One of the first references to the Smilovice refugee case was a video of a meeting of the village council. iDNES.cz wrote that the most common complaints from Smilovice residents were: „again, it's about us without us. Let them take

them to Prague, you can't see into the heads of migrants, you don't know what they'll do."[78] Here we see a crisis where a chanting crowd, represented by a spontaneous rally of the people, was beginning to put pressure on weakened institutions, in this case the Mayor, the Silesian diaconian representative and others present. It was a situation where these people were not looking for the natural cause of the crisis, let alone looking for the fault in themselves. Instead, they pointed fingers all around them. They blamed both the Mayor and the refugees, pretty much anyone but themselves. However refugees were better suited to be scapegoats, which is why most of the complaints are aimed primarily at them. The ability to distinguish is fading: „you can't see into the heads of migrants."[79] A migrant becomes someone whose actions are unpredictable and a priori dangerous. He becomes someone who shows not the traits of humanity but rather the traits of an animal. The animal acts instinctively, we don't know what it is thinking because it does not speak and its behavior is unpredictable.

Referencing the Smilovice case has brought to the fore exactly the marks that reflect the most appropriate traits for choosing a victim. Let us recall that essentialy any otherness could bear such features that point to the fragility and relativity of the system. his includes mainly religious minorities and foreigners, but also the sick, the insane, people with visible congenital disorders, the disabeled by injury and physical ailments. The group of 153 refugees from Iraq is even a religious minority that is already being persecuted, thus becoming a scapegoat twice. Another feature reflected in one of the articles is the instability and fragility of the incoming group, which is described as follows: „There are a total of seven families with sixteen children and teenagers in the group, three single sisters in middle age - whose parents were murdered in their youth by Islamist terrorists, two elderly couples, one elderly woman whose husband was kidnapped by ISIS and to this day she does not know if he is alive, a widow with two older sons, one of whom is medically handicapped."[80] This group suffered severe losses in the family and is described as weak, while middle-aged men are killed or kidnapped, leaving elderly spouses, women and children. They even include someone with a medical disability, which is another characteristic of victim selection.

In the latest example we would like to demonstrate how refugees can be portrayed in the media as the ones to blame for the crisis. This is an article from iDNES.cz that put refugees in the position of someone who was responsible for making waste containers more expensive. The headline of the article read: „Refugee crisis makes NATO and Colours of Ostrava festivals more expensive. There are no containers."[81] The sub-headline of this article goes as follows: „Kilometers of fence, hundreds of residential containers and mobile toilets are needed every year by organizers… of major events. They're in trouble this year. Mobile equipment is disappearing and becoming more expensive. Especially because of refugees."[82] The organizers of the event are in fact having trouble finding residential containers, as is explained in the rest of the article, but

75 GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 21.
76 Cf. GIRARD, *The Scapegoat*. 15.
77 Cf. PAVEL VI. apoštolský list *Octogesima adveniens* 45.

78 Accessed March 13, 2021: https://ostrava.idnes.cz/smilovice-resili-prijezd-krestanskych-migrantu-fus-/os-trava-zpravy.aspx?c=A160215_203436_ostrava-zpravy_jog
79 Accessed March 13, 2021: https://ostrava.idnes.cz/smilovice-resili-prijezd-krestanskych-migrantu-fus-/os-trava-zpravy.aspx?c=A160215_203436_ostrava-zpravy_jog
80 Accessed March 13, 2021: http://www.blesk.cz/clanek/zpravy-uprchlicka-krize/375200/isis-jim-zabijel-rod-iny-desil-sexualnim-otroctvim-ted-jsou-doma-v-cesku.html
81 Accessed March 13, 2021: https://ostrava.idnes.cz/uprchlicka-krize-zvysuje-i-naklady-akci-dny-nato-a-col-ours-pn7-/ostrava-zpravy.aspx?c=A160418_2240143_ostrava-zpravy_jog
82 Accessed March 13, 2021: https://ostrava.idnes.cz/uprchlicka-krize-zvysuje-i-naklady-akci-dny-nato-a-col-ours-pn7-/ostrava-zpravy.aspx?c=A160418_2240143_ostrava-zpravy_jog

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even there, the author is still sticking to the idea that „refugees make the goods scarce."[83] Once again, it shows an inability to look for fault in ourselves, but in someone else who is actually weak. This article helps to make it look as if refugees are beginning to affect and strain the European economy.

Conclusion

The sites Blesk.cz and iDNES.cz dehumanized the image of refugees. It should be added that they did so indirectly, and perhaps unconsciously through the positioning of refugees and majorities in a way that reinforced the image of the refugee as someone suitable for the role of scapegoat and as someone with whom we have almost nothing in common. The *us vs. them* relationship was constantly bandied about in the media, distancing the refugees and the majority from each other. Both media gave too much leeway to the disagreeable reactions or outright reactions of society's opposition to refugees, which helped paint refugees as someone who was problematic. Furthermore, the image of refugees has been dehumanized by being all too often associated with topics such as ISIS, terrorism, threats, war, death, security screening, etc. This way of presenting the news may have led to the refugees being written into the subconscious of readers as someone who posed a threat and a risk, which could have led to very quick and easy stereotyping. This process was reinforced by dialogue network which guaranteed to deepen positions as their replicas were often multiplied, which accentuated, made the messages more visible and profiled as something important. The media also dehumanized the image of the refugee by not addressing certain topics at all. They paid attention to the personal stories of the refugees as well as the personal feelings of people who resented them, a typical strategy of the tabloid media. It did not address the situation in a broader context and did not include views from professional circles in the discussion. This leads us to conclude that the scapegoating mechanism may be partly triggered by the way in which some of the reports are presented by our chosen media. Refugees have very often been associated in articles with topics that can inspire fear in the reader. Furthermore, it is clear from the refugees' speeches that they are based on experiences that are both terrifying and impossible for us to put ourselves into their place, because they are too distant and tragic for us to comprehend. The media was more focused on these issues than on the real cause of their arrival and contextuality. Attractive media reports were often multiplied, exaggerated and made more visible. But the main problem is the way the media has positioned the fugitive and the majority. There were always words like „Christian refugees from Iraq" which have concealed more than it is immediately apparent. Journalists were aware that refugees were an unwelcome group of people and that waves of resentment or protest were being directed at them. This fact hung in the air and journalists did their best to at least emphasize that they were refugees of the Christian faith, which included the information that they were refugees, but at least not of the Muslim faith. We see a slight paradox in this, as the Czech Republic is often described as an atheist country. But the fact remains that Christianity is closer to us than Islam.

There have been repeated mass murders of scapegoats in human history. Whether witches, Jews or Roma, the principle was always the same. Even today, we face a great challenge. In front of the challenge of realising that refugees are people like us, that they experience the same emotions, that they are not to blame for the crisis. We are also faced with the challenge of uncovering the scapegoat mechanism that is present in the structures of constructing media representations and that influences and controls us to a large extent. If we do not uncover it in time, we may lose the ability to recognize man and fellow man in the other. Therein lies the prophetic role of

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83   Accessed March 13, 2021: https://ostrava.idnes.cz/uprchlicka-krize-zvysuje-i-naklady-akci-dny-nato-a-colours-pn7-/ostrava-zpravy.aspx?c=A160418_2240143_ostrava-zpravy_jog

Christians and Christian institutions, which, in accordance with the Gospel and social teaching of the Church arising out of evangelical personalistic norm, are not to side with the persecuting mob but, on the contrary, to stand by the scapegoats, to lend them a helping hand and to create for them an atmosphere of acceptance in which their otherness is not emphasized.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Expert articles

IMPACT OF A CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE RISK OF ALCOHOL ABUSE

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Lucia Ludvigh Cintulová [1] ✉, Zuzana Budayová [2], Jerzy Rottermund [1]

[1] St. Elisabeth University of Health and Social Sciences, Bratislava (SK)
[2] Catholic University in Ružomberok, Faculty of Theology, Theological Institute in Spišské Podhradie (SK)

Abstract

Background: Drinking alcohol is still a common and very popular activity among different age groups of the population, especially risky behavior occurs in young people under 30 years of age. The period of the pandemic contributed to the fact that alcohol consumption, especially during the first wave of coronavirus, increased in the domestic environment, where domestic violence arose to a greater extent also due to excessive drinking.

Methods: We used the quantitative research to collected data including the sample of 116 respondents involved in the treatment process due to alcoholism. We used a questionnaire that focused on the following dimensions: 1. Triggers of excessive alcohol consumption; 2. Life situation and its influence on the alcoholism; 3. The impact of a pandemic on alcoholism; 4. Emotions at the treatment in the pandemic period.

Discussion: The pandemic and social isolation not only increased alcohol consumption in those groups that were at risk, but also contributed to increasing tolerance of alcohol consumption in the majority population, even within home offices. Alcohol consumption has increased at a time when people are experiencing greater mental and physical stress, which increases the risk of interdependence.

Conclusion: Our findings highlight the need for individuals and stakeholders to make measures to change thinking about drinking alcohol and make them more informed to mitigate the impact of high-risk alcohol drinking during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed the higher increased of drinking alcohol by young people up to 30 and older people over 50 during last two years as the pandemic started.

Keywords: Pandemic – COVID-19 – Alcoholism – Binge drinking.

Introduction

Alcohol addiction is a disease that has its stages, diagnostic, healing and therapeutic process. The causes of alcohol abuse many and always depends on the psychological predisposition of man which alcohol dependence succumb to or not.

Pandemic coronavirus struck human psyche and its survival, brought more stressors to people who have been completely unknown and incomprehensible. So far, the unrecognized stressors began to appear, such as fear, cornering of the negative media information, a lack of personal contact with friends and relatives, lack of privacy and restriction of personal space in domestic environment, financial problems and many other. We didn't experience any restrictions before,

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✉ **Contact on all authors/Correspondence author:**
Doc. Mgr. Lucia Ludvigh Cintulová, PhD. – e-mail: luciacin83@gmail.com
PhDr. Mgr. Zuzana Budayová, PhD. ; Jerzy Rottermund, MD, PhD.

everything was free. Thus, pandemic measures have changed not only the forms of developed alcoholism, but they changed and hit people who have been more prone to alcohol on the basis of the company. In contribution, we point to circumstances affecting the development and course of alcohol dependence in a pandemic situation that deteriorates.

Alcohol addiction

Social complications of alcoholism are mainly involved with an alcoholic life when it is no longer able to go to employment in sober condition or stop sipping over working hours. It is very likely that it gets utterance at work and the economic situation in the family worsen significantly. The family cannot rely on such a man and the loss of ethical and valued criteria that had had a loss of ethical and value criteria, and according to which he behaved. Such a situation largely hits family life, alcoholic can begin to behave aggressively and apologize to their behavior and alcohol use. He probably doesn't even like that is a mistake in it, but often the mistake is looking for others. If alcoholic has some money, mine them on alcohol or nonsensical things. It doesn't matter what the family will eat or for what will be dressed or paying bills, loans. There are mainly children who are ashamed of such a parent of shame, do not consult the resulting situation and often becomes themselves they will begin to do things that they never do and for which they can't do, such as. Trounce, worsen the benefit in school and the like. It suffers not only a child but also the second parent who is pulling alone and does not have a support that is very important (Benkovič, 2017[2], Simanov et al., 2000[3], Rojková, 2010[4], Tarter, 2006,[5]Wu et al.,2004[6]).

Alcohol addiction is characterized by the MKCH-10 at least three symptoms from six. These are at least one month or repeatedly for one year (Grohol, 2013). Warning symptoms: irresistible desire to take alcohol. Helplessness to control the use of a substance in terms of the end of the drinking or a quantity of drinking alcohol. Higher Tolerance Organism on Alcohol. One will give up their hobbies and leisure activities to be able to consume alcohol at that time. Alcohol consumption even if he knows well about alcohol risks. (Grohol, 2013, Rassool, 2018, [7] Nešpor, 2018[8]).

Chronic alcoholism has a very slow course and therefore no one will notice that there is a problem with alcohol, it is not realizing it or consumer itself, but not worth even a family nor his known and buddies. Therefore, treatment is therefore delayed and mostly when the consumer has mental and physical problems. The consumer consumes alcohol only on family celebrations, but alcohol takes themselves as a medicine that will help him with disease eg: tooth, stomach, throat pain, insomnia. Very often it happens that the consumer drinks alcohol secretly so that no

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one can see him and therefore is a very small chance to get it someone noticing me a problem with the use of alcohol. She drinks when she feels the need. The family does not have a chance to note because the body is already used to alcohol and the bootless of the drunk will always arrive at a larger and larger amount of use of alcohol. Especially in the morning after waking up when the Alcohol Consumer is missing and occur symptoms such as the hands of the hands and the urge for each cost to drink. There's a chance to return from the so-called. If the consumer realizes himself and wants to change himself. Sometimes it is better to ask for help (Benkovic 2018[9]; Kerr, Stockwell, 2012, Hupková, 2017[10]; Conrad P., Barker K. K., 2010[11]).

The consumer knows very well justify drinking. It is especially the swallowed problems for which the alcoholic is hiding and these are bad family relationships, utterance at work, troubled children, inability to find employment. One of the warning symptoms is also a transition from beer or wine to hard alcohol, or a combination of both. This is a signal that already had a family and friends browse as it has only consumed only one favourite alcohol brand. A frequent manifestation in alcoholics is also carrying small bottle of alcohol in the pocket if they accidentally came up withdrawal symptoms. (Rehm et al., 2011[12]).

Very dangerous is also combining medicines and alcohol there is an withdrawal syndrome twice. These are medicinal products for the natal prescription and to assist in the treatment of dependence (Rehm et al., 2011[13]).

For the disorder of psychic and behavior caused by use of alcohol (diagnosis group F10.0 - F10.9) was in the psychiatric ambulances of 30 203 persons (23 115 men and 7 088 women), with up to 75.7% of them diagnosed alcohol addiction syndrome.

Total number of people with psychic and behavioral disorder caused by alcoholism in period 2011-2019
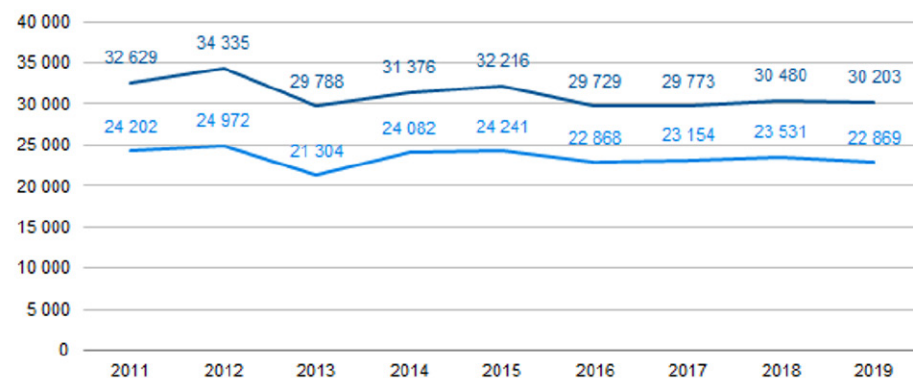
First line (dark blue): F10.0-F10.9 Psychic and behavioral disorders caused by alcoholism
Second line (skyblue): there of F102 – addition syndrome

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9   Benkovič, J. Treatment of addictions, In: Paľa, G., Čusová, A. et al. Alcohol, drugs, addiction - what about them? Professional seminar on the occasion of the Healthy Life Abstinence Day celebrations in Prešov. Prešov 2008: PU in Prešov, pp. 42-52
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Source: https://www.nczisk.sk
For the first time in life, psychic and behavioral disorders were caused by the use of alcohol detected in 7,239 persons, of which in more than half (58.7%) was a dependency syndrome. Among the newly diagnosed were the most represented age groups 45 - 54-year-old (234.5 per 100,000 inhabitants of the age) and 55-64-year-old (200.7 per 100,000 inhabitants).

Health Damage Alcohol consumption in the Slovak Republic 2019 (NCZISK.sk)

For diagnosis of alcohol cirrhosis of liver, 2 401 people were treated and 331 patients were hospitalized to the toxic effect of ethanol.

Figure 2. Completed hospitalization in diseases whose causation was the alcohol in 2019

Source: https://www.nczisk.sk
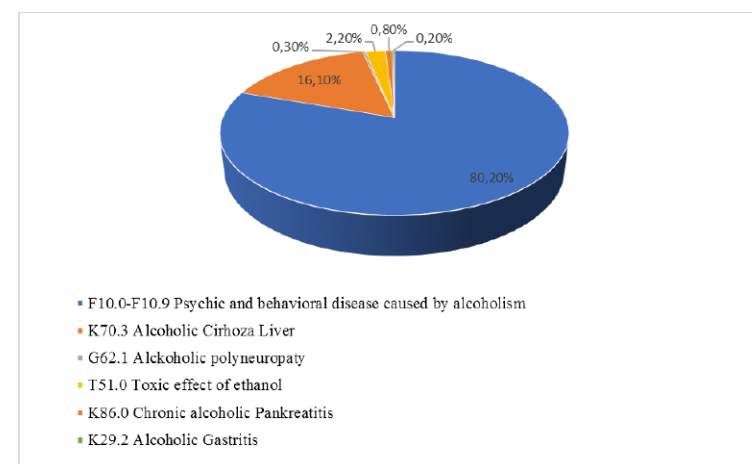
In the disorders of psyche and behavior caused by the use of alcohol, men (74.7%) dominated over women's hospitalization (25.3%). The most concerned persons aged 45-54 (418.6 per 100,000 inhabitants of the age group), 35-44 years (346.6 per 100,000 inhabitants) and 55-64 years (332.3 per 100,000 inhabitants). Hospitalized 55-64-year patients (136.9 per 100,000 inhabitants) were most often hospitalized with alcohol cirrhosis.

Total number of experienced persons with Diagnosis F10.0 - F10.9 Psyche and behavioral disorders caused by alcohol in 2017 compared to 2016 (from 29 729 V r. 2016 at 29 773 V r. 2017). Over the course of 2011 and 2017, the highest number investigated in 2012. As regards age groups and the highest number of examined occurred for a long-term in the age group 50-54 years However, in addition to 2013, when the highest number investigated in the 45-49 age group was years old. (Ochaba at al., 2019, National centrum of health information)[14]

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IMPACT OF A CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE RISK OF ALCOHOL ABUSE | Lucia Ludvigh Cintulová, Zuzana Budayová, Jerzy Rottermund

Alcohol increases the risk of suicidal proceedings. Last year, in Slovakia committed suicide 498 persons, of which almost 40% suicides were carried out in the presence of alcohol or addictive (psychotropic) substance. Men suicide (39.7%) in the presence of alcohol were slightly more often than women (31.7%).

From 743 suicidal attempts were up to 44.3% carried out in the presence of alcohol or addictive substance. In the case of men, more than half (51.3%) of suicide attempts were carried out in the presence of alcohol, for women it was in 37.1% of cases.[15] (National action plan for alcohol problems [16]2013-2020)

Figure: Summary of suicides under the influence of the alcohol or another Psychotropic substances in 2011-2019
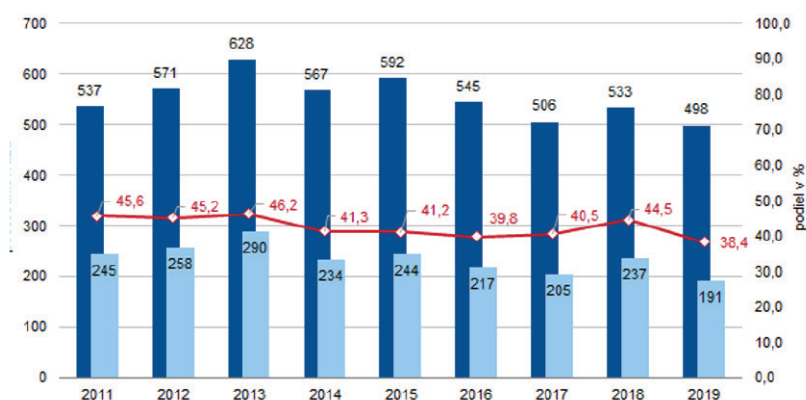
Notes: dark blue: total number of suicides
Sky blue: there of N of suicides under the alcohol
Red: there of 0 of suicides under the alcohol
Source: NCZI.sk

Alcohol consumption are not even pregnant women. From the total number of births, 57 059 in 2018 was 200 cases of families that used alcohol during pregnancy. The most such births were 15-17 years old in younger age groups and 20-24 years.

The negative effects of alcohol in pregnancy for fetal development is well known, cases of drinks are situated in older multi-sales, free, or divorced women. It is a highly likely expectation of complications of damage to organs for long-term consumption of alcohol (Binder, 2020). [17]

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15   ÚVZ SR: Update of the National Action Plan for Alcohol Problems for the years 2013 - 2020. Available at: https://www.nczisk.sk/Aktuality/Pages/Poskodenie-zdravia-konzacamiou-alkoholu-v-Slovenskej-republike-2019.aspx

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Aim and objectives

The research problem is alcohol abuse and its effects on human life. We have identified several domains that we will observe: the reason of alcohol abuse, triggers and life situation, emotional dimension and treatment process.

Methods

The research took place in May 2021 in the Hronovce Psychiatric Hospital - Addiction Department, in the form of a questionnaire by respondents in the process of the treatment due to alcohol addiction. The total sample consisted of 116 respondents involved in the treatment process due to alcoholism. We used a questionnaire that focused on the following dimensions:

1. Triggers of excessive alcohol consumption
2. Life situation and its influence on the alcoholism
3. The impact of a pandemic on alcoholism
4. Emotions at the treatment in the pandemic period

The sample

Demographic	Factor	%
Gender	Male	48,5
	Female	51,5
Age	25-35	12,4
	35-45	36,8
	45 and more	50,8
Alcohol consumption	1-2 years	11,8
	2-4 years	49,6
	4 and more	38,6
Education	High school	38,4
	Bc. Degree	32,4
	Master degree	29,2
Total	Sample	116 / 100%

Source: own research

Results

The sample was consisted of 116 respondents passing the treatment process due the alcoholism, including 48,5% women and 51,5% men.

The research results identified 6 main categories expressing the reasons of alcohol consumption and binge drinking at respondents:

1. Individual reasons, including boredom, searching for yourself, too much free time, feelings of solitude, searching something else, new, effort to fit in the social environment, collective, low coping strategies and resistance to stress.
2. Family reasons, acceptation, misunderstanding, problems in the family and between family members, quarrels, domestic violence, abuse and neglect.
3. Social reasons, including unemployment, economic crisis, total voltage in society, salary reduction and loss of position,
4. Economic reasons, including economic problems, debts, unsatisfactory of economic needs.
5. Psychical problems, including psychic disorders, insomnia, personality disorders, thinking and lifestyle change.

6. Relationship problems, including problems in the family, in marriage, stress at work, missing authorities, conflict nature.

Dimension: Causes of excessive alcohol consumption

The most of the respondents in the treatment process due to alcoholism expressed that the reason why they start to drink is the combination of different factors, but most of them identified the most likely reason. There are significant differences between reason of drinking and gender. The individual reasons are more often at men than at women (p=0,034), economic problems are more typical for the women as the reason of drinking alcohol (p=.0046). Social reasons are more often indicated by men compared to women (p=0.025) (see table1).

Table 1. Reasons of alcoholism

Reasons of excessive alcohol consumption	Men	Women	p
Individual reasons	53,49%	46,41%	.034
Family problems	44,25%	55,75%	.124
Economic problems	41,35%	58,65%	.046
Psychical problems	50,20%	49,80%	.138
Relationship problems	46,58	53,42%	.163
Social reasons	62,84	37,16%	.025

Source: own research

Table 2 represents preferred type of alcohol by gender. Beer is more preferred by men and women are likely to drink wine. There no differences in drinking hard distillates between men and women.

There are significant differences between men and women in places where they use to drink alcohol (p=0.001). 61,7% drink alcohol at home compared to 58,4%men who drink alcohol at public bar/places (p=0,014.). Women and men confirmed that they used to drink at job during the coffee break or in hidden places. The most of them confirmed that job placement has a negative impact on the decision to consume alcohol and binge drinking.

The results have shown women drink alcohol at public places that are less visible (55,8%) and 57,1% men used to drink at public places e.g. stations, streets, bus stops.

Table 2. Preferred type of alcohol and drinking place

Alcohol spirits	Men	Women	Total
Beer	72,2%	12,8%	43,2%
Vine	35,7%	59,3%	31,2%
Hard distillates, alcohol	51,4%	48,3%	46,8%
Mixed drinks	2,1%	6,7%	5,7%
Cheap alcohol in plastic bottles	2,5%	3,6%	2,2%
Delivered mix drinks	3,0%	5,3%	3,1%

Drinking place	Men	Women	P
Home	38,3%	61,7%	,002
Public bar	58,4%	41,6%	,014
Job placement	43,3%	46,7%	,093

Public places – visible e.g. Stations	57,1%	42,9%	,021
Public places less visible: street, parks	44,2%	55,8%	,025
Accommodation facility	67,6%	32,4%	,009

Source: own research

Dimension: Life situation and its influence on alcoholism

The results of the research have shown that all alcohol-dependent patients in the treatment process had the same symptoms: an irresistible desire to drink and drink more and more (p=0.005), drinking in the early morning, often before starting work, a higher tendency in women (p = 0.011). Men declared drinking shortly after working hours or during the lunch break (p = 0.018). With the increasing need to drink alcohol in larger quantities, apathy and loss of interest in things around him also increased (p = 0.006). As apathy increased, so did the need for drinking, regardless of health damage, human failure, and loss of social benefits (p = 0.014). Personal failures, job loss, and the threat of economic debt or divorce were not reasons for which patients could be treated. Both men and women confirmed personal beliefs and personal awareness of their mistakes as the main motivators for agreeing to alcohol treatment (p = 0.030).

Table 3. Effect of life situation on the alcoholism

Factors	Men	Women	P
Need to drink more often and more amount of alcohol	58,7%	41,3%	,005
Need to drink early morning	38,8%	61,2%	,011
Need to drink at working time	62,3%	37,7%	,018
Increasing apathy and loss of interest	52,4%	47,6%	,006
Drinking without logical reason	42,1%	57,9%	,014
Consequences of drinking alcohol	40,4%	59,6%	,030

Source: own research

Dimension: Effect of the pandemic on the risk of excessive alcohol consumption

Compared to the beginning of the pandemic and the 9 months later, respondents reported consuming more drinks per day in the second period of the pandemic (+32%, $P<0.001$), and a greater proportion reported exceeding recommended drinking limits (+27%, $P<0.001$) and binge drinking (+38%, $P=0.004$) as the type of lifestyle. These differences were found compared both genders, but more often preferred by men. Differences in the proportion exceeding drinking limits were larger for women than men ($P=0.022$). Public health monitoring of alcohol consumption during the pandemic was not under the control. The most of the abused people do not look for the health care.

Large-scale efforts began in March 2020 to reduce the burden of COVID-19, there were pandemic measures including closed restaurants and liquor stores, it changed the behaviour of alcohol consumption during the pandemic moved to the home environment and open possibilities for the essential businesses and authorized off-premise alcohol deliveries, alcohol drinks to go, and pickup stages in front of the pubs.

Physical distancing measures increased alcohol consumption at home, that was confirmed more by men compared to women (p=0,013).

24,1% men agreed with the statement *Alcohol helped me to stop thinking about life problems* compared to 29,2% of women.

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There is significant relation between binge drinking and pandemic (p=0,002). The respondents are more likely to drink more often and more alcoholic drinks.

47,8% women confirmed the pandemic did not stop them to drink alcohol compared to 40,3% men, the women started to drink more compared to the situation before the pandemic in 2019 (p=0,006).

Drinking alcohol made me more relaxed, comfortable and happy, this statement was agreed by 38,2% men and 40,7% woman, in the general drinking alcohol makes them more relaxed and they look for the positive feeling during the pandemic as well (p=0,018).

There is relation between the access to the alcohol and the pandemic measures (p=0,005) that not make negative impact on the access to the alcohol, on the other hand the pandemic help to hidden drinking and move it to the home and „safe" environment where it is not visible as on the public places (p=0,013).

Covid-19 and the pandemic	Agree Men	Agree Women	Disagree men	Disagree woman	P
Alcohol helped me to stop thinking about life problems.	24,1%	29,2%	28,1%	18,6	,032
Due Covid-19 I started to drink more as usually	35,7%	38,8%	15,6%	10,1%	,002
Covid-19 and health problems did not stop me to drink alcohol	36,6%	39,3%	10,9%	13,2%	,006
Drinking alcohol made me more relaxed, comfortable and happy.	38,2%	40,7%	11,1%	10,0%	,018
Pandemic measures did not stop access to the alcohol deliveries	40,3%	47,8%	5,4%	6,5%	,005
Physical distancing measures. Increased alcohol consumption at home	43,1%	39,4%	10,2%	7,3%	,013

Source: own research

Dimension: Impact of emotion on the treatment during a pandemic

In the last 2 decades, alcohol consumption and alcohol-related emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths have increased markedly among women.[18] Our research has shown the increased emotion and irrational behaviour mostly at women, who are no able to find coping strategies to face the stress and fear against coronavirus. There is relation between the pandemic and the need to repeat treatment process to avoid consequences of alcohol consumption (p=0,003).

The pandemic had have irrational impact of the critical thinking and irrational decision, especially at 61,8% women (p=0,002). The women are more at risk of the stress linked with the pandemic situation and they are less able to use effective coping strategies to avoid stress and frustration as the pandemic took a long time (p=0,008). Those people who are more effected by the economic and social consequences of the pandemic, they are at risk of alcohol-related problems more compared to the other social groups. (see also Kucekova, 2009, Muszka, 2016)[19]

18   White AM, Castle IP, Hingson RW, *Using death certificates to explore changes in alcohol-related mortality in the United States, 1999 to 2017, Alcohol Clin Exp Res* 2020; 44 (1), p. 178–187.

19   Kucekova, I. Until the White Morning. Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2009. 203 p.
      Muszka, T. Alcoholism, Unemployment and Suicide. In New Social Human Education V International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference, Prešov, November 7, 2016

Psychiatric ambulances have not seen an increase in the number of addicts, but this figure is not authoritative, as alcohol addicts have been shown to seek help less often, as family co-dependence has increased, and families have formed in times of social isolation and pandemic measures better safe environment for the hidden drinking (p=0,14) and binge drinking also during the home office. There is significant relation between the pandemic and motivation to pass the treatment (p=0,017) and access to the treatment (p=0,031). The most of the respondents are less likely to visit psychiatric help and to pass the treatment due pandemic that makes them thinking negatively.

Factors	Men	Women	P
Increased emotions	38,3%	61,7%	,011
Irrational behaviour	41,5%	58,5%	,020
Re-treatment	53,6%	46,4%	,003
No critical thinking	38,2%	61,8%	,002
Worse consequences for longer time to pass treatment due pandemic measures	59,3%	40,7%	,008
More hidden drinking	39,6%	60,4%	,014
Strong feeling nobody care about the abused people	51,6%	48,4%	,021
Less motivation to pass treatment	44,5%	56,5%	,017
Worse access to the treatment	52,7%	47,3%	,031

Source: own research

The pandemic measures made a great negative impact on the consequences of the alcohol consumption as usual due to long time of the stress, frustration and depression affected by coronavirus (p=0,008).

Discussion

In the complex treatment of alcohol dependence, resocialization is justified. Through group meetings, it helps clients get out of the vicious circle and find their way to each other, to find their way to the family. Clients integrate into working life through resocialization, in some cases they finish their education. In order to induce changes in the way of life, they try to become independent and take responsibility for themselves.

The research showed that almost 90% of patients who underwent the detoxification treatment process must repeatedly undergo treatment for alcohol dependence within 2-3 years, otherwise the treatment is more than 70% unsuccessful. It turned out that resocialization must be performed in alcohol addicts repeatedly at least twice in two years, provided that the family also cooperates in supportive treatment. It turned out that if there are no good family relationships and support for other family members in the process of treatment and resocialization, the patient alone does not cope and fail, 55% have alcohol as a reason for divorce and these patients have less chance of recovery, their motivation is not the family, but they have to get to the very bottom to be willing to complete the treatment, so alcohol has to hit their lives, the effects of alcoholism have to hit themselves - life-threatening.

In the process of resocialization. Patients undergo individual phases in aftercare, their view of resocialization changes, the first group goes through a phase of self-knowledge, in which they begin to find a positive value of themselves (31.2%). In the second group, the awareness of one's own mistakes and the effort for change prevail (30.4%), in the third group the hope for

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a new lifestyle without alcohol resonates (21.6%). Clients after resocialization, who are in the fourth group, perceive resocialization as a means to achieve a normal life (16.8%).

The results of the research confirmed the differences in preference of the reason why men and women started drinking excessively. It has been confirmed that men drink more hard alcohol in larger quantities, while women start in smaller amounts earlier (p = 0.008). The risk environment is the work and social environment in which drinking alcohol is highly tolerated or supported by colleagues (p = 0.021).

It turned out that the pandemic had a negative impact on the development of alcoholism, which increased slightly compared to 2019 before the pandemic. The link between a pandemic and excessive alcohol consumption caused by stress, financial problems, relationship disagreements and job loss has been confirmed. Year-on-year, the number of people addicted to alcohol increases by an average of 100,000 patients per year; Almost a third of respondents admitted that during home office they drank alcohol (36.8%), shared photos of alcoholic beverages on social networks (48.7%) and adopted alcohol without giving an opportunity (27.5%), they drank alcohol just like that. because I can, no one sees me (31.4%). I need to relax from the stress of home office and alcohol is the tool, said 17.3% of respondents.

Another study confirmed relation between alcohol consumption and negative society situation and crises. There were sustained increases in alcohol consumption, prevalence of alcohol use disorders, binge drinking (defined throughout the study as consuming 5 or more drinks in a 2-hour period and 4 or more drinks in a 2-hour period, respectively, for men and women younger than age 65)[20]

Respondents reported statistically significant increases in alcohol consumption after the enactment of stay-at-home orders and the relaxation of alcohol regulations in many regions. The differences in consumption were consistent across demographic subgroups assessed, with statistically significantly larger differences in the proportion exceeding drinking limits for women compared with men [21]

Excessive alcohol consumption may weaken the immune system, large increases in consumption may worsen the health of people with COVID-19.[22]
People with alcohol use disorders may be particularly vulnerable because their support systems are limited by physical distancing measures. Increased alcohol consumption in the home, combined with the stress of confinement with others and economic instability, may lead to an increase in domestic violence.[23]

Multivariable logistic and multinomial regression models were used to assess associations between COVID-19-related stressors and binge drinking and changes in alcohol consumption. Among 1,982 participants, 69% were female and 31% male. Thirty-four percent of the sample reported binge drinking during the COVID-19 pandemic. More binge drinkers increased alcohol consumption during the pandemic (60%) than non-binge drinkers (28%). After adjusting for sociodemographics, for every 1-week increase in time spent at home during the pandemic, there was 1.19 (95% CI: 1.06-1.34) greater odds of binge drinking. [24]

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20   National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). Rethinking drinking: alcohol & your health. [Web page]. Published n.d. Available at: https://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/. Accessed May 29, 2020.

21   Barbosa C, Cowell AJ, Dowd WN. Alcohol Consumption in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States. *J Addict Med*. 2021;15(4):341-344. doi:10.1097/ADM.0000000000000767

22   Sarkar D, Jung MK, Wang HJ., *Alcohol and the immune system, Alcohol Res Curr Rev* 2015; 37 (2), p. 153–155.

23   Hameed MA., *The tripartite tragedy: alcohol and other drugs, intimate partner violence and child abuse, Child Aust* 2019; 44 (01), p. 32–41.

24   Weerakoon SM, Jetelina KK, Knell G. Longer time spent at home during COVID-19 pandemic is associated with binge drinking among US adults. Am J Drug Alcohol Abuse. 2021 Jan 2;47(1):98-106.

Self-reported heavy episodic drinkers confirmed increase of the generalized anxiety disorder and an increase in frequency during the pandemic and less critical thinking about the health problems associated with the covid-19 disease.[25]

Conclusion

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the people were put in the difficult situation has based on restrictions in relations, in meetings with close and relatives, emerging tensions between people, uncertainties and fear of employment, but also from the disease and loss of their loved ones. Alcohol appeared as a possible escape solution from many pitfalls that the pandemic situation brought. Many modifications and changes in the behavior of people with alcohol dependence arises. The alcohol addiction is further moving to the family environment, as the implementation of the drink was not possible in the wider social environment.

The extension of forced domestic isolation along with serious economic and financial impacts, unhealthy family and relationship atmosphere have a serious impact on mental health and survival of man. Alcohol as a replacement solution - Hybris - thus takes a leading place at a parse, individual solution to many problems resulting from social situation.

Based on our findings, we can say that in the pandemic situation, based on relationship problems, the attestation in the domestic environment and the global situation significantly deteriorates alcoholic mental dependence, alcohol is more moved from a wider social environment into domestic (and hidden) drinking, it is also changing Consuming alcohol based on sex, changing possible causes and consequences of alcoholism.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Expert articles

THE SATURATION OF SPIRITUAL NEEDS IN MARGINALISED ROMA COMMUNITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Peter Vansač ✉, Tomáš Sivák

Institute of bl. M. D. Trčku, Michalovce;
St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Sciences Bratislava (SK)

Abstract

Introduction: COVID-19, a global challenge facing the worldwide healthcare system, is a societal issue concerning both professionals and the general public of our country. Our research focuses on the marginalised Roma communities (MRC) as they experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting quarantine of the entire community in correlation with the saturation of spiritual needs. The MRC present in individual regions of Slovakia represent a population that is impoverished, ostracised from participation in social events, with restricted access to the labour market, healthcare, education, and other integration phenomena. COVID-19 is a danger to the entire population bar none, but people with chronic diseases, poor hygiene, limited access to healthcare services and living in high population densities are at particular risk of a serious illness. The aforementioned conditions are evident within MRC.

The objective of our research was to learn how respondents living in isolation (quarantine) fulfilled their spiritual needs during the pandemic.

Methods: For the purpose of our research, we used descriptive statistics and the non-parametric Spearman correlation coefficient in order to answer postulated research questions.

Results: The results of our research show that out of 316 respondents, 112 men and 148 women were COVID-19 positive, amounting to a total of 82.3%, while 98.1% of all respondents were baptised. All of our respondents were isolated within their home locality (settlement).

Discussion: As part of our research, we examined how our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs during quarantine, and how they perceived the spiritual and social aid from relief workers given their gender, age and family status. Our research shows that the younger the age, the less our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs. Family status very clearly influences one's relationship to spirituality - with widowers/widows evincing the most positive relationship, and singles the least. Differences in perceptions of spiritual and social aid have been observed between men and women. Women showed a far broader awareness of the aid given by relief workers than their male counterparts. Age proved to be a factor in like manner: the higher the age, the more profound the perception of aid. In the context of correlation between family status and the perception of aid, widows and widowers perceived and showed appreciation for the relief workers' help the most.

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✉   **Contact on author/Correspondence author: Prof. ThDr. Peter Vansač, PhD.**
    email: vansac.p@gmail.com
✉   **Contact on author: Mgr. Tomáš Sivák – PhD. Student – St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Sciences Bratislava (SK) – email: sivak.vssvalzbety@gmail.com**

Conclusion: Our research has brought us results that support the spiritual paradigm of showing a client the proper way to live their life in any frame of mind, status or environment.
Keywords: Spiritual needs - COVID-19 - The Pandemic - The Roma community.

Introduction

SARS CoV 2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2) which causes COVID-19 was first identified in the Chinese city of Wuhan in the months of November and December 2019. The pandemic spread throughout the entire world soon after. It is indisputable that this pandemic has impacted Slovakia, and above all the marginalised Roma communities (MRC). The Public Health Office has identified the factors that threatened and continue to threaten the MRC. These factors include, but are not limited to, high population densities. The objective of our research is to find out how respondents belonging to MRC fulfilled their spiritual needs and how they perceived the social and especially spiritual support from relief workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marginalised Roma communities in Slovakia

Social exclusion is generally understood as a systemic process of marginalisation, isolation and weakening of social ties, evident at the level of the individual as well as at the level of social groups. Exclusion means being ostracised from participation in the common forms of social life. The most endangered are individuals or groups with weakened ties to at least one of the four levels of integration through which they are integrated into society:
1. To democracy and law (supporting civic integration)
2. To the labour market (supporting economic integration)
3. To the welfare state (supporting social integration)
4. To family and the community (supporting interpersonal integration).[2]

The Roma people living in individual regions of Slovakia with marginalised communities represent a population that is impoverished. However, this poverty takes on extreme forms, the likes of which are not found in the majority of the population within marginalised territories.[3] Such groups include Roma urban ghettos along with ghettos of homeless people, as well as marginalised Roma communities, i.e. all settlements listed in the Atlas Of Roma Communities (2004).[4]

The first Atlas of Roma Communities was presented to the public in 2004, created by a team led by Iveta Radičová, the then-Executive Director of the S.P.A.C.E. Foundation - The Centre for Social Policy Analysis in Bratislava (hereinafter referred to as Atlas 2004).

An updated version of Atlas 2004 was introduced in 2014. It was the Atlas of Roma Communities in Slovakia 2013, created by a team from the University of Prešov in Prešov, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Charles University in Prague, comprised of Daniel Škobla, Jaroslav Kling on behalf of the UNDP, and Kvetoslava Matlovičová.

The latest results of the mapping update were introduced in 2019 - The Atlas of Roma Communities 2019 (hereinafter referred to as Atlas 2019), the authorship of which can be attributed to a group of experts from the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma

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2   *Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020.* p. 6. accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.minv.sk/?strategia-pre-integraciu-romov-do-roku-2020

3   *Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020.* p. 6. accessed January 14, 2022

4   accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.employment.gov.sk

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Communities, represented by Abel Ravasz, in cooperation with the Institute for Labour and Family Research, represented by Daniel Škobla.[5]

Common forms of social exclusion experienced by Roma people include:

Economic exclusion - in essence being barred from the living standards and life opportunities enjoyed by the rest of society. That comes down to, for instance, the standing of individuals on the labour market, the level of consumption and the amount of income, assets, housing standards, etc.

Cultural exclusion - is the denial of the rights of an individual or a group to participate in society's culture and to share its cultural capital, education, and culture.

Symbolic exclusion - occurs under the condition that social and cultural identities are, to a considerable extent, also symbolic identities. A group is constructed symbolically and validated by symbols, just as membership therein is symbolically validated or rejected. Symbolic exclusion is associated with the stigmatisation of individuals and groups perceived as different, deviant, and/or foreign. It can be identified, for example, based on the degree of social distance, the existence of prejudice and stereotypes.

Spatial exclusion - is the concentration of excluded individuals and social groups into certain geographical locales. In the case of Roma communities, so-called segregated Roma habitations (settlements, urban ghettos) may be identified, as well as the phenomenon of double marginalisation.[6]

There are also psychological forms of social exclusion, related to a lack of emotional resources. Their accompanying phenomena are the feelings of shame, timidity and individual failure, as well as general insecurity and vulnerability.[7]

The causes of social exclusion are unemployment, poverty, low levels of education and qualification, all the while these factors work interdependently in their impact on social exclusion. In the case of social exclusion of the Roma population, ethnicity can play a part as well. However, social exclusion is not only a consequence but also the cause of low levels of education and qualification, unemployment, and multidimensional poverty.[8]

COVID-19

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a virus that results in severe acute respiratory syndrome and is dubbed coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2). SARS-CoV-2 is a new strain of coronavirus. It was not identified in humans prior to December 2019. The spread of COVID-19 began in late 2019 and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on March 11, 2020.[9] It became the first coronavirus pandemic.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
The main symptoms of COVID-19 include:
- fever,
- cough,
- general fatigue or tiredness,
- change in or loss of taste and/or smell,
- sore throat,
- headache,
- muscle ache,
- diarrhoea.

The severity of the illness varies greatly from person to person. Some people who have contracted SARS-CoV-2 are asymptomatic. That means they show no symptoms whatsoever.
In the more severe cases, the following may also occur:
- difficulty breathing or dyspnoea,
- delirium,
- chest pain.

Individuals with severe symptoms may require special medical care and support.
A patient's condition can deteriorate rapidly. This is often the case during the second week of the illness. Some people who have contracted COVID-19 require hospitalisation. In extreme cases, intensive long-term health care is necessitated.[10]

Who is at risk of contracting COVID-19?
All people are at risk of contracting COVID-19. However, there is a greater risk of the illness becoming life-threatening within particular sections of the population. These are people over the age of 60, pregnant women, as well as people with co-morbidities such as:
- obesity,
- high blood pressure,
- diabetes,
- heart diseases,
- long-term lung and respiratory diseases,
- neurological diseases,
- a weakened immune system.

Symptoms in adults tend to be more severe than in children. Children do nonetheless transfer the virus to others, which might lead to a serious illness in some instances.[11]

According to Skorodenský and Guľašová, in addition to the somatic symptoms of COVID-19, the anxiety and fear of patients must also be taken into account. The influence of anxiety directly impacts pain perception. Anxiety and stress may affect one's pain threshold, as well as one's tolerance thereof. Pain increases the irritability of the nervous system, often resulting in negative emotional reactions which only bolster the feeling of pain.[12]

5   A. Mušinka, Methodology of three statistical surveys (so called Atlas) of Roma communities in Slovakia and political representation of Roma in settlements of Prešov Self-governing Region. *Annales Scientia Politica,* 8, no. 2 (2019): 79 – 89.

6   *Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020.* p. 6. accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.minv.sk/?strategia-pre-integraciu-romov-do-roku-2020

7   R. Džambovič and M. Jurásková, Sociálne vylúčenie Rómov na Slovensku. in Vašečka, M. (Ed*): A IPEN PAL O RO-MA – Súhrnná správa o Rómoch na Slovensku. Bratislava.* (Inštitút pre verejné otázky 2002). 535 – 536.

8   *Stratégia Slovenskej republiky pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020.* p. 7. accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.minv.sk/?strategia-pre-integraciu-romov-do-roku-2020

9   accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.who.int

10   accessed January 14, 2022 https://vaccination-info.eu/sk/covid-19/fakty-o-covid-19

11   accessed January 14, 2022 https://vaccination-info.eu/sk/covid-19/fakty-o-covid-19

12   M. Skorodenský and M. Guľašová, *Základy klinickej psychológie.* (Filozofická fakulta Prešovskej univerzity v Prešove, Prešov 2012). 87.

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Addressing COVID-19 in marginalised Roma communities

The plan for addressing COVID-19 within the marginalised Roma communities (MRC) was approved by Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic No. 196 on the 2nd of April, 2020.

The plan includes, inter alia:

Basic information regarding the marginalised Roma communities.

According to the plan, there are several factors in play within the MRC which indicate higher risks to the group in question. These factors include:

- poor health conditions, including untreated and chronic diseases,
- insufficient hygienic conditions, including restricted access to drinking water,
- limited access to healthcare services,
- lesser awareness of proper hygiene standards,
- high population density,
- migration of MRC members for work to and from abroad.

In the current epidemiological situation facing Europe, we have been seeing an increased returning of MRC members to Slovakia from abroad. As they return and travel through countries with a substantially worse epidemiological situation, there is a great risk of COVID-19 infiltration into local Roma settlements, with an extremely high probability of its subsequent spreading and the inevitable emergence of epidemics within these settlements and beyond.[13]

Conditions for settlement quarantine

The plan states that COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. The virus is transmitted via contaminated droplets during coughing, sneezing and talking. The disease mainly affects those sharing the patient's household and their close surroundings. In the event that the number of individuals who test positive for COVID-19 crosses 10% in a given settlement, it becomes futile to quarantine only a selected group of people in facilities, but rather the entirety of the settlement must be quarantined instead. However, individuals who have had their COVID-19 positive status laboratory-confirmed and whose body temperature eclipses 38 degrees Celsius whilst exhibiting further symptoms such as dyspnoea and coughing will be transported to a designated healthcare facility for hospitalisation. In this regard, only persons who have made a full recovery shall be tested. During the quarantine of a settlement, it is imperative to close off its premises, keep the inhabitants informed about the situation, monitor the close contact of individuals, ensure their safety, as well as provide a sufficient supply of food and water, medical assistance and, if necessary, consider setting up an improvised kitchen and hospital.[14]

The Roma and religiosity in the Slovak Republic

The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People states in the Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Gypsies that it is a peculiar matter to examine the religiosity of Roma people, as they are not geographically bound to a single location. The religiosity of the Roma is conditioned by the country in which they live, whether it be Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox, Muslim or other religion, often taking little interest in the differences between them.[15]

According to Bartosz, the Roma: *"Having lived for centuries among various cultures, they have accepted this way of living as the correct one, as their own, as the easiest and most natural. However, they have never quite felt completely at home, or exclusively among their own. Always somewhere along the border, always despised by and consequently despising their surroundings".*[16] Some authors define religiosity as the adherence to rituals and beliefs within an organised religious institution or church. Religiosity originally contained both institutional and individual aspects. Today it is associated with dogmatic teachings, religious institutions and rituals; it is described as being formally structured.

Christ has entrusted his Church with the mission to *"among all peoples and nations, lead them by the example of life through preaching, sacraments and other means of singing the praises of faith, freedom and the peace of Christ, thus opening a free and secure path to true partaking in the mystery of Christ."* Such universality pushes the Church to seek out even the most geographically distant nations which, although inhabiting a territory of ancient Christian custom, have not yet accepted the gospel, have done so only partially, or have yet to enter the ecclesial community altogether. A large portion of the Roma who have lived on traditional Christian lands for centuries and have often been pushed to their fringes can undoubtedly be counted among them. Although the Roma population has been marked by discrimination and hardship, often even persecution, God has not forsaken them, for he *"wishes that salvation and understanding come to all."*[17]

In recent decades, it has been God's providence which has stimulated the growing interest in this population to a large degree, and has moved the hearts and minds of many pastoral workers who have since dedicated themselves with all their being to its evangelisation, despite being met with misunderstanding in many an instance.

In their research study entitled SIRONA, the authors Podolinská and Hrustič list the following registered Churches and religious institutions operating among the Roma in Slovakia:

1. The Apostolic Church in Slovakia.
2. The Baháʼí Community of the Slovak Republic.
3. The Baptist Brotherhood.
4. The Seventh-day Adventist Church.
5. The Fraternal Church of the Slovak Republic.
6. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
7. The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession.
8. The Evangelical Methodist Church.
9. The Greek Catholic Church.
10. The Jehovah's Witnesses religious community.
11. The Orthodox Church.
12. The Reformed Christian Church.
13. The Roman Catholic Church.
14. The Old Catholic Church of Slovakia.[18]

13 *Plán riešenia ochorenia COVID-19 v marginalizovaných rómskych komunitách,* schválený uznesením vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 196 zo dňa 02. apríla 2020.

14 *Plán riešenia ochorenia COVID-19 v marginalizovaných rómskych komunitách,* schválený uznesením vlády Slovenskej republiky č. 196 zo dňa 02. apríla 2020.

15 *Smernice pre pastoráciu Rómov, 2005, čl. 13.*

16 A. Bartosz, *Neboj sa cigána. Nadara Romestar.* Podľa poľského originálu: Adam Bartosz: Nie bójsie Cygana – Nadara Romestar. 2. vydanie. (Sobrance: Občianske združenie Romanivodži Sobrance, 2004). 204.

17 *Smernice pre pastoráciu Rómov, 2005, čl. 9*

18 T. Podolinská and T. Hrustič, *Boh medzi barierami, Sociálna inklúzia Rómov náboženskou cestou.* (Bratislava: ÚET SAV 2010).
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Spirituality of the Roma

The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People states in the document *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Gypsies* that spirituality holds a very significant place amongst the Roma population. Their relationship with God manifests mainly on an emotional basis. God is the patron and protector of family life, especially in times of woe.[19]

Vojtíšek categorised the manifestations of Roma spirituality into seven levels:

1. The first level of spirituality is **the lens through which one sees the world** and orients oneself within it. These can be philosophical concepts, theology, anthropology, the conception of the world - its inception, direction and eventual end (cosmology).[20] Roma spirituality has a folk character and is manifested in ways such as worship of holy images and domestic altars, and by ritual purity. Holy images of Jesus Christ and especially the Virgin Mary can routinely be observed in Roma households.

2. The second level includes **ceremonies** as a reflection of the above-mentioned concepts in the life of individuals and communities, e.g. sacrifices, rituals of healing, divination, etc. Further viable inclusions are meditation, prayer, pilgrimages, etc., i.e. personal ceremonies which are also of a ritual character, much like sacred places, holidays, sacred robes, incense, bells and other sacred objects.[21] Baptisms, weddings and funerals bear great significance for the entire extended family associated with major celebrations. Baptism is an important ritual for the Roma. In terms of significance, it ranks second after funerals. Baptism is the main spiritual act. It does not necessarily mean acceptance into the community of believers, but is more so understood as protection from malevolent forces. Through Baptism, God's protection from the influence of evil is granted. An unbaptised child may be preyed upon by evil forces and demons. Another danger to an unbaptised child is thought to be the *"ghost of a mother"* who died during childbirth and now claims children from other mothers. Various sharp objects or holy images are also placed into the cribs of children as an aegis against the *"ghost of a deceased mother."* Children might even be threatened by ensorcellment. When ensorcelled, an evil power is transferred onto a child (but also an adult or an animal). One can be ensorcelled by the evil eye, a malevolent thought, unsolicited attention, or excessive praise. A child should not draw too much attention in a crowd because it becomes exposed to the risk of ensorcellment.[22]

3. The third level are the norms and values which come from **"higher realms"** and are perceived as binding and reflected by our conscience, such as the Decalogue.[23] Superstitions, magical thinking, beliefs in the supernatural, amulets, acts of witchcraft in combination with the local religion create a unique mixture and specificity of the Roma concept of the world and its values. This world is very fragmented and consists of a great many groups. Within the context of a local society, individual groups partially adopt new norms and values whilst partially maintaining their own. E.g. the rules of purity most likely originated from the caste system in India, and the adherence thereto helps with self-determination of individual groups in a kinship. The ideas of God differ and are influenced by long-term evangelisation. Divergences can also be found in

the concept of the Holy Trinity. God is thought to be an integral part of everyday life. The Roma believe that God can be found everywhere, especially in one's heart, and that it is not needed to go to church every Sunday in order to converse with him.[24]

4. The fourth level of spirituality is the **telling of divine tales** (myths, stories of exceptional personalities, legends of saints, miraculous and heroic tales).[25] The core system of Roma values is known to include the need for freedom, abiding by ancestral hierarchies and traditions, embracing the heritage of ancestors, and the love of children and money as a basic need for survival. These positive values are evident in Roma fairy tales, humorous stories, phraseologies and the lyrics of songs. From their fairy tales, the Roma derive their acquiescence with destiny, and their inability to think about the future.[26]

5. The fifth form of spirituality are **experiences**, both spontaneous and intentionally lived through joint ceremonies and personal spiritual practice. Transition rituals and ceremonies, as well as magical practices, create unique shared experiences.[27] The ceremonies and rituals mentioned in the second level could once again be mentioned here, along with the traditional Roma pilgrimage from many European countries to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer in southern France, where they gather to worship the statue of their patron St. Sarah the Black in the crypt of the church. In Slovakia, a pilgrimage of the Roma to the towns of Levoča and Gaboltov have become tradition.

6. The sixth level of spirituality is perceiving the **sanctity of community** which transcends ordinary experience.[28] Individual Roma groups not only differ from one another based on their ways of living, but also distance themselves from the rest on the very same basis, considering only their own social status and system of values to be correct and "pure". The concept of purity has retained vivid ritualistic features, and the Roma still adhere to certain principles in the present.[29]

7. The seventh form of spirituality is creativity, e.g. in the form of music, paintings, various objects which can become personally sacred or sacred for the entire community, and thus play a major role as far as ceremonies are concerned.[30] Musical expression depends on the locality, skill, audience's taste, and customs. The only musicological moment which can be considered a *"typical Roma musical element"* is likely the level of an author's specific interpretation.[31]

The very realisation that spirituality may assume various specific forms enables relief workers tending to the Roma community to focus on that which the client perceives as being religious and spiritual. This model also helps dispel prejudices segregating people into believers and

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19   *Smernice pre pastoráciu Rómov, 2005, čl. 14.*

20   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 1. Vyd. (Praha: Portál, 2012). 19-23.

21   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 19-23.

22   M. Hajská, *Křtem proti zlým silám.* in *Dingir, časopis o současné náboženské scéně* no. 7, 1, (2004): 13-16.

23   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 19-23.

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24   K. Matejů, *Romská religiozita*. (Diplomová práce, Liberci Technická univerzita v Liberci, Katedra filosofie, 2010):

25   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 19-23.

26   M. Kaleja a kol. *Romové - otázky a odpovědi v českém a slovenském kontextu*. (Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě, Pedagogická fakulta, 2012). 44.

27   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 19-23.

28   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 19-23.

29   M. Kaleja, a kol. *Romové - otázky a odpovědi v českém a slovenském kontextu*. (Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě, Pedagogická fakulta, 2012). 9.

30   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 19-23.

31   M. Kaleja, a kol. *Romové - otázky a odpovědi v českém a slovenském kontextu*. (Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě, Pedagogická fakulta, 2012). 49.

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non-believers.[32] The second part of the questionnaire was devised in such a way that would allow us to find out how our respondents who contracted COVID-19 or were quarantined in isolation lived and realised their spiritual lives.

Positions of workers in marginalised Roma communities

The positions of field social workers in the MRC are addressed by personnel standards. They define the requirements for the professional skills, qualification and experience of workers. They also set the conditions for the professional growth and evaluation of workers, and their supervision.[33]

Field social worker (FSW)

The prerequisites for working as an FSW are professional competence, legal capacity, integrity and personal qualifications.

Education: Pursuant to Act No. 219/2014 Coll. on Social Work, in accordance with paragraph 5 section 1, letter a) in paragraph 45, one should have the secondary degree of higher education. In order to perform field social work, graduates of other fields of study in the realm of helping professions with a secondary university degree (psychology, medical pedagogue, social pedagogue, ...) must meet the conditions set by Act No. 219/2014 Coll. on Social Work in accordance with paragraph 45.[34]

Field worker (FW)

The prerequisites for working as a FW are legal capacity, integrity and personal qualifications.

Education: completed secondary education (school-leaving exams not a condition). After being hired as a field worker, one must undergo a professional educational programme focused on field social work.

Other competencies: Knowledge of the target group, proficiency in its language, ability to work as part of a team, to be empathetic and persistent, willingness to develop own competencies related to the needs of field work, and administrative skills.[35]

Healthy regions

The Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic has established a state-subsidized organisation named *Zdravé regióny* (Healthy regions), whose mission is to implement and develop temporary compensatory measures in the field of health. The implementation and development of health mediation in the MRC represents a set of activities focused on the social determinants of health, including health-related behaviour, material conditions, psycho-social factors, barriers to access to healthcare, health literacy and structural constraints - e.g. discrimination, racism, poor education, related legislation...). The target groups are: members and residents of the MRC.[36] Within this organisation, the following work in the MRC:

Health Support Assistant Coordinator (HSAC)

Education: at least first degree university education, or 5 years of experience in the field of work with the MRC, or 2 years of experience in the field of work with the MRC whilst studying at a university concurrently.

Job description of an HSAC
- Being responsible for the coordination and management of assigned health support assistants (HSA).
- Participating in the preparation and implementation of community health support in marginalised Roma communities (MRC) with a focus on COVID-19 within the project and the assigned sites;
- Keeping the MRC informed about the prevention, healthcare provision, health insurance and the rights of patients with a focus on COVID-19.
- Regularly monitoring the situation in selected MRC pertaining to health conditions and public health - by gathering information on the situation within the community in terms of social determinants of health and in terms of epidemiology with a focus on COVID-19. To this end, regular communication and cooperation with healthcare providers, public health professionals, relief workers, local actors, and close cooperation with the Health Development Manager are a given, along with ensuring the necessary data collection within the scope of the project with a focus on COVID-19.[37]

Health Support Assistant (HSA)

Education: completed compulsory school attendance - a requirement,; lower secondary or complete secondary education having passed the school-leaving exams - an advantage. Language skills: basic Slovak language skills - a requirement; knowledge of the language used by a socially excluded community (Roma/Hungarian, vernacular) - a requirement.[38]

Job description of an HSA
- Providing basic health education in a marginalised Roma community within one's competence - in segregated and sequestered Roma settlements and localities;
- Acting as a communication conduit between the inhabitants of segregated and sequestered Roma settlements and localities and healthcare providers and medical workers (doctors, nurses, midwives, public health workers, rescue workers);
- Supporting the community's access to healthcare: providing information on prevention, healthcare and health insurance provision, as well as patient and policyholder rights;
- Participating in the application of health support programmes to the community in accordance with the coordinator's instructions;
- Working to increase the responsibility of community members for their own health;
- Collaborating with the coordinator on identifying risk factors and health-related needs of the disadvantaged community;
- Executing field data collection;
- Exchanging information and experience with field social workers as well as teaching assistants, community centre workers and non-governmental organisations focused on aiding the disadvantaged Roma communities;

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32   Z. Vojtíšek, P. Dušek and J. Motl, *Spiritualita v pomáhajících profesích*. 19-23.
33   E. Ondrušková and J. Pružinská, *Štandardy terénnej sociálnej práce a terénnej práce v sociálne vylúčených skupinách*. (Bratislava: Ultra Print s. r. o. 2015). 20.
34   Zákon č. 219/2014 Z. z. o sociálnej práci a o podmienkach na výkon niektorých odborných činností v oblasti sociálnych vecí a rodiny a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov
35   E. Ondrušková and J. Pružinská, *Štandardy terénnej sociálnej práce a terénnej práce v sociálne vylúčených skupinách*. (Bratislava: Ultra Print s. r. o. 2015). 20.
36   accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.istp.sk

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37   accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.zdraveregiony.eu
38   accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.zdraveregiony.eu

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- Mandatory participation in trainings aimed at expanding the knowledge and skills related to the job;
- Keeping a record of own activities (the HSA journal, client registration form, records of further interventions, attendance and more in accordance with the HSAC guidelines);
- Obligatory participation in coordination meetings, where one is to submit documentation of their work to their immediate superior;
- A responsible approach to resources entrusted for the work (pressure gauge, backpack, clothing), refraining from passing them on to other persons.[39]

Volunteer in the MRC

A volunteer is a natural person who has, of their own volition and free of any pressure, chosen to devote their time, knowledge and skills to a meaningful activity, which they consider meaningful and beneficial. Acting as such in an organised or independent manner, without claim to financial remuneration.[40]

Majduchová defines a volunteer as follows: *"A volunteer is a citizen who freely and without external influence from any moral or legal obligations chooses to enrich their civic and personal life alike on the foundation of solidarity. After fulfilling one's civic, public and personal responsibilities, a volunteer selflessly makes themselves available to the community, relying primarily on a creative approach to addressing newly emerging local needs, and putting the poor, neglected, infirm and marginalised first".*[41]

In her habilitation thesis, Matulayová addresses the natural motivation to help one's neighbours as follows: *"The core principles of the volunteering philosophy are values such as altruism, humanism, liberty, solidarity, mutual assistance, social justice, participation, democracy. The Universal Declaration on Volunteering of the International Association for Volunteer Effort, in addition to the aforementioned ethical values and principles of human dignity, further emphasizes social responsibility and personal commitment."*[42] Act No. 406/2011 Coll. on Volunteering, and on the amendment of certain acts, in paragraph 3 letter f) states that, within the context of our subject, a volunteer carries out their activity *"with the integration of persons living in socially excluded communities into society, with a particular focus on eliminating all forms of their disadvantages".*[43] To give an example, the Order of Malta in Slovakia regularly recruits volunteers and trains them. In addition to other activities, they are also involved in pastoral and educational efforts among the Roma in Nitra and eastern Slovakia – through the projects "Orechov dvor" and "Olejníkov".[44]

Priest and pastoral worker

The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People states in the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Gypsies* on the topic of pastoral work in the MRC that, during episcopal conferences, a bishop promoter responsible for the pastoral care of the Roma is to be selected. In Slovakia, that role belongs to a Monsignor: Bernard Bober - the Metropolitan Arch-

bishop of Košice. The document further states that it is up to the bishop to select a priest, monk or lay person to oversee evangelisation among the Roma.[45]

On the occasion of the visit of The Holy Father Francis, the Catholic Church in Slovakia published a handbook entitled "*Nositelia nádeje, Pastoračné diela Katolíckej cirkvi v rómskych komunitách*" (Bearers of Hope, The Pastoral Works of the Catholic Church in Roma Communities) which states that pastoral work with the Roma includes about 80 Roman Catholic and 20 Greek Catholic parishes with about 100 priests, monks and more than 200 volunteers. Pastoral work with the Roma takes place in about 25 pastoral establishments as institutionalised or systematic pastoral work, and in other parishes it is carried out within the framework of proper parish pastoral care (less institutionalised). The pastoral ministry is supported by local governments, community centres, schools, leisure centres, and local or nationwide non-governmental organisations - such as KANET, n.o.; Teach for Slovakia; o.z. Cesta von - Omama; o.z. Ženy ženám; o.z. Bunky, o.z. Jarovnice; Umelecké centrum F6; Horúci tím; o. z. Oheň nádeje, Dobrý pastier - Lačho pastiris, Fórum kresťanských inštitúcií, etc.[46]

Research objective

The research objective is to determine the saturation of spiritual needs in marginalised Roma communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The partial objectives of this research are to find out:
How many respondents were COVID-19 positive.
What symptoms they experienced.
How many respondents were/were not baptised - a predisposition of the respondents' spiritual needs.

- How our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs, such as:
- During quarantine/isolation/illness, they made sure to keep in a visible spot an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint.
- During quarantine/isolation/illness, they prayed more often than before.
- During quarantine/isolation/illness, they strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before.
- During quarantine/isolation/illness, they came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation).
- During quarantine/isolation/illness, they tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine.
- During quarantine/isolation/illness, they prayed at home collectively as a family more than before.
- During quarantine/isolation/illness, they sang religious songs at home more than before the quarantine, depending on **gender, age, and marital status.**

Another of our objectives is to find out how our respondents, depending on their gender, age, and marital status, perceived aid during their quarantine/isolation/illness provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests, and whether they:
- took interest in the respondents - maintaining constant contact,
- provided medical care and brought them medication,
- purchased and delivered food to the respondents' homes,

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39   accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.istp.sk
40   M. Olah, *Sociálnopravná ochrana detí.* (Prešov 2005). s. 52.
41   H. Majduchová, Manažment dobrovoľníkov - 3. časť. *Efekt* (1/2006): 21.
42   T. Matulayová, *Dobrovoľníctvo v sociálnych službách v kontexte andragogiky a sociálnej práce*, [online], 20.
43   Zákon č. 406/2011 Z. z. o dobrovoľníctve a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov
44   accessed January 14, 2022 http://www.orderofmalta.sk/romske-projekty/

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45   *Smernice pre pastoráciu Rómov, 2005, čl. 89.*
46   *Nositelia nádeje, Pastoračné diela Katolíckej cirkvi v rómskych komunitách.* 7.

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- imparted sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong during their illness/quarantine/isolation,
- assured them that they would keep them in their prayers and encouraged them to pray themselves,
- provided spiritual help - brought spiritual literature,
- emboldened them not to yield to fear of disease and death.

Research questions

Research question No.1

How our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs in such a way that, during quarantine/isolation/illness, they:
- made sure to keep in a visible spot an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint
- prayed more often than before the quarantine.
- strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before.
- came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation).
- tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine.
- prayed at home collectively as a family more than before.
- sang religious songs more often than before the quarantine depending on **gender.**

Research question No. 2

How our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs in such a way that, during quarantine/isolation/illness, they:
- made sure to keep in a visible spot an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint
- prayed more often than before the quarantine.
- strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before.
- came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation).
- tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine.
- prayed at home collectively as a family more than before.
- sang religious songs more often than before the quarantine depending on **age.**

Research question No. 3

How our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs in such a way that, during quarantine/isolation/illness, they:
- made sure to keep in a visible spot an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint
- prayed more often than before the quarantine.
- strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before.
- came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation).
- tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine.
- prayed at home collectively as a family more than before.
- sang religious songs more often than before the quarantine depending on **marital status**.

Research question No. 4

How our respondents, depending on their **gender**, perceived aid during their quarantine/isolation/illness provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests, and whether they:
- took interest in the respondents - maintaining constant contact.
- provided medical care and brought them medication.
- purchased and delivered food to the respondents' homes.
- imparted sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong during their illness/quarantine/isolation.
- assured them that they would keep them in their prayers and encouraged them to pray themselves.
- provided spiritual help - brought spiritual literature.
- emboldened them not to yield to fear of disease and of death.

Research question No. 5

How our respondents, depending on their **age**, perceived aid during their quarantine/isolation/illness provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests, and whether they:
- took interest in the respondents - maintaining constant contact.
- provided medical care and brought them medication.
- purchased and delivered food to the respondents' homes.
- imparted sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong during their illness/quarantine/isolation.
- assured them that they would keep them in their prayers and encouraged them to pray themselves.
- provided spiritual help - brought spiritual literature.
- emboldened them not to yield to fear of disease and of death.

Research question No. 6

How our respondents, depending on their **marital status**, perceived aid during their quarantine/isolation/illness provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests, and whether they:
- took interest in the respondents - maintaining constant contact.
- provided medical care and brought them medication.
- purchased and delivered food to the respondents' homes.
- imparted sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong during their illness/quarantine/isolation.
- assured them that they had kept them in their prayers and encouraged them to pray themselves.
- provided spiritual help - brought spiritual literature.
- emboldened them not to yield to fear of disease and of death.

Research methods

To obtain the necessary information, we used the existing available scientific literature and a non-standardized questionnaire of our own design. The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions. Five questions were focused on collecting descriptive information about the respondents regarding their age, gender, marital status, employment status and whether the respondent was

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baptised. Three questions were focused on determining positivity for COVID-19, quarantine and individual symptoms of COVID-19. The following 7 questions were focused on the fulfilment of spiritual needs of one's own volition. The final 7 questions were focused on the perception of social and spiritual aid provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests. The answers to these questions were in the form of the Likert Scale: I completely agree - I agree - I do not have a strong opinion - I do not agree - I completely disagree. The SPSS 20.0 statistical programme was used for statistical processing purposes. A detailed description of the file was prepared using the numerical and percentile representation of respondents in individual varia-bles. Non-parametric statistics were used to determine differences. In order to verify substantial differences between gender and the observed variables, the Mann Whitney test was used on 2 independent samples. To determine the significant differences between the variables with re-spect to the age and marital status of respondents, the Kruskal - Wallis test was used for several independent samples.

Characteristics of the research sample
The research sample consisted of 316 respondents from the MRC who recovered from COV-ID-19 or had been quarantined. Respondents were selected on the basis of the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019.[47] The Roma communities in question are the following:

Table No. 1 Characteristics of the research sample

Location	Total population of MRC settlements/N	Number of participants in the research/N	%
Chminianske Jakubovany	2300	64	2.7
Jarovnice	6100	71	1.1
Krajná Bystrá	350	40	11.4
Kružlová	400	41	10.2
Ladomirová	600	33	5.5
Stropkov	1200	35	2.9
Svidník	700	32	4.5
Total	**11,650**	**316**	**2.7**

Source: Own elaboration

Our aim with regard to the research sample was for the MRC to be included in the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, as well as having access to the respondents. The number had been determined in advance as a percentage of the total population in the settlement. The condition for selecting respondents was that the given respondent had overcome COVID-19 or had been quarantined, and was over 18 years old.
Their description relating to the monitored aspects is given in the following table.

Table No. 2 Descriptive characteristics of respondents

		Men (n 143) number	Women (n 173) number
age	18 – 25 years	29	27
	26 – 35 years	31	42
	36 – 45 years	41	38
	46 – 55 years	18	25
	56 – 65 years	18	26
	66 and above	6	15
Marital status	Single	29	19
	Married	86	96
	Unmarried partner	22	28
	Widower/widow	6	22
	Divorced	0	8
COVID	Positive	112	148
	Negative	31	25
Fever	Yes	73	103
Cough	Yes	82	113
	no	61	60
Dyspnoea	yes	30	39
Pneumonia	Yes	17	22
Baptism	Yes	138	171
	no	5	2

Source: Own elaboration

Research results
Partial objectives had been set within our research, by which we intended to primarily find out the following:
- How many respondents were COVID-19 positive.
- What symptoms they experienced.
- How many respondents were/were not baptised - a predisposition of the respondents' spiritual needs.

Table No. 3 The number of COVID-19 positive respondents, their symptoms and the number of baptised/unbaptised

		Men (n 143) number	Women (n 173) number
COVID-19	Positive	112	148
Fever	Yes	73	103
Cough	Yes	82	113
Dyspnoea	yes	30	39
Pneumonia	Yes	17	22
Baptism	Yes	138	171
	no	5	2

Source: Own elaboration

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47   accessed January 14, 2022 https://www.minv.sk/?atlas-romskych-komunit-2019

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Table No. 3 shows that, out of the total number of 316 surveyed respondents, 260 were positive, of whom 112 were men and 148 were women. 56 respondents were negative, of whom 31 were men and 25 were women. The table further includes the symptoms experienced by our respondents during COVID-19. Our research objective was to find out how many respondents were baptised/unbaptised, as within the scope of our research baptism is understood to be a pre-disposition to the saturation of spiritual needs based on one's own choice.

Table No. 4 Significant differences between genders and the variables found by the Mann Whitney test on 2 independent samples.

	Covid pos.	fever	cough	dyspnoea	pneumonia
t	11,475.5	11,319.5	11,383.0	12,176.0	12,267.0
p	0.095	0.131	0.147	0.738	0.824

Source: Own elaboration

Legend
t: Mann Whitney test value
p: test significance level

It can be inferred that there was no significant difference between men and women in terms of the clinical symptoms they experienced during COVID 19.

Research question No. 1
How our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs in such a way that, during quarantine/isolation/illness, they:
9. made sure to keep in a visible spot an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint,
10. prayed more often than before the quarantine,
11. strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before,
12. came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation),
13. tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine,
14. prayed at home collectively as a family more than before,
15. sang religious songs more often than before the quarantine depending on **gender.**

Table No. 5 Significant differences between genders and variables found by the Mann Whitney test on 2 independent samples.

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
t	10,554.5	9958.0	10,304.0	9995.5	12,233.5	10,349.5	11,490.5
p	0.015	0.001	0.005	0.001	0.895	0.005	0.253

Source: Own elaboration

Legend
t: Mann Whitney test value
p: test significance level

Significant differences between men and women were observed in questions 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14. Women kept an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or other saints, in a visible spot substantially more than men, just as women prayed more often

during quarantine, strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before the quarantine, came to terms with their illness and prayed more collectively with their family. Such intensification was not observed in men.

Research question No. 2

How our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs in such a way that, during quarantine/isolation/illness, they:
9. made sure to keep in a visible spot an image (or statue) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint,
10. prayed more often than before the quarantine,
11. strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before,
12. came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation),
13. tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine,
14. prayed at home collectively as a family more than before,
15. sang religious songs more often than before the quarantine depending on **age.**

Table No. 6 Significant differences between marital statuses and variables found by the Kruskal - Wallis test on 2 independent samples.

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Chi sq.	26.948	17.234	18.335	23.666	10.490	11.294	4.582
Df	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sig.	**0.000**	**0.004**	**0.003**	**0.000**	0.062	**0.046**	0.469

Source: Own elaboration

Legend
Chi sq.: chi square value of the test
Df: number of freedom levels of the test
Sig.: test significance level

The age of respondents was the cause for the significant differences found in questions 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14. The lowest age group of respondents from 18 to 25 years did not have a strong opinion on spirituality, which means that they did not occupy themselves with deeper spiritual matters during their illness and quarantine.

Research question No. 3
How our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs in such a way that, during quarantine/isolation/illness, they:
9. made sure to keep in a visible spot an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint,
10. prayed more often than before the quarantine,
11. strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before,
12. came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation),
13. tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine,
14. prayed at home collectively as a family more than before,
15. sang religious songs more often than before the quarantine depending on **marital status.**

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Table No. 7 Significant differences between marital statuses and variables found by the Kruskal - Wallis test on multiple independent samples.

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Chi sq.	24.886	35.645	31.169	35.705	15.249	21.478	7.845
Df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.097

Source: Own elaboration

Legend
Chi sq.: chi square value of the test
Df: number of freedom levels of the test
Sig.: test significance level

The marital status of respondents was the cause for the significant differences found in questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14. In respondents claiming single status, interest in spirituality dropped by a half.

Research question No. 4

How our respondents, depending on their **gender**, perceived aid during their quarantine/isolation/illness provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests, and whether they:
16. took interest in the respondents - maintaining constant contact,
17. provided medical care and brought them medication,
18. purchased and delivered food to the respondents' homes,
19. imparted sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong during their illness/quarantine/isolation,
20. assured them that they would keep them in their prayers and encouraged them to pray themselves,
21. provided spiritual help - brought spiritual literature,
22. emboldened them not to yield to fear of disease and death.

Table No. 8 Significant differences between genders and the variables found by the Mann Whitney test on 2 independent samples.

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
t	10,542.0	10,868.0	11,102.5	10,822.5	10,153.5	11,456.5	10,537.5
p	0.010	0.044	0.092	0.033	0.002	0.224	0.009

Source: Own elaboration

Legend
t: Mann Whitney test value
p: test significance level

Significant differences between men and women were observed in questions 16, 17, 19, 20 and 22. Women felt that they and their families received substantially more attention from FSW, FW, HSAC, HSA, volunteers and priests, were provided medical aid, given good advice, took notice of the assurances that they were thought of in prayers and encouraged more than men did. It can be assumed that these differences arose from the more explicit levels of expressing concern on the part of women, as well as their greater need for emotional support.

Research question No. 5

How our respondents, depending on their **age**, perceived aid during their quarantine/isolation/illness provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests, and whether they:
16. took interest in the respondents - maintaining constant contact,
17. provided medical care and brought them medication,
18. purchased and delivered food to the respondents' homes,
19. imparted sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong during their illness/quarantine/isolation,
20. assured them that they would keep them in their prayers and encouraged them to pray themselves,
21. provided spiritual help - brought spiritual literature,
22. emboldened them not to yield to fear of disease and of death.

Table No. 9 Significant differences between marital statuses and variables found by the Kruskal - Wallis test on multiple independent samples.

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Chi sq.	22.100	18.358	17.568	25.949	20.956	6.347	26.001
Df	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Sig.	0.001	0.003	0.004	0.000	0.001	0.274	0.000

Source: Own elaboration

Legend
Chi sq.: chi square value of the test
Df: number of freedom levels of the test
Sig.: test significance level

The higher the age of respondents, the more profound their awareness of the aid provided by FSW, FW, HSAC, HSA, volunteers and priests.

Research question No. 6

How our respondents, depending on their **marital status**, perceived aid during their quarantine/isolation/illness provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests, and whether they:
16. took interest in the respondents - maintaining constant contact,
17. provided medical care and brought them medication,
18. purchased and delivered food to the respondents' homes,
19. imparted sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong during their illness/quarantine/isolation,
20. assured them that they would keep them in their prayers and encouraged them to pray themselves,
21. provided spiritual help - brought spiritual literature,
22. emboldened them not to yield to fear of disease and of death.

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Table No. 9 Significant differences between marital statuses and the variables found by the Kruskal - Wallis test on multiple independent samples

	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Chi sq.	37.047	16.142	19.885	39.639	34.332	8.529	32.158
Df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Sig.	0.000	0.003	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.000

Source: Own elaboration

Legend
Chi sq.: chi square value of the test
Df: number of freedom levels of the test
Sig.: test significance level

Table No. 9 makes it evident that the perception of aid provided by FSW, FW, HSAC, HSA, volunteers and priests during COVID-19 with respect to marital status made for negligible differences in individual questions. The answers showed that respondents claiming single status perceived the external aid of individual workers the least.

Discussion

The main objective of our research was to find out how the Roma *"confided in God"* during COVID-19 and the quarantine and how they perceived the spiritual aid provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests. There is a famous quote from St. John Chrysostom, who said the following: *"If you entrust yourself to God in sickness, he shall embrace you heedless of the good you have done in health".*[48]

Within the nominal variables, we discovered how many Roma (our respondents) were positive for COVID-19, and what symptoms they experienced. It was of further interest to our topic whether the Roma were or were not baptised.

In Table No. 3, we reported on the number of respondents positive for COVID-19. We discovered that 260 respondents were positive for COVID-19, 112 of whom were men and 148 were women, amounting to a total of 82% out of our research sample of 316.

The Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities has implemented multiple measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Plenipotentiary Andrea Bučková assembled a crisis team, whose members monitored the situation in Roma communities and participated in crisis management meetings at the national and regional levels. At the same time, the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities executed a *National Project aimed at resolving adverse situations related to COVID 19 in municipalities with the presence of marginalised Roma communities* with the help of field assistants and the provision of support interventions from crisis advisory teams. 354 municipalities listed in the Atlas of Roma Communities 2013 and in the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, which were not supported by the so-called helping professions and non-governmental organisations, were eligible to participate in the project. To improve the pandemic situation in marginalised Roma communities, a National Project entitled *KORONA TE MEREL* was also approved, the recipient of which is the state-subsidized organisation of the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic - Healthy Regions. 4,100 relief workers and workers of the so-called supporting professions operated and continue to operate in municipali-

ties where Roma communities live - field social workers, health education assistants, community centre staff, teaching assistants and members of local civil order services.[49]

As part of our research, we inquired into how many of our respondents were baptised. We discovered that, out of the total number of 316 respondents, 309 were baptised, which means 97.7%. The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People states in the document *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Gypsies* that many Roma people, although baptised, have not been evangelised. *"Faith in God"* on its own does not suffice from the Christian faith's point of view; the authentic acceptance of Jesus Christ and his message is necessary.[50] Because the Roma have not been evangelised, they, in their credulity, engage in false spirituality practices such as hand reading and other superstitions.[51] As we have stated, baptism is considered to be a predisposition for the pursuit of spiritual needs. On the other hand, we are aware, and this is also evident from our research, that baptism must be accompanied by evangelism, which shall reflect in the process of enculturation the specifics of the Roma mentality and culture, the division of the Roma into individual groups and subgroups, the identity and traditions of Roma families, the lifestyle and values of the Roma, and their view of religion.[52]

In research questions Nos. 1, 2 and 3, we looked into how our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs in such a way that during quarantine/isolation/illness, they: kept in a visible spot an image (or statuette) of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of St. Joseph, or any other saint, prayed more often than before the quarantine, strived to abide by the commandments of God more piously than before, came to terms with their fate (illness or isolation), tuned in to religious service broadcasts on television or the radio more than before the quarantine, prayed at home collectively as a family more than before, and/or sang religious songs more often than before the quarantine, depending on their gender, age and marital status.

We found significant differences between men and women in all but two of the monitored indicators, namely that they would tune in to religious service broadcasts on television / radio and sing religious songs.

It is known from the practical pastoral care of the Roma community that their relationship with God is manifested largely on an emotional basis. God is the patron and protector of family life, especially in times of woe. This emotional basis is observable in the households of many Roma families. Many families choose to occupy visible spots in their display cases, cabinets and shelves with a plethora of statuettes, such as of Lord Jesus, the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and other saints. In many households, one room is reserved for this purpose specifically, where entire small altars and statuettes of saints are placed. It serves as a domestic shrine of sorts, where they enter in silence to plead with God.[53] The difference between men and women in research

48   T. Špidlík, *Pramene svetla.* (Spolok sv. Vojtecha Trnava 2000, Vydavateľstvo otcov baziliánov Blahovistník, Prešov 2000). 123.

49   *Podiel pozitívne testovaných na COVID - 19 v rómskych komunitách sa pohybuje približne na úrovni pozitívnych prípadov v majorite,* november 2020.

50   *Smernice pre pastoráciu Rómov, 2005,* čl. 75

51   P. Vansač, Vplyv spirituality na rómsku rodinu pri riešení edukačných problémov, In: Hučík, J., Žolnová, J., *Vplyv na úspešnosť Rómov z marginalizovaných rómskych komunít v edukačnom procese, Recenzovaný zborník zo sympózia konaného 10.-11.4.2014 v Liptovskom Jáne, PROHU* (Liptovský Ján 2015): 175-183.

52   P. Vansač and M. Belovičová, The importance of dialogue and respecting anthropological and cultural aspects in the evangelisation of Roma. *Acta Missiologica.* 13, no. 2, 2019.

53   P. Vansač, Vplyv spirituality na rómsku rodinu pri riešení edukačných problémov. in *Vplyv na úspešnosť Rómov z marginalizovaných rómskych komunít v edukačnom procese, Recenzovaný zborník zo sympózia konaného 10.-11.4.2014 v Liptovskom Jáne, PROHU* by J. Hučík, J. Žolnová, (Liptovský Ján 2015): 175-183.

Expert articles

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question No. 1 is also caused by the fact that women manage the household, but women also manage the finances of the household (they hold the treasury).[54]

Our research shows that the younger the age, the less our respondents fulfilled their spiritual needs. Simply stated, it shows that 50% of respondents in the 18-25 age group have no connection to spirituality.

We learned that marital status is a factor of influence pertaining to spirituality. Respondents who are married evince the most intense relationship with spirituality; for singles it decreases by up to 50% compared to those of married status. According to Kozoň, the connective tissue of Roma life is their traditional family feeling. A considerable number of persons is often thought of as family, even distant relatives are treated with the same family affiliation. Family affords a feeling of security, and ensures solidarity in times of sickness and misfortune.[55]

In research questions Nos. 4, 5 and 6, we strived to learn how our respondents, depending on their gender, age and family status, perceived aid during quarantine/isolation/illness consequent to COVID-19 provided by field social workers (FSW), field workers (FW), health support assistant coordinators (HSAC), health support assistants (HSA), volunteers and priests by taking an interest in the respondents - they were in constant contact with them, provided them with medical care and brought medicine, delivered food to the respondents' homes, gave them sound advice and encouraged them to stay strong in their illness/quarantine and isolation, assured them that they thought of them in prayer and encouraged them to pray, provided them with spiritual aid - brought them spiritual literature, and/or emboldened them not to succumb to fear of disease and death.

Differences in perceptions of spiritual and social aid have been observed between men and women. Women showed a far broader awareness of the aid given by relief workers than their male counterparts. Age proved to be a factor in like manner; the higher the age, the more profound the perception of aid. In the context of correlation between family status and the perception of aid, widows and widowers perceived and showed appreciation for the relief workers' help the most. Respondents of single status appreciated this aid the least.

Recommendations for practice

In the perception of the Roma, God is understood as their Father for whom they have due respect as a judge who is just, rewards and punishes on merit, and as a good man who seeks to help all.[56] In our research, we inquired whether the Roma were or were not baptised. From a research sample of 316 respondents, we found that only 7 of them had not received the sacrament of baptism. We can therefore confirm that baptism is an integral ritual for the Roma. On the other hand, the research showed precisely what was emphasised in the *Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of Gypsies* – that, although many Roma are indeed baptised, they have not been evangelised.[57] This pertains to the age group of 18-25 year old young men and women in particular, as well as to the marital status of men, i.e. the fathers of families. We recommend that the priests

and pastoral workers who are personally involved in the evangelisation of the Roma focus on this particular age group of fathers.

Our research shows that women maintained a higher perception of the aid provided by relief workers than their male counterparts. This phenomenon can be rooted in multiple causes, such as women's greater concern for their own lives and the lives of their families, which in turn increases the need for emotional support. Our research has further shown that our respondents greatly appreciated the spiritual support of relief workers in order not to succumb to fear of disease and of death. The purpose of this encouragement is based on the fact that health issues and family misfortune are prone to be interpreted as God's punishments for grievous sins, wherefore it should be emphasised that the Roma hold their own morals and *"a good heart"* in high esteem, as they should serve as a guarantee that they will not face damnation after death, but rather only that departure to paradise will follow.[58] We recommend conducting similar research in other MRC in the Košice self-governing region and comparing it with our own research.

Conclusion

In our research, we surveyed respondents from seven MRC, all of which are listed in the Atlas of Roma Communities 2019. Our research has brought us results that support the spiritual paradigm of showing clients the proper way to live their lives in any frame of mind, status or environment. In our research, we focused on the illness, status, and environment of the clients in relation to spiritual needs. We found that our respondents freely fulfilled their needs through prayer, abiding by the Decalogue, and making peace with their fated condition. Furthermore, we have measured the perception of support provided to them courtesy of relief workers.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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10 YEARS OF USHIRIKIANO CENTRE IN MALINDI, KENYA

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Jarmila Holkova ✉ [1,2], James Kazungu Katana [1]

[1]   Ushirikiano Centre, St. Elizabeth University (SEU) Tropical Program Malindi, Kenya
[2]   Missiology department of St. John Paul II. School of Missiology and Tropical Health SEU

Abstract
Background: In 2021, Ushirikiano Centre marked 10 years of its existence. Founded by Slovak St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work, it has been serving the local community of Msabaha, a village satellite of Malindi in the coastal area of Kenya, since September 2011, focusing on educational support especially of orphans, half-orphans or children from low-income and single-parent families; on social work with their caregivers and other needy people, nutritional support and many-sided support of people living with HIV. This article presents the results of small-scale research evaluating the benefits that the activities of the Centre brought, during the 10 years of its existence, to its clients and the local community as a whole, as perceived by the clients themselves.
Results and Conclusion: The results have confirmed validity and effectiveness of the Centre´s interventions and at the same time have shown potential for further development, especially in the areas of counselling, empowerment and combating stigma and social exclusion of people living with HIV. The model of Ushirikiano Centre´s approach proves an effective example of developmental and missionary work in sub-Saharan setting.
Keywords: Developmental work – Catholic mission – Education social work – Discussion group – HIV.

Introduction and setting - Ushirikiano centre in Malindi, Kenya

Ushirikiano Centre is a social and educational centre with included HIV Outreach Program. It is situated on the grounds of St. Mary´s Catholic Mission - the Marian shrine and missionary parish served by Capuchin Franciscan Fathers - in Msabaha, a village satellite distant 12 km from Malindi, on the Indian ocean coast of Kenya in sub-saharan Africa. Malindi is a town on Malindi bay at the mouth of the Sabaki River, 120km northeast of Mombasa. Its population is almost 120,000 inhabitants, which makes it the largest urban centre in Kilifi County. Msabaha itself counts roughly 11,300 inhabitants.

The Centre was founded in September 2011 by St. Elizabeth University of Health and Social Work in Bratislava, Slovakia. Originally established as an anti-malnutrition project, after 2 months it transformed into social and educational centre with much wider scope. In December of the same year the HIV Outreach Program was added to its core activities. The Ushirikiano Centre

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✉   **Contact on all authors/ Correspondence author: Jarmila Holkova – e-mail: jholkova@yahoo.com**
    The author is currently enrolled in a PhD program at the Missiology department SEU

was officially inaugurated on January 28th, 2012, by Prof. Vladimir Krcmery, the then Rector of the University.

The mission of the Centre is to provide educational, social and nutritional support to people most in need and complex care to people living with HIV. Its vision is to effectuate positive changes in the lives of community members of all ages, with special attention to children, and to give them a chance for a better future. Its logo reads: Education first! – education as the key to social, economic development and reduction of social inequalities, as the way to a more just society. The motto of the Centre is: "Truth, trust and cooperation! (Responsibility must be shared!)". "Ushirikiano" actually translates from Swahili as "cooperation". The Centre´s activities can be divided into 4 areas: educational (formal: support of schooling, and informal education), social (material and medical assistance, counselling, advocation, community development etc.), malnutrition project and HIV mobile unit. Over the years more and more emphasis has been put on the support of schooling through distance adoption program.

Research aims

In this small- scale research, we were looking for an answer to the question: "*During the 10 years of its existence, how have the clients of the Ushirikiano Centre benefited from its activities, as perceived by the clients themselves?*" The idea behind was to attempt to assess if the Centre is really fulfilling its mission and vision and bringing real change in the lives of its clients and the whole community of Msabaha.

Methods

The method of discussion/focus groups along with the elements of brain storming was utilised. Main data collection took place in the period from the 14th to 18th December 2021. Later, on January 17th, 2022, a separate discussion group was organised for the patients of the HIV mobile clinic. Social workers of the Ushirikiano centre acted as moderators of the groups, giving only one question to the participants: "*As we celebrate 10 years from its foundation, let us make a memory of all the good things we have received from the Centre. How did the Ushirikiano Centre help you when you were in need, what do you feel to be grateful for?*" Anybody in the group could name a benefit received, and if the group agreed it was valid, those that felt that they have received the same benefit were invited to raise their hands and thus give a "vote" to that particular benefit. The moderator was taking notes of the benefits named and the number of votes they received.

Participants of the research

Three discussion groups of caregivers (parents, grandparents, aunties, older siblings…), three discussion groups of "children" aged 10 years and older (including those that have already finished their schooling and reached adulthood) and one discussion group of the HIV mobile clinic´s patients were organised, which gave a total of 102 participants/caregivers, 128 participants/children and 37 participants/patients of the HIV mobile clinic.

Out of 102 participants/caregivers were 99 women and 3 men. The prevalence of women reflects the everyday reality of the Centre, where most of the clients are either single mothers, grandmothers, widows, or women representing their family and taking major responsibility in ensuring education, nutrition and overall care of children. 78% of the caregivers were in the age group of 31-40 years, 18% in the group of 41 to 50 years and only 2% each were in the groups of 51 to 60 and 61 to 70 years respectively. Almost 14 % of participants/adults have been clients of the Centre since its very beginnings 10 years ago. The major part (45%) of the participants, however, have been with Ushirikiano Centre for 6 to 7 years (see table 1).

As for children, out of 128 participants were 70 girls and 58 boys. More than a half (60%) were 15 years and older. In spite of their age, many of them are still attending primary school and that is because their family was unable to financially provide for their schooling at young age; as a result, they were enrolled later, after receiving support from the Ushirikiano Centre. Most of them are now in higher primary classes. Correspondingly, almost 65% of respondents/children are currently attending primary grades 5 to 8 and secondary schools. Lesser proportion of children from lower primary classes is also result of the choice of respondents: as indicated above, only those 10 years and older were included in the research. Similar to caregivers, 14% of children have been part of the Ushirikiano Centre since its establishment 10 years ago. Almost half of them (47%) have been with the Centre for 8 to 9 years (see table 2).

Among the 37 respondents – patients of the HIV mobile clinic - were 26 women/girls and 11 men/boys. 13 adult participants were in the age group from 31 to 40 years, 7 from 41 to 50 years, and 7 were more than 50 years old. 10 participants were underage, from 10 to 17 years old. Almost 60% of the respondents have been attending HIV mobile clinic for more than 5 years, 35% between 3 to 4 years and only 5% (2 patients) were newcomers, attending the clinic for 1 year or less (see table 1).

Results

Discussion groups yielded a list of 39 benefits formulated by parents, 40 benefits formulated by children and 22 benefits expressed by the patients of the HIV mobile clinic.

The benefits named by parents and children were compared and where the inherent meaning was the same, the wording was unified to facilitate comparison. Afterwards, the benefits were grouped according to their meaning and 13 categories were created: 1. Formal education of children (support of schooling), 2. Informal education of children (extra-curricular activities), 3. Upbringing of children and their personality development, 4. Personal growth and development of parents, 5. Material help, 6. Medical help, 7. Advocation, 8. Counselling, 9. Social cohesion and community development, 10. Empowerment, 11. Food support, 12. Malnutrition help, 13. Support of agriculture. These categories were matched with the 3 project areas of the Ushirikiano centre: educational (categories 1-4), social (categories 5-10) and nutritional (categories 11-13).

Among the benefits that received appreciation by the greatest number of parents (90% and more) were educational support (paying the school fees for their children) and providing textbooks, school supplies and other necessary things like hygiene, clothes, solar lamps etc.; possibility to learn useful things at lectures for adults, meet new interesting people at the Centre (many coming from abroad) and experience celebration of feasts (Christmas, Easter, Ushirikiano family day, …) and cultural events both for children and adults. Regular Saturday extracurricular activities for children were also highly appreciated. All the respondents expressed gratefulness for the efforts of the Centre to help them prepare and go through the Covid-19 pandemics (by giving lectures on the topic, providing masks, vitamins, organising field tuition for children when the schools were closed etc.). Very rewarding was the fact that all the respondents stated that they felt greater responsibility for their community/village thanks to their membership in Ushirikiano centre: community development is actually one of the underlying reasons for the existence of the Centre.

As for the children, they similarly highly appreciated support of their schooling, the assistance of the Centre during the covid-19 pandemics, and the possibility to learn many useful things at Saturday children´s lectures and meet new inspiring people at the Centre. Among other benefits that were valued by more than 90% of respondents/children were learning new games, finding best friends, being taught important values like honesty, generosity etc., and receiving food and milk at the Centre. All the children stated they were proud of belonging to Ushirikiano Centre

and felt it like a family, almost all of them even proposed to help the Centre when they grow up. Children listed many other practical benefits, like receiving help to improve their school results, possibility to use the Centre´s library, participating in a trip, learning new skills, improving hygiene habits, even learning not to throw garbage on the ground (otherwise considered normal behaviour in the surrounding society). Almost 80% of children confirmed that the Ushirikiano Centre inspired them to help the needy people or children in the community.

The 22 benefits formulated by the patients of the HIV mobile clinic were also grouped according to their meaning and 11 categories, belonging to 4 different areas, were created. These are as follows: Area MEDICAL CARE: 1. Regularity and default prevention, 2. General health condition, 3. Public health. Area MENTAL HEALTH: 4. Coping with negative emotions, 5. Overcoming stigma and feelings of social exclusion, 6. Positive perspective of life, 7. Self-awareness and the sense of control over one´s life. Area SOCIAL: 8. Economic benefits, 9. Counselling, 10. Community development. Area NUTRITIONAL: 11. Food support and help in malnutrition. Highly appreciated benefits (with 90% and more "votes") were improved regularity in taking anti-retroviral drugs and regular medical check-ups and blood testing of viral load, active approach of the Centre in encouraging the patients to be regular in their attendance of the monthly clinic, better understanding of the infection and the sense of more control over one´s life and health condition. In addition, all of the patients expressed gratefulness for the help during the Covid-19 pandemics (provision of vitamins, face masks, food support, advice…). Appreciated by all the patients is also the fact that HIV mobile clinic saves them both time and money (no need to travel to the Malindi District Hospital and spend many hours in its waiting area). Around 80% of the patients claimed to have learned how to better cope with negative emotions, especially fear and anger; and 70% stated that Ushirikiano Centre helped them overcome feelings of stigma and social exclusion. Very significant is the fact that 87% of the respondents/patients admitted to be more responsible towards other people, especially in preventing the spread of the infection; and 78% claimed to even be able to share their knowledge about the disease and thus help other people in their community.

For the complete results see tables 3, 4 and 5 and diagram 1. Proportion of "votes" and the percentage do not always represent the overall appreciation of the listed benefit by the whole group of respondents. For this reason, the benefits were marked as one of two types – "inclusive" and "exclusive". Benefits marked as "inclusive" are potentially accessible to all the clients and the percentage shows to what extent the clients really take advantage of them and recognise them as helpful. "Exclusive" benefits are positive outcomes of the services offered to only certain part of the clients who had that particular need (e.g. families with malnourished children, older or sick people unable to repair their house by themselves, children with poor school results, families experiencing difficulties in relationships etc.). Thus, the votes for the "exclusive" benefits do not reflect the overall recognition of their importance to the community, rather the number of people that needed that kind of intervention and found it efficacious.

Discussion

The results, for the greater part, correspond with the priorities of the Ushirikiano centre - as was expected, the categories of educational support – formal and informal education - received highest appreciation. Worthy of notice is recognition of positive impacts on family relationships – one third of adult respondents confirmed improved relationships with their partner, two thirds with their children. Similarly, one third of children confirmed improved relationships with their siblings and even half of them improved relationship with their parents. Almost 90 percent of parents acknowledged that the Centre helped them become better parents and 77 percent of children admitted to becoming better children. The latter was confirmed by parents – 81 percent

stated that their children changed, became better thanks to participating in Ushirikiano centre educational activities. A quarter of children and one third of parents stated that even their faith in God and prayer improved. Very rewarding is the fact that the Centre´s efforts to support social cohesion and community development bore its fruit - respondents named 5 benefits for this category (see chart 1 and 2). Also efforts in advocation received decent attention, although the proportion of votes was not the highest for a simple reason – only certain number of clients are in need of that particular kind of intervention. On the contrary, categories of counselling and empowerment received less recognition that would be desirable and thus the related services and interventions of the Centre will require greater attention in the future, especially for adults. Actually, children expressed more recognition for the benefits in the category of empowerment – more than three thirds of them stated the Ushirikiano centre gave them motivation to study hard and achieve their goals, encouraged them to have more confidence in their abilities and helped them improve their English. Support of agriculture does not belong to the priorities of the Centre, however, 61 percent of the respondents expressed gratefulness for the assistance in this field (occasional provision of seeds, tools, good advice,…) which suggest that also this kind of intervention will probably need more consideration in the future, especially due to the impacts of the global warming that are already posing a threat and bringing hardship to subsistence farmers: that are, at least to a certain degree, most of our clients.

For the HIV infection and its management, defaulting is a long-standing problem in many African countries and the HIV mobile clinic was thought-out and started exactly with this in mind. During discussion group meeting, this was actually the first benefit the patients named – HIV mobile clinic helped them take their medicine regularly and even better understand the importance of doing so. Ushirikiano staff put a lot of effort into encouraging regularity and adherence to the treatment – even by walking or cycling miles following paths through the bushy and sandy rural area to look up passive patients directly in their homes. This often-fatiguing effort bore its fruit.

Stigma is another issue of great importance. In the research, 70% of the respondents stated that the interventions of the Ushirikiano Centre helped them overcome feelings of stigma and social exclusion, at least to a certain degree. This indicates there is still room for improvement, although combating stigma and social exclusion needs a holistic approach that would embrace the whole community, not only patients of the HIV mobile clinic. Possible new interventions of the Centre might include educational lectures and awareness programs at local schools, information stands at local cultural, sports events or a weekly market, posters at the Village Chief´s office and local shops etc.

As for counselling, in the case of HIV mobile clinic it received much greater appreciation (81% of respondents) compared to only 44% of respondents/caregivers and 24% of respondents/children. This reflects both the positive outcome of the efforts of HIV mobile clinic team, and the greater need of the people living with HIV to seek advice for their health condition and various difficult life situations connected with it.

While evaluating results it is necessary to keep in mind that most of the respondents were current and continuing clients of the Centre. Among the participants of the research were only few of those that finished the programme long time ago; completely missing were those excluded for serious reasons, those that were not content about the way the Centre works etc. Their inclusion in the research would certainly change the results to a certain degree.

Conclusion

We can conclude that for the most part the Centre has been fulfilling its mission and vision. The model of its interventions proves valid and effective example of developmental and missionary work in sub-Saharan setting, bringing real changes in the lives of people and the local community as a whole. Moreover, all the respondents found the emergency interventions of the Centre important to help them cope with the Covid-19 pandemics.

In the future, more effort needs to be put into the fields of counselling and empowerment, which are effective instruments in supporting self-help and independence of clients and hence promote their dignity, as opposed to growing dependence on assistance. HIV mobile clinic has significantly contributed to improvements in anti-retroviral treatment adherence, responsible behaviour and general physical and mental health of its patients. In the future, ample scope can be given to new ideas for combating stigma and social exclusion of people living with HIV in the local community.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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Table 1: Socio-demographic information of the respondents/caregivers and respondents/patients of the HIV mobile unit

Gender of respondents	N° of caregivers out of 102	%	N° of patients of HIV m.u. out of 37	%
Female	99	97,06	26	70,27
Male	3	2,94	11	29,73
Age of respondents	-	-	-	-
10-17 years	0	0,00	10	27,03
18-30 years	0	0,00	0	0,00
31-40 years	80	78, 43	13	35,14
41-50 years	18	17, 65	7	18,92
51-60 years	2	1,96	4	10,81
61-70 years	2	1,96	3	8,11
71 years and above	0	0,00	0	0,00
How long have the respondents been involved in the Ushirikiano Centre	-	-	-	-
1 year and less	4	3,92	2	5,41
2 years	4	3,92	0	0,00
3 years	11	10,78	8	21,62
4 years	1	0,98	5	13,51
5 years	4	3,92	0	0,00
6 years	23	22,55	7	18,92
7 years	23	22,55	0	0,00
8 years	11	10,78	15	40,54
9 years	7	6,86	0	0,00
10 years	14	13,73	0	0,00

Table 2: Socio-demographic information of the respondents/children

Gender of respondents/children	N° of children out of 128	%
Female	70	54,69
Male	58	45,31
Age of respondents/children	-	-
10 years	6	4,69
11 years	5	3,91
12 years	13	10,16
13 years	17	13,28
14 years	10	7,81
15 years	20	15,63
16 years	26	20,31
17 years and above	31	24,22
How long have the children been involved in the Ushirikiano Centre		
1 year and less	4	3,13
2-3 years	0	0,00
4 years	10	7,81
5 years	10	7,81
6 years	16	12,50
7 years	10	7,81
8 years	34	26,56
9 years	26	20,31
10 years	18	14,06
Enrolment of participants/children in schools or jobs		
1st–3rd grade of primary school	17	13,28
4th grade of primary school	15	11,72
5th–6th grade of primary school	33	25,78
7th-8th grade of primary school	27	21,09
Secondary school	23	17,97
Vocational school	1	0,78
College	1	0,78
Permanent job	1	0,78
Casual jobs	10	7,81

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Table 3: The list of received benefits as perceived by parents – clients of the project Ushirikiano centre in Malindi, Kenya, with the corresponding proportion (number of "votes" out of 102 participants and the percentage) of those that consider the benefit true to their own experience.

N°	Benefit	Benefit type	N° of votes	%
PROJECT AREA: EDUCATIONAL				
Category 1: Formal education of children (support of schooling)				
1	Ushirikiano helped my children go to school and have better future.	Incl.[2]	102	100,00
2	I am happy my children can borrow textbooks from Ushirikiano	Incl.	94	92,16
3	Ushirikiano helped my child/children get better school results (tuition, talking to teachers…)	Excl.[3]	73	71,57
Category 2: Informal education of children (extra-curricular activities)				
4	My children have great experiences on Saturday activities (like carnival, games, Christmas party, theatre…)	Incl.	99	97,06
5	I am happy my children can read storybooks thanks to Ushirikiano library	Incl.	88	86,27
6	My children could go to an interesting trip with Ushirikiano	Excl.[4]	62	60,78
Category 3: Upbringing of children				
7	My children changed, became better when they started attending Saturday lectures and activities, learned new skills…	Incl.	83	81,37
8	Ushirikiano encouraged me to be more active about my children´s schooling (going to school meetings, checking on the results of my children, giving them proper time for homework,)	Excl.	70	68,63
9	Thanks to Ushirikiano the relationship with my children improved	Excl.	69	67,65
10	Ushirikiano helped me when my children were misbehaving	Excl.	43	42,16
Category 4: Personal growth and development of parents				
11	I learned many good and useful things at lectures.	Incl.	102	100,00
12	Thanks to Ushirikiano I met new interesting people	Incl.	102	100,00
13	Thanks to Ushirikiano I got very beautiful experiences (like Ushirikiano family day, visit of the professor Krčmery, …)	Incl.	92	90,20
14	Thanks to Ushirikiano I became a better parent	Incl.	90	88,24
15	I learned new skills at workshops	Incl.	75	73,53
16	Thanks to Ushirikiano my faith in God/prayer improved	Excl.	32	31,37
17	Thanks to Ushirikiano the relationship with my husband/wife improved	Excl.	31	30,39

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2   Incl. = inclusive benefits: potentially accessible to all the clients

3   Excl.= exclusive benefits: positive outcomes of the services offered to only certain part of the clients who had that particular need

4   Trips are the benefit accessible to all the children, however was marked as „exclusive" because the participation is in most cases merit-based (children are chosen according to their school results, diligence, behaviour, active involvement in the life of the centre etc.)

N°	Benefit	Benefit type	N° of votes	%
PROJECT AREA: SOCIAL				
Category 5: Material help				
18	Ushirikiano helped with some necessary things, like school supplies for children, or soap, hygiene things, clothes, solar lamp or something else I needed	Incl.	102	100,00
19	Ushirikiano built a house for me.	Excl.	29	28,43
20	Ushirikiano helped me repair my house	Excl.	11	10,78
Category 6: Medical help				
21	Thanks to Ushirikiano I was able to better prepare and go through the covid-19 pandemics	Incl.	102	100,00
22	Ushirikiano helped me or my children when we had health problems (medicines, medical examinations, accompanying to hospital,…)	Excl.	60	58,82
Category 7: Advocation				
23	Ushirikiano helped me get necessary documents for me or for my children (ID card, birth certificate...)	Excl.	84	82,35
24	Ushirikiano helped me defend my rights with those who were neglecting them or directly trying to harm me	Excl.	59	57,84
25	Ushirikiano accompanied me to the offices when I was not sure how to do things by myself	Excl.	39	38,24
Category 8: Counselling				
26	I got a good advice at Ushirikiano when I needed it, when I had problems and didn´t know how to resolve them by myself	Excl.	45	44,12
Category 9: Social cohesion and community development				
27	Thanks to Ushirikiano I feel greater responsibility for my community/village	Incl.	102	100,00
28	I feel Ushirikiano like a family, I feel good in the group of parents, I belong	Incl.	77	75,49
29	Thanks to the example of Ushirikiano I helped somebody in my community who was in difficulty	Incl.	63	61,76
30	Thanks to what I have learned at Ushirikiano I was able to give good advice to somebody in my community/village	Incl.	51	50,00
31	In difficult times I received good advice, help or consolation from other parents in the group	Excl.	45	44,12
Category 10: Empowerment				
32	I am or I was a member of savings group and it is/was helpful to me	Incl.	69	67,65
33	Ushirikiano encouraged me to be a better person and to have more confidence in my own abilities	Incl.	53	51,96
34	Thanks to Ushirikiano I learned some basic writing/reading and calculation	Excl.	35	34,31
35	Ushirikiano encouraged me to start or improve my own business	Excl.	31	30,39
PROJECT AREA: NUTRITIONAL				
Category 11: Food support				
36	Ushirikiano helped me with food when there was a problem in the family	Excl.	72	70,59

37	Ushirikiano helped me get some animals necessary for nutrition of my family	Excl.	30	29,41
Category 12: Malnutrition help				
38	Ushirikiano helped my child/children when they were malnourished	Excl.	34	33,33
Category 13: Support of agriculture				
39	Ushirikiano helped me in my agricultural activities (provided seeds, tools, good advice,…)	Excl.	63	61,76

Table 4: The list of received benefits as perceived by children – clients of the project Ushirikiano centre in Malindi, Kenya, with the corresponding proportion of those that consider the benefit true to their own experience (number of "votes" out of 128 participants and the percentage)

N°	Benefit	Benefit type	N° of votes	%
PROJECT AREA: EDUCATIONAL				
Category 1: Formal education of children (support of schooling)				
1	Ushirikiano helped me go to school and have better future	Incl.[5]	128	100,00
2	I am happy I can borrow textbooks from Ushirikiano	Incl.	120	93,75
3	Ushirikiano helped me get better school results (by tuition, talking to me, to teachers)	Excl.[6]	113	88,28
Category 2: Informal education of children (extra-curricular activities)				
4	I learned many new and good things at children's lectures.	Incl.	128	100
5	Thanks to Ushirikiano I met new interesting people	Incl.	128	100
6	I learned some new games at Ushirikiano	Incl.	118	92,19
7	I am happy I can read storybooks thanks to Ushirikiano library	Incl.	111	86,72
8	I´ve had great experiences on Saturday activities (like carnival, games, Christmas party, theatre,)	Incl.	100	78,13
9	I could go to an interesting trip with Ushirikiano	Excl.[7]	80	62,50
10	Thanks to Ushirikiano I learned not to throw garbage on the ground	Incl.	78	60,94
11	Thanks to Ushirikiano my hygiene habits improved (cleaning teeth, washing hands,…)	Incl.	60	46,88
12	I learned new skills at Ushirikiano (like acting drama, handcrafts, acrobatics, …)	Incl.	50	39,06
13	I am/was a member of the Junior football club of Ushirikiano	Excl.	48	37,50

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5 Incl. = inclusive benefits: potentially accessible to all the clients

6 Excl.= exclusive benefits: positive outcomes of the services offered to only certain part of the clients who had that particular need

7 Trips are the benefit accessible to all the children, however was marked as „exclusive" because the participation is in most cased merit-based (children are chosen according to their school results, diligence, behaviour, active involvement in the life of the centre etc.)

	Category 3: Personality development of children			
14	Ushirikiano taught me some good values, like being honest, generous…	Incl.	128	100
15	I feel proud of being an Ushirikiano child	Incl.	128	100
16	I became a better child when I started attending Saturday lectures and activities	Incl.	98	76,56
17	Thanks to Ushirikiano the relationship with my parents improved	Excl.	68	53,13
18	Thanks to Ushirikiano the relationship with my siblings improved	Excl.	49	38,28
19	Thanks to Ushirikiano my faith in God/prayer improved	Excl.	30	23,44
Category 4: Personal growth and development of parents				
20	Ushirikiano encouraged my parents to help me more with school (they started coming to school meetings, giving me proper time for homework,…)	Excl.	70	54,69
PROJECT AREA: SOCIAL				
Category 5: Material help				
21	Ushirikiano helped me with some necessary things, like school supplies or soap, hygiene things, clothes, solar lamp or something else I needed	Incl.	60	46,88
22	Ushirikiano helped us build or repair our house	Excl.	12	9,38
Category 6: Medical help				
23	Thanks to Ushirikiano I was able to better prepare and go through the covid-19 pandemics	Incl.	128	100,00
24	Ushirikiano helped me when I had health problems (medicines, medical examinations, accompanying to hospital,…)	Excl.	30	23,44
25	Ushirikiano helped me when I had jiggers	Excl.	30	23,44
Category 8: Counselling				
26	I got a good advice at Ushirikiano when I needed it, when I had problems and didn´t know how to resolve them by myself	Excl.	31	24,22
Category 9: Social cohesion and community development				
27	I feel Ushirikiano like a family, I feel good here, I belong	Incl.	128	100,00
28	When I grow up I would like to help Ushirikiano centre	Incl.	123	96,09
29	Friends at Ushirikiano are my best friends	Incl.	120	93,75
30	I got new friends at Ushirikiano	Incl.	112	87,50
31	Ushirikiano inspired me to serve the needy people or children and the community	Incl.	100	78,13
Category 10: Empowerment				
32	Ushirikiano gave me motivation to study hard and achieve my goals	Incl.	101	78,91
33	Ushirikiano encouraged me to have more confidence in my own abilities	Incl.	98	76,56
34	Being at Ushirikiano helps me improve my English	Incl.	97	75,78

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| 35 | I learned computer skills with Ushirikiano | Excl. | 20 | 15,63 |

PROJECT AREA: NUTRITIONAL

Category 11: Food support

36	I was served some good food at Ushirikiano (pilau, rice and beans,…)	Incl.	128	100,00
37	I was happy when we received milk on Saturdays	Incl.	128	100,00
38	Ushirikiano helped us with food when there was a problem in my family	Excl.	50	39,06
39	Ushirikiano helped our family get some animals (for example through adoption – sponsors)	Excl.	25	19,53

Category 12: Malnutrition help

| 40 | Ushirikiano helped me with porridge when I was too thin | Excl. | 12 | 9,38 |

Table 5: The list of received benefits as perceived by the patients of HIV mobile clinic at Ushirikiano Centre in Malindi, Kenya, with the corresponding proportion of those that consider the benefit true to their own experience (number of "votes" out of 37 participants and the percentage)

Nº	Benefit	Benefit type	Nº of votes	%
AREA: MEDICAL CARE				
Category 1: Regularity and default prevention				
1	Thanks to Ushirikiano I am taking my medicine regularly and understand why it is important to take it every day	Incl.[8]	37	100,00
2	Thanks to Ushirikiano I am getting my medical check-ups and blood testing regularly	Incl.	35	94,59
3	Ushirikiano staff encourages me to come regularly to HIV mobile clinic (by phone calls, personal advice…)	Incl.	36	97,30
4	Ushirikiano staff visited me when I could not come to HIV mobile clinic	Excl.[9]	21	56,76
Category 2: General health condition				
5	Thanks to Ushirikiano my health condition has improved	Incl.	33	89,19
6	Ushirikiano paid for me some additional medical examinations when I was in need	Excl.	15	40,54
7	Thanks to Ushirikiano I was able to better prepare and go through the covid-19 pandemics (thanks to Ushirikiano centre for the advice, vitamins, face masks to protect us from covid-19 etc.)	Incl.	37	100,00

Category 3: Public health				
8	Thanks to Ushirikiano I am responsible towards other people and know how not to spread infection on them	Incl.	32	86,49
AREA: MENTAL HEALTH				
Category 4: Coping with negative emotions				
9	Ushirikiano helped me overcome or reduce **the fear** I felt because of HIV infection	Incl.	30	81,08
10	Ushirikiano helped me overcome or reduce **sadness** I felt because of HIV infection	Incl.	28	75,68
11	Ushirikiano helped me overcome or reduce **anger** I felt because of HIV infection	Incl.	30	81,08
Category 5: Overcoming stigma and feelings of social exclusion				
12	Ushirikiano helped me to overcome feelings of stigma and social exclusion	Incl.	26	70,27
Category 6: Positive perspective of life				
13	Ushirikiano helped me to have more hope for the future	Incl.	20	54,05
14	Thanks to Ushirikiano I can see my life still has an immense value and dignity	Incl.	31	83,78
15	I feel grateful for HIV mobile clinic	Incl.	37	100,00
Category 7: Self-awareness and the sense of control over one´s life				
16	I feel I have my disease more under control now	Incl.	37	100,00
17	HIV mobile clinic helped me to better understand my disease and how to live with it	Incl.	35	94,59
18	During difficult times Ushirikiano motivated me not to give up and fight the infection	Excl.	25	67,57
AREA: SOCIAL				
Category 8: Economical benefits				
19	HIV mobile clinic is saving my time and money, that I would otherwise spend for travelling to Malindi District Hospital	Incl.	37	100,00
Category 9: Counselling				
20	I got some good advice on HIV mobile clinic day (from the doctors, Ushirikiano staff…)	Incl.	30	81,08

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8   Incl. = inclusive benefits: potentially accessible to all the clients of HIV mobile clinic

9   Excl.= exclusive benefits: positive outcomes of the services offered to only certain part of the clients who had that particular need

Category 10: Community development				
21	I was able to share what I have learned at Ushirikiano with other people in my community (for example on how not to get infected, or inviting them to get tested for HIV, to those infected to take medicine regularly, inviting them to HIV mobile clinic, giving good advice how to live good life with HIV infection, how to be responsible...)	Incl.	29	78,38
AREA: NUTRITIONAL				
Category 11: Food support and help in malnutrition				
22	Ushirikiano helped me with food or nutrition supplements (porridge) when I needed it	Excl.	25	67,57

Diagram 1: Clients' recognition of positive outcomes of different social interventions of the Ushirikiano centre (expressed by the average proportion of "votes" received in each category)
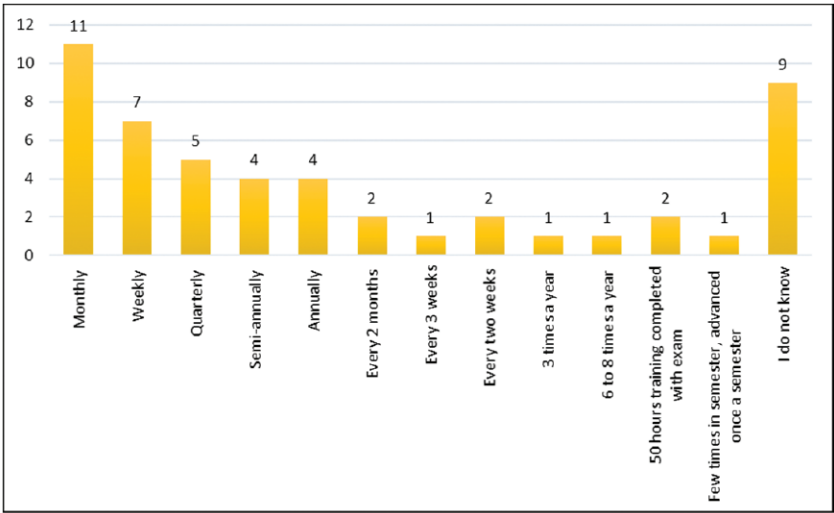
SPECIFICATIONS OF WELLNESS MODEL COUNSELLING IN THE FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLOR PREPARATION

Mária Šmidová ✉

Faculty of Theology, Trnava University in Trnava (SK)

Abstract

Background: The analysis, based on the summarised theoretical and experiential knowledge provides a brief concept of selected specifications of wellness model counselling and the requirements pertaining thereto, which are necessary for the quality professional training of professionally licensed counsellors.

Conclusion: It is important for future counsellors to meet the highest standards demanded by the profession, and to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in order to be professionally qualified in providing counselling in the field they choose for their future professional career. These are, for example: career counselling, school counselling, rehabilitation counselling, mental health counselling, occupational, multicultural, assessment and research counselling, as well as counselling in the field of addiction, criminal activity, or counselling focused on family, children, adolescents, adults, the elderly, etc. Clients must benefit from the adequate professional training of counsellors, guaranteeing that they will receive quality services that meet their needs.

Keywords: Wellness counselling – Education – Programme counselling – Professionally licensed counsellor.

Introduction

The purpose of the KEGA project entitled: *Creation of a distance learning module in pastoral counselling for selected helping professions- social work and pastoral theology* is to apply the method of pastoral counselling to the Slovak environment.[1] It is a method of proactive work with clients in the helping professions, which is currently continuing to prove itself more and more in this field abroad. Therefore, the creation of the module is also focused on education, research and the practical involvement of experts from cooperating institutions from several countries who have many years of experience in the use of counselling. The theoretical preparation of the module is also realised within the project on the basis of intensive

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✉ **Contact on author: Prof. PhDr. Mária Šmidová, PhD. – e-mail: maria.smidova@truni.sk**
To this end, qualitative research with the aim "to determine ways to effectively apply the counselling method to the system of selected helping professions in Slovakia" was also conducted. p. 326, 330. Mária Šmidová, Mária Nemčíková, Katarína Slezáková: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FOCUSED ON THE APPLICATION OF COUNSELLING IN SLOVAKIA ON SELECTED HELPING PROFESSIONS. s. 326-340. Acta Missiologica 15, No. 2 OCTOBER 2021. https://www.actamissiologica.com/ Details may be found in the following article: Mária Šmidová, Mária Nemčíková, Katarína Slezáková: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FOCUSED ON THE APPLICATION OF COUNSELLING IN SLOVAKIA ON SELECTED HELPING PROFESSIONS. s. 326-340. Acta Missiologica 15, No. 2 OCTOBER 2021. https://www.actamissiologica.com/

study of relevant thematic fields.[2] These fields also include research into the training, professional competencies and licenses of counsellors. The analysis, based on the summarised theoretical and experiential knowledge provides a brief concept of selected specifications of wellness model counselling and the requirements pertaining thereto, which are necessary for the quality professional training of professionally licensed counsellors.

The importance of wellness model counselling for client activation

Counselling is a unique system of beliefs about the best way to help people deal with their various difficulties, or emotional personal issues and problems. This help system has gradually evolved into specific client assistance. It is based on faith in the potential and strengths of clients. It helps to cultivate and improve their abilities, skills and functioning. This general understanding of counselling is based on a wellness model that is different from the medical counselling model.

The medical counselling model seeks to return the patient to the level of their functioning prior to their ailment. It was developed by physicians with the intention of treating physical ailments; in the medical model the counsellor diagnoses and „treats" the ailment. The patient's self-actualisation is somehow reduced in this model, which is determined by the counsellor's attitude when working in this counselling model. The success of the model is whether the patient continues to live their life. Should the patient be adversely affected by another ailment, he or she will contact the counsellor again for further treatment. The medical model of counselling mainly employs psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers as parts of one whole. The primary difference between the medical counselling model and the wellness model is the counsellor's attitude when working with the patient.

The objective of the wellness counselling model is that positive mental health, a feeling of comfort, well-being and satisfaction are achievable and possible for everyone. The priority is not the curing of some illness. It does not focus on the treatment of pathologies, but instead seeks to prevent illnesses, minimise them, and improve the overall quality of the client's life by supporting their highest level of functioning across all dimensions of human life. It helps one develop and function to the best of one's ability. Most of the problems experienced by clients who seek out a wellness counselling model are developmental in nature. If these problems can be prevented, counsellors strive for early intervention through client education or training and professional involvement early on in the process. To illustrate, we can provide a brief example of one such early intervention in a client suffering from depression. From the counsellors' position, we educate and inform this client what depression is, what its symptoms look like, and how prevention can be achieved. Experience has shown that, in most cases, it is imperative to reduce the level of stress. In this model, counsellors also try to determine what factors prevent the client from reaching his or her maximum potential.

The wellness counselling model utilises therapeutic techniques supported by verifiable research that do not conflict with the standards of ethical guidelines for the profession, and which include the professional competence and practice of counsellors. Through its influence, it also contributes to increasing the client's life expectancy and supports his or her overall health and well-being. It focuses on „being a challenge" for clients, so that they constantly strive for the highest level of their multi-system health possible.[3]

2   KEGA - application commission No. 2 for new technologies, methods and forms in the teaching process at Trnava University in Trnava. Distance module of education in the field of pastoral counselling. Project No. 006TTU-4/2021, 2021, Project focus and description. p. 4/23.

3   In this context, see for example: J. E. Myers, T. J. Sweeney, and Witmer, J. M. The Wheel of Wellness counseling for wellness: A holistic model for treatment planning. *Journal of Counseling and Development* 78, (No. 3), 2000: 251–266. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2000.tb01906.x ; J. E. Myers and T. J. Sweeney, Wellness

It does not identify the clients' objectives for them, but rather helps them identify them by themselves. Counsellors help their clients achieve their goals; it is in fact a cooperation in which the main objective is to encourage and embolden the clients, to motivate them to be successful. It could be said that counsellors empower clients in such a way that they themselves are able to enact the changes they require.

They work with clients to improve their health on every level. They help clients strive to maintain a sense of well-being by managing a variety of tribulations in a proactive and healthy way.

Every human is a holistic being consisting of interdependent relationships - body, mind, emotions and soul. Counselling involves a person's entirety within all realms of human existence, including the physical, cognitive, emotional, as well as social, cultural, professional and spiritual aspects of life. In other words, the functioning of a person and thus the implementation of wellness counselling is holistic at the mental, spiritual and emotional[4] levels in relationships and in various areas of life, for example in one's career, spiritual life, leisure activities, physical health, environment, financial condition, sexuality, etc.

In counselling, each person/client must be perceived as being unique and it is necessary to treat them in a suitable, individual and specific manner. This includes positive acceptance of their whole person, showing a deep empathic understanding and sincerity in the counselling relationship - between the counsellor and the client. This relationship has a major influence on the client's health. In addition to this relationship, essential components of any therapeutic or healing process are also involved.

Thus, a disorder or dysfunction is never the only focus of the wellness counselling model. Work with clients concerns every phase of their lives. It is based on the conviction that everyone is able to adapt, change and practice lifestyle habits in order to improve their welfare habits. No one is too old or too young to adopt a new behaviour thanks to which they could improve certain aspects of their lives. The wellness counselling model helps clients take responsibility for their health throughout their entire lives. It teaches them to mobilise their own strength in order to solve their problems and improve their overall sense of comfort. For example, through personal control, empowerment and self-activation.[5]

Select important requirements for the professional training of counsellors

If we compare counselling with other helping professions in terms of professional requirements and focus, psychiatrists have the title of M.D. and focus primarily on the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. In the case of psychologists, a doctorate is required and, within their professional focus, more emphasis is placed on evaluation, diagnostics and treatment.

Counseling: The Evidence Base for Practice. *Journal of Counseling and Development* (1 October 2008) https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2008.tb00536.x ; Cummins, P. N., Massey, L., Jones, A. Keeping ourselves well: Strategies for promoting and maintaining counselor wellness. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, 46, (2007): 35–49. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1939.2007.tb00024.x

4   In this context, see for example: Roach, L. F., Young, M. E. Do counselor education programs promote wellness in their students? *Counselor Education and Supervision* 47, (2007). 29-45. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6978.2007.tb00036.x ; Granello, P. Integrating wellness work into mental health private practice. *Journal of Psychotherapy in Independent Practice*, 1, (2000): 3–16. doi:10.1300/J288v01n01_02 ; Lawson, G., Myers, J. E. Wellness, professional quality of life, and career-sustaining behaviors: What keeps us well? *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 89, (2011). 163–171. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00074.x; Lenz, A. S., Smith, R. L. Integrating wellness concepts within a clinical supervision model. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 29, (2010). 228–245. doi:10.1080/07325223.2020.518511

5   In this context, see for example: Bradley, N., Whisenhunt, J., Adamson, N., Kress, V. E. (2013). Creative approaches for promoting counselor self-care. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 8, 456–469. doi:10.1080/15401383.2013.844656

Social workers have a Master's degree and are mainly focused on connecting clients with community resources, diagnostics and treatment. Mental health counsellors have a Master's degree and focus primarily on diagnostics and treatment. Marriage and family therapists have a Master's degree and focus primarily on diagnostics, treatment, marriage and family therapy. If we look at what distinguishes professional counsellors, it is: A developmental approach to helping clients.

As part of their client services, professional counsellors perform inputs, assessments, psychological testing, counselling, personality testing, education, treatment plans, recommendations, coordination services, case management, client, family and community education, documentation, professional / ethical responsibilities and advocacy.

They operate in virtually every field, within various institutions and organisations. The following can be mentioned, for example: elementary, middle, and high schools, private agencies, community agencies, university counselling centres, non-profits/for-profits, mental health agencies-outpatient (non-profit), hospital psychiatric units/floors-inpatient, hospital ERs, as crisis counsellors, in state psychiatric hospitals, correctional institutions, recovery centres for social services, corporations, research institutions, government agencies, private practice, the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, faith-based organisations (churches, temples), consultation services, private practice (career counselling, wilderness programmes, home-based counselling services, crisis and trauma centres, online counselling services, alcohol & drug prevention agencies, grant-funded programs), health departments (alcohol and drug counsellors, residential programmes, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters and centres), employee assistant programmes, and health management organisations.

Therefore, it is very important for them to undergo thorough and quality professional training for this profession. We could briefly outline that, for future counsellors, it is necessary to obtain at least a Master's degree and subsequently further education in the field of counselling, which consists of some of the important components listed: competencies of counsellors, accreditations of counsellors, certifications of counsellors, licenses of counsellors, additional education of counsellors. For more detailed information on the specifications of counsellors' professional identities, their competencies, accreditations, certifications, licenses, additional education and development, or counselling associations, publications, journals, etc., visit the websites of the American Counselling Association (ACA) and National Board for Certified Counsellors (NBCC).

Conclusion

Universities are currently trying to use various counselling models to meet the many needs of their students. That applies to the field of education and support. Many research studies seek to determine which models these are, as well as their specifications.[6] These are important steps in supporting the study of counselling, as counselling students and employed professional counsellors in the 21st Century find themselves in a period when society's approach to healthcare is changing. The important question is what their role will be in this changed system. Their potential is determined by their vision of what they are and what they can become - both personally and professionally. The demanding and relatively hefty professional preparation of counselling students for the counsellor's work aids them in providing quality services to their clients and also in the effort to eliminate negative stigmas plaguing the search for counselling services. Similar concepts based on the analysis of summarised theoretical and experiential knowledge can be a valuable contribution to the discussion of experts working in the field of counselling for many years to come, as well as to the educating of students

6   Ocean, Mia, Damian Hawkins, and Kobitta Chopra. Racial disparities, perceptions, and evaluations: Counselling model choice and the Florida college system. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 38.12 (2014): 1142-1156. https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2012.752770

with the aim of reducing the level of expected risks associated with finding quality and reliable counselling services. They also open up space for researchers who are interested in collaborating to support the provision of counselling to different groups of clients.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
The author hereby declares to be the sole author of this work and has approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author declares that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, the author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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Expert articles

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THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE (SHORT COMMUNICATION) |
Krzysztof Trebski, Peter Caban, José Carlos Bermejo, Libuša Radková, Lucia Ludvigh Cintulová, Mária Šmidová

THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE (SHORT COMMUNICATION)

Krzysztof Trebski [✉1], Peter Caban [2], José Carlos Bermejo [3], Libuša Radková [4], Lucia Ludvigh Cintulová [5], Mária Šmidová [6]

[1] Inst. Centro Spiritualità Nicola D'Onofrio, Bucchianico (IT)
[1,6] Faculty of Theology, Trnava University in Trnava (SK)
[2] Karl-Franzes Universität (Graz, AT)
[3] Universidad Ramón Llull de Barcelona; Universidad Católica de Portugal (Lisboa); Universidad Católica de Valencia San Vicente Mártir; Centro de Humanización de la Salud (CEHS) Tres Cantos, Madrid (Spain)
[4,5] St. Elisabeth University of Health and Social Sciences, Bratislava (SK)

Abstract
Background: Since March 2022, a special survey is conducted with refugees from Ukraine as a result of the war. The survey is being conducted in Slovakia, Italy and Poland in various Crisis Centers and Centers, which focus on helping families and children. It focuses on examining the needs of refugees from Ukraine and what kind of support they would need from helpers and clergy.
Conclusion: Given the dynamically evolving situation, researchers are constantly monitoring the current needs of refugees and their prioritization.
Keywords: Ukraine – Crisis – The needs of the Refugees – Care – Support.

Introduction

In the period from March 2022, a special survey is conducted with refugees from Ukraine as a result of the war. The survey is being conducted in Slovakia, Italy and Poland in various Crisis Centers and Centers, which focus on helping families and children. It is implemented on the basis of qualitative and quantitative strategies. Potential participants are contacted through the contact staff of the mentioned centers. The participation of respondents in the survey is exclusively voluntary and their anonymity is ensured, as well as the protection of their provided information and data. To date 20 April 2022, 150 refugees aged 25-55 have participated in the survey. The purpose of the special survey is to examine what the needs of refugees from Ukraine are and what kind of support they would need.[2]

So far, the survey has revealed following needs of refugees from Ukraine.

After fleeing Ukraine, waiting for asylum in another country, in addition to what they have experienced, is often a source of serious suffering for refugees. This immigration status and waiting for asylum or resettlement is exacerbated by the symptoms of traumatic stress. During this waiting period, refugees say they are often located somewhere and become dependent on the help of others or are in informal working and living conditions in large cities.

According to them, it is the work license and health care that enable the integration into their new society, meaningful integration, and integration into everyday life.

Another problem is that some of them enter our countries less healthy compared to our domestic population and will eventually develop various diseases.

Another serious problem may be the fact that their daily stressors can be as worrying as their trauma associated with the war which they fled from.

These daily stressors may include acclimatizing to a new culture, language, and socio-economic status, as well as orientation in new social systems to gain access to public benefits and health care. The dynamics of their families may also change, for example by the fact that for men in the family may be difficult to find a job that suits their skills and profession and, consequently, it may be challenging to secure their families economically, which can also have a negative effect on their behavior in the family. Some men are already showing more arduous behavior towards wives and children.

Refugees would need that the assisting workers from different backgrounds, who receive them and who come into contact with them, will be able to advocate and provide support, to be accessible in different contexts and have a deep understanding of cultural factors.

Refugees would need to experience a sense of acceptance, deep empathic understanding, consolation, hope, personal strength and a sense of self-worth, a sense that they can count on someone in case they need some help or some kind of support; the feeling that they can share their experiences and needs within the framework of religious beliefs.

Conclusion

Due to the dynamically evolving situation, the researchers continuously monitor the current needs of refugees and their prioritization through a short quantitative questionnaire. The questionnaire also maps the types of services and support they received during the integration process, in the countries where the special survey is being conducted, with an assessment of their degree of usefulness in adaptation/acclimatization.

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✉   **Contact on all authors/Correspondence author: Doc. ThLic. Krzysztof Trębski, Ph.D.**
     email: krzysztof.adam. trebski@truni.sk
     Doc. ThDr. Peter Caban, PhD., Prof. José Carlos Bermejo
✉   **Contact on author: Doc. ThDr. Peter Caban, PhD. – e-mail: caban@mail. muni.cz**
✉   **Contact on author: prof. José Carlos Bermejo – email: jcbermejo@humanizar.es**
✉   **Contact author: Doc. Mgr. Lucia Ludvigh Cintulová, PhD. – e-mail: luciacin83@gmail.com**
✉   **Contact author: prof. Ing. Libusa Radkova, PhD. – e-mail: libusa.radkova@gmail.com**
✉   **Contact on author: Prof. PhDr. Mária Šmidová, PhD. – e-mail: maria.smidova@truni.sk**

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Short communication

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THE FIRST WEEK ON THE UKRAINIAN BORDER IN THE ARMED CONFLICT-SPECTRUM OF MISSION, AND ASSISTANCE (LETTER TO THE EDITOR-NOTE) |
V Krcmery, Julius Lydia Dominique Brichta, Alena Koscalova, Maria Jackulikova, Maria Popovicova, Ladislav Bucko, Michael Olah, Libusa Radkova,
Monika Palockova, Daniela Hennel

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

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THE FIRST WEEK ON THE UKRAINIAN BORDER IN THE ARMED CONFLICT-SPECTRUM OF MISSION, AND ASSISTANCE (LETTER TO THE EDITOR - NOTE)

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V Krcmery [1, 2] ✉, Julius Lydia Dominique Brichta [3], Alena Koscalova [1,] Maria Jackulikova [1], Maria Popovicova [1], Ladislav Bucko [1], Michael Olah [1], Libusa Radkova [1], Monika Palockova [1], Daniela Hennel [1]

[1] St John Paul II School of Missiology SEU Refugee team BA, Lesbos Greece in Vel Bereznij, Uzgorod/V. Nemecke (SK), (UA)
[2] Slovak Med Univ. School of med., Dept. Trop. and Dept ID, and Min of Health, Equity and SEUC Intervention Team Bratislava (SK)
[3] The Knights of Malta-Maltese Help to SK and Ukraine branch BA (SK), Valletta Malta

Abstract
The first week of the Christian Values humanitarian mission undertaken by the Order of the Knights of Malta and Maltese Help, a joint project with the Equity Humanitarian Organisation at the Ukrainian border just 12h from the beginning of the armed conflict is here described and discussed. The spectrum of the type of missionary intervention, and humanitarian and healthcare aid, is compared in the first 4 days to a subsequent period of one to three weeks later.
Keywords: Christian values – Mission in an armed conflict area.

Introduction
Armed conflicts are not exceptional even in Europe, which is considered by migrants and refugees as a "safe continent" (1-4).
However, experience from the last 30-35 years contradicts this viewpoint and several armed conflicts including civil and aggressive wars have been recorded in Central (Southern) Europe despite little attention having been given to the suffering of civilians and the need of mission for migrant refugees of wars, those internally displaced, both homeless and shelter seekers. We must remember the suffering caused by the bombing of Temesvar on 25-28 Dec 1989 during the battles between the Securitate and Army during the final days of Ceaușescu's power, followed by the terrible civil war between parts of former Yugoslavia, followed by the Kosovo crisis in 2000, where up to 160,000 people were found in mass graves, and another million escaped to neighbouring countries.
Other conflicts near Southern Europe - in Syria, Turkey and Iraq - were followed by l.l million refugees fleeing to Western Europe via the Balkans, Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary to Austria and Germany, and the civil war in Karabach which led to an official war conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia in 2020-21. Finally, it should come as no surprise that military aggression

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✉ **Contact on all authors/Correspondence author: Dr. h. c. Prof. MUDr. V. Krcmery email: tropicteam@gmail.com**

Letter to the editor - note

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against Ukraine, after 10 years of silent conflict in Crimea and East Ukraine ended in war in Ukraine, followed by the exodus of about 5 million people, either internally displaced or as refugees to neighbouring countries, declared in just the first week as the largest humanitarian migrant catastrophe since WWII.

Methods

The spectrum of humanitarian assistance, healthcare intervention and Missionary Psychosocial support is compared between the first 3-4 days and the subsequent week. The multidisciplinary team was composed after 4 days and led by the Knights of Malta of SK, who were at the border first and worked closely with the Migration and Border Police until supplemented by the SEUC migrant Health Team from Lesbos, Greece, who had been working there for 4 years with migrants because of the Syrian crisis, joined by the Equity and Ministry of Health Intervention team, composed of Humanitarian workers, a doctor, nurses, a head nurse, and a Crisis Intervention Mission.

The first hotspot at the border built by the Maltese Order was after 3 weeks expanded also to the governmental Hotspot in Michalovce, providing, along with food and transport, also sheltering and government aid. Each service running 24/7 was composed of one Maltese professional and 6 volunteers accompanied by 2 nurses in night shifts and a doctor and a nurse from 8 am to 8 pm.

Results

I. A comparison of the spectrum of war refugees
First 3 days: whole families entered, about 12,000 per day
Day 4-5: Students from large universities in Kharkiv, Kiev and others formed about 30 percent, but males of UA nationality were already on day 3 returning back for army recruitment
Day 6: Mothers and children formed 95 percent of refugees
2. A comparison of medical statuses
During the first week, the primary health population was met in our Hotspots; only a few acute cases such as suffocation, hypertensive crisis and unbalanced diabetes were recorded, including I birth, the rest was formed by exhaustive and post-traumatic stress due to bombing and shelling of escape routes
3. A comparison of psychosocial assistance and types of mission
Food after 12-30 hours of travel and 4-16h of waiting in low temperatures was very welcomed, followed by temperature/fluid resuscitation requiring first aid with fluid saturation, perfectly performed by the Maltese volunteers. Supplying medications for chronic diseases and treatment of PTSD and other psychosocial disorders. A major barrier for psychological help was the language barrier, since most volunteers spoke English and most migrants after day 5-6 spoke only Ukrainian or Russian. Frequent organisational changes with the aim of providing better help made the aid-giving smooth in the first week, a usually more administratively difficult task.

Discussion

Comparing our experience on the Hungarian/Austrian Border in 2015-16, the checkpoint on the UA/SK border was initially, due to the Maltese Order and subsequently by St Elizabeth University plus Equity plus the Ministry of Health Intervention team, better organised and more effective, also because in HU/AT the migrants were arriving in trains in groups of 2-3 thousand, but here small groups continued and it was easier to approach them family by family in e.g. I min intervals (housing advice, health advice, etc.).The second difference was that primarily a healthy young population was escaping in contrast to the middle to elderly population during the Syrian and Iraqi crises 7 years earlier.

In comparison to Lesbos 2018-21, much less aggression and much fewer young migrants of war of Afghan and sub-Saharan African origin have been seen (100 to I, in comparison to Lesbos).

Governmental help came much earlier, after I week, in comparison to e.g. our experience in Karabach 2020-21 or in 2015-16 at the Hegyeshalom HU hotspot. No outbreaks of enteric or gastric diseases were observed during the first 2 weeks, and when voluntarily tested for COVID, positive samples were obtained only exceptionally.

Conclusion

During previous conflicts such as in former Yugoslavia 30 years ago, Kosovo 22 years ago, Syria 10 years ago, Iraq 8 years ago, the Balkans 6 years ago, etc., according to our experience, no classical epidemics such as in Rwanda or Yemen or Haiti, where outbreaks of Cholera were observed, have been detected.

The primary healthy population, e.g. young families with healthy children and mothers can "survive" without immobilizing illnesses on such long suffering journeys. Surprisingly, COVID 19 was more frequently observed in Slovak volunteers than in Ukrainian migrants of war, again because symptomatic diseases preclude any kind of travel or migration. We have to remember that all conflicts within at least the last 30 years, to use the experience in various places of Central and Eastern Europe, including Turkey and Caucasus regions, have had an impact on migration to the EU. Multidisciplinary teams including nurses, psychologists and priests, travel managers and social workers must be prepared in every border town, especially in countries bordering non-EU countries.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS
All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
All the authors declare that the research involved in the article and the publication of the article were carried out without having any business, financial or other relations and/or circumstances that could be considered as a potential conflict of interest. At the same time, all the authors declare that there is no conflict of interest related to this article or its review.

Letter to the editor - note

THE HEART IN THE HEARTLESS WORLD. STRUGGLES FOR WHAT IS CENTRAL TO HUMAN LIFE*

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Mireia Ryšková ✉, Libor Ovečka ✉

Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague (CZ)

Another international conference organised within the framework of the UNCE project *Theological Anthropology in Ecumenical Perspective* was held online due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This type of conference is not ideal, as there is a lack of informal meetings between the participants and there is no space for debate outside the time allocated to the conference. On the other hand, it allowed scholars from different countries to participate who might otherwise not have been able to attend the conference for various reasons. The conference provided space for public presentations by young researchers, i.e. doctoral and post-doctoral students, as well as experienced ones.[1]

The conference focused on the perennial problem of "what is actually important in life", which was looked at from various perspectives in the individual contributions and presentations. Although the main title hints at considering this world heartless, the conference was not primarily about criticism of the contemporary world but about searching for a way to be a genuine human being in today's complicated world. The title of the conference, taken from Karl Marx's quote on religion (religion as "the heart in a heartless world"), highlights a theological perspective in interpreting contemporary world problems.

The conference was divided into five primary thematic sections:

I. The Problem of the Separation between Human Interiority and Exteriority
II. Patristic Inspirations
III. Finding the Heart in Liturgy (Panel discussion – theses of Ivana Noble)
IV. Is the World Heartless? The Hermeneutics of a Place
V. Searching for the Heart in Literature

These primary thematic sections were accompanied by presentations and discussions in small groups conducted primarily by doctoral and post-doctoral students.

Ivana Noble opened the three-day conference by talking about several fundamental topics using quotes uttered by various thinkers and artists whose common denominator can be found in their vision of overcoming human alienation from oneself, others, creation, and God.

The first topic of the conference was raised by Tim Noble (A Critical Re-Evaluation of the Theological Reception of Karl Marx) who reflected on Marx's "appreciation" and criticism of religion

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✉ **Contact on author: Doc. PhDr. Mireia Ryšková Th.D. – email: mireia.ryskova@ktf.cuni.cz**
✉ **Contact on author: Doc. PhDr. Libor Ovečka Th.D. – email: ovecka@ktf.cuni.cz**

and the possibility of applying Marx's ideas to liberation theology. Both the title of the conference and its subtitle highlight the gravity of the problem of transforming the world to make it a place to live for all, which constitutes a challenge for contemporary Christians, as well. The relationship between interiority and exteriority was addressed by Aristotle Papanikolaou of Fordham University (The Problem of the Separation between Human Interiority and Exteriority), who talked about overcoming the dichotomy of knowledge and love in the attainment of *theosis* from the position of orthodoxy (based primarily on the ideas of Maximus the Confessor). At the end of his lecture, he used the experience of violence (from the perspective of both the victim and the perpetrator) as an example of the interconnectedness of the human body and soul, the experience of which is not only inscribed in the inner life of an individual or a generation but is transmitted through generations, even genetically. The subsequent summaries and comments formulated by Davor Džalt and Michaela Kušnieriková provided space to respond to the contributions presented in the discussion.

The second section dealt with patristic inspiration where the two main presentations were given by Václav Ježek (The Heart in the Hesychast tradition) and Nevena Dimitrova (The Theology of Meditation in St. Maximus the Confessor and its Modern Reception). Ježek's extensive presentation emphasised the importance of the heart as the central organ of cognition and thought, as well as of feeling (love), following the biblical tradition. The unity of cognition and love, as postulated by the Hesychast tradition, albeit in differentiated views, is necessary for man to get to know God, and through Him the world. Nevena Dimitrova focused her attention on the importance of purity of heart in order to discover one's true self and to achieve "mature innocence". Viorel Coman then summarised and critically evaluated the main ideas behind both presentations, emphasising the need for scientific reflection, the connection between mind and heart (science and spirituality) and the development of the human being as a whole (which includes, for example, sports and culture). People with disabilities need to be integrated into the reflection on man as the likeness of God (the likeness of the perfect creator). At present, it is important to adequately "translate" the patristic tradition into the contemporary world.

The next part of the conference consisted of work in small groups:

Group A (Felipe Dittrich Ferreira: Creation beyond Nature; Pavel Pola: Concept of the Heart in Viktor E. Frankl and Nicolae Steinhardt; Pavol Bargár: Pursuing Shalom in a City: A Theological Reflection on the Beautiful and the Good in Urban Settings);

Group B (Bogdan Hulea: The Contribution of André Scrima to the Relationship Between Christianity and Islam in Today's World; Marieke Maes: The Meaning of Religion in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur confronted with Marx's Critique of Religion; Denys Kondyuk: The Spiritual and Personal Dimension of Beauty in the City: An Analysis of the film *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* /2019/);

Group C (Ondřej Fischer: Benedict's Concept of "Attentive Heart" in his *Deus Caritas Est* Seen in the Light of Francis' *Laudato Si* and the Needs of Christian Professional Social Practice; Martina Kopecká: Celebration of Easter 2020 and Liturgical Life in Churches during Quarantine in Connection with COVID-19; Jan Lamser: Moltmann's Struggle for Identity Through Play);

Group D (Gilija Žukauskienė: Down to the Bottom of the Mystical States; Jiří Dosoudil: Created in God's Image: A Search for Authentic Humanity; Irena Pavlovich: Orthodoxy: A Social Capital for Civil Society).

Interesting activities

The group work allowed mainly doctoral and post-doctoral students to contribute short presentations – differentiated in terms of topics – dealing with the main topic from different perspectives, especially in application to contemporary life and the environment.

The programme continued with the third section in the form of a panel discussion on the role of liturgy in life, prompted by questions from Ivana Noble (e.g. what is the heart of liturgy?; what does liturgy mean for the contemporary man in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic?). Václav Ježek, Pavel Pola, Martina Kopecká, Martin Kováč, and Jana Hoffmanová participated in the panel discussion. The topic revolved mainly around the possibilities of liturgy in the current crisis, which is making it impossible to celebrate the liturgy under normal conditions, i.e. in person and surrounded by the community. From the experience of the respondents and the participants of the discussion, the absence of real community and common liturgy (which referred primarily to the celebration of Easter) emerged as the core downside. Nevertheless, the panel's participants also observed certain upsides: the search for new ways to maintain a personal relationship with God and the liturgy, the re-examination of stereotypes, the emphasis on small groups, the experience of the lack of liturgy (i.e. the new-found awareness of the importance of celebrating liturgy together), and the desire for engagement with others.

The final two sections were devoted to the issue of place/space (i.e. the world) and literature.

The fourth section entitled Is the World Heartless? A Hermeneutics of a Place offered two very thought-provoking contributions, one by Georgios Vlantis: What is Central in a Hermeneutics of a Place, and the other by Katherine Shirck Lucas: How Cities Remember: A Case Study from the South of the U.S. Vlantis elaborated on his theme using the example of A. E. Kattan's Quasem Schneider in Beirut. In his presentation, he showed that place is a relative category (never objective or neutral) and its perception and experience have many dimensions. The hermeneutics of a place is always linked to the individual perception of place, which, however, evolves gradually on different levels. Katharine S. Lucas connected her presentation to a reflection on contemporary events happening in America (Black Lives Matter), considering the place as a public space that contains symbols (monuments) of a past with which one cannot identify. Thus, she confirmed Vlantis' thesis that place (space) is never a neutral, objective category, it always depends on what it is connected to and what takes place in it. Her presentation then raised the fundamental question: how can one connect the Christian message with the oppression of black people? She sees a process of healing of memory using a common dialogue about the past, in which the churches should play a role, as the only way forward. Reconciliation in relation to the past can never be the first step, but rather the last step as the culmination of a process of gradual common processing of the past.

The last, fifth, section entitled Searching for the Heart in Literature consisted of two presentations dealing with literary topics. Pavel Hošek in his presentation entitled The Journey with J. R. R. Tolkien through Darkness to the Heart of the Good highlighted the significant role of literary works (using Tolkien's literary works as an example) for the spiritual growth of the reader who – like the hero of the novel – undergoes development from original innocence through the world of evil and the struggle with it all the way to maturity, which allows him to see the world from a new perspective and with confidence in the victory of the good, which differs from the original naivety. Michael Kirwan's lecture entitled Is There Any Way out of the Heart of Darkness? Conversations with Joseph Conrad pointed out the destructive power of evil, as presented with considerable scepticism by Conrad himself in his novel, without arriving – unlike Tolkien – at any catharsis. In the context of The Heart of Darkness, which demonstrates the almost monstrous darkness of the soul of the novel's mysterious protagonist (in a way corresponding to Nietzsche's "superman" and the death of God) and the destructive power of African nature, which at the same time becomes a symbol of the destruction of man, Kirwan questions the cosmological context and moral responsibility for a common home for all life in the contemporary world, in light of the issues addressed in Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si and a document from the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region. In his response to both contributions, Pavol Bargár praised their moral appeal and their emphasis on the power of literary works to grasp reality and ask insistent questions.

The online conference was closed by Ivana Noble. Although the entire conference took place in a virtual space, there were moments of united (albeit distant) prayer and sharing.

The conference itself can then be seen as s contribution to the theme: one of the most essential features of human life (the heart of existence) is the possibility of sharing, not only by simple communication of thoughts but also by sharing of concerns and joys, a common effort to preserve this world and the meaning of life. Technology, which often isolates and distances people and can be used very destructively, this time served not only to connect people across continents but above all to create an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and understanding. Paradoxically, this understanding was perhaps even a little deeper compared to face-to-face communication and in-person presence.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All the mentioned authors significantly, directly, and intellectually contributed to the work and approved its publication.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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Interesting activities

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Claus Muss I-GAP, Rresearch centre, Vienna (AT)

Wojciech Surmiak, University of Silesia in Katowice, (PL)

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Michaela Mulera Catholic university of Eastern Africa Nairobi (KE)

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Harm Goris, Tilburg University, The Netherlands, (NL)

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Nicodemus Mwanzia Kimuli Catholic university of Eastern Africa Nairobi (KE)

Ivan Szabo St. Elisabeth Tropical Programme, St. Lesley College, Eldoret (KE)

Muhammad Israr, Shaheed Benazir Bhuto University Sheringal (PK)

Grazyna Debska Krakowska Akademia im Andrzeja Frycza Modrzewskiego (PL)

Victor Namulanda Wanjala Catholic university of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, (KE)

Małgorzata Jagodzińska Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Płocku (PL)

Sana Ullah University of Malakand Chakdara Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (PK)

Michael Howlett PhD, ThD, Waterford Institute of Technology, Ireland, (IE)

Claudiu T. Arieşan, University of the West, Timişoara, (RO)

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Katarina Mulama, Catholic university of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, (KE)

Vlastimil Kozon, Vienna General Hospital - Medical University Campus, Vienna (AT)

Thomas Simonek UNHCR Camp Moria Lesbos, Greece (GR)

Peter Marks UNHCR camp Lesbos SEU Migrant Health Program, Greece (GR)

Aleksandar Cubranic, Clinical Hospital Centre Rijeka (HR)

Muhammad Israr, Shaheed Benazir Bhuto University Sheringal (PK)

Zofia Szarota Pedagogical University of Cracow (PL)

Miriam Schifferdecker, Martin Luther College, SEU, Petrovac, Serbia (RS)

Victor Namulanda Wanjala Catholic university of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, (KE)

Małgorzata Jagodzińska Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Płocku (PL)

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