

Ecology of the Mass

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Abstract: *Even based on a cursory observation we can see that in today's world "ecology" and "ecological issue" are very popular terms. This tendency, strengthened by the teaching of Pope Francis, comes to theology. Some theologians try to incorporate ecological theses into their research. Unfortunately, they often do it in a wrong way. Quite often, the ecology and ecological issue are understood colloquially as the opposition to the use of natural resources. The aim of this text is to show what the environmental paradigm is and how it can be used in theological research. The publication describes the ecology concept of the Holy Mass. It also explains the key issues of this theory.*

Keywords: *Ecology. Ecological paradigm. Liturgy. Mass. Methodology.*

Introduction: context, methodology and sources

Recently, issues concerning environmentalism and the ecology of various realities are present not only in everyday life conversations and quasi-scientific statements, but also in truly scientific reflection. It is surprising, therefore, that references to ecology and more or less successful attempts to include it in current research are lacking in theology. This situation is being improved by the "ecological pope"¹, whose teaching (according to methodological assumptions) is one of the principle sources of theological studies².

The results of the above circumstance, creating a new ecological trend in theology, do not always prove beneficial for the latter. Often, this lack of benefits manifested by uncertain, incoherent or simply untrue conclusions is either due to the wrong combination of such different sciences or is a result of a simplistic understanding of ecology and environmentalism. The broad semantic field of ecology and related expressions obviously results in the danger of making them equivocal.

Our study aims to clarify doubts arising in the context of ecology and environmentalism and organizes the above-mentioned (at least potential) confusion, systematizing the issues that appear to be most important for the concept described. The specific goal is to show what we understand as the ecology of the Mass. However, this is not, which is worth emphasizing at the very beginning, about capturing the

¹ Pope FRANCIS is often characterized by this or a similar term. This is due to the so-called ecological issue, which was very clearly articulated in the encyclical *Laudato si'* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana 2015).

² See: NAPIÓRKOWSKI, S.C.: *Jak uprawiać teologię?*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecejzalnej, 1991, p. 38.

ecological dimension of the Mass, and there is no shortage of publications on this.³ We are now dealing with the scientific concept that can be called the ecology of the Mass, which is the basic subject of this study.

The research problem is how and according to what key we should undertake and conduct our reflection on the ecology of the Mass. Specific problems are created by the issue of the ecological paradigm and its use in non-natural sciences, the identity of the ecology and the ecology of the Mass as well as the potential (and observed) perception of these issues. In addition to these typically methodological issues constituting the contents of the first two parts of the publication, the third and fourth parts will briefly focus on the characteristics of one of the basic factors of the environmental approaches, namely the natural environment of the Mass and on the issue of variability in the observed reality, also essential for ecology.

Achieving the above-mentioned goal requires using ecological (natural) and theological source texts, including Church documents. The former mainly serve to show what ecology and the ecological paradigm are. The presence of the latter in this texts, as it turns out, has a clearly theological character, and it need not be explained. The legal acts referred to and publications issued by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education are worth noting, which are the sources of the nomenclature used in the field of the theory of science and its administration. Publications on theological and ecological topics are also of great help, and reference will often be made to them in source studies in which ecological and theological relations are already worked out and ordered and may constitute a model for this type of study.

The ecological paradigm

Ecology is a tool used to organize our reflection on the ecology of the Mass, and so in accord to the title of the article and contents of this study, ecology is a kind of model and reference point for this trans-disciplinary concept. This study follows current systems and nomenclature currently used in Poland based on a scientific discipline⁴ that explores and describes interdependencies that occur between living organisms and the surrounding physical and biotic environment⁵ or more generally, it is literally the science of organisms in 'their homes' and in their family environment⁶.

³ For the sake of reference, two texts can be quoted here, which, in the bibliography attached to them, contain quite extensive documentation regarding publications dealing with the issue being discussed. See: WYROSTKIEWICZ, M.: *Ekologiczny wymiar Eucharystii. Czy Eucharystia jest ekologiczna?* in: SŁOTWIŃSKA, H. (ed.), *Siedem sakramentów świętych w nauczaniu katechetycznym*, Lublin: Gaudium, 2007, p. 259-306; KLUCZKOWSKI, A.: *Homo ecologicus na Mszy świętej*, in: *Iuvenes quaerentes 2017*, MIELNIK, D. (ed.), Lublin: Koło Naukowe Teologów KUL, 2017, p. 33-49.

⁴ See: *Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 8 sierpnia 2011 r. w sprawie obszarów wiedzy, dziedzin nauki i sztuki oraz dyscyplin naukowych i artystycznych*, Dziennik Ustaw, 2011, no. 179, item 1065.

⁵ See: VILLE, C.A.: *Biologia*, BILEWICZ-PAWIŃSKA, T. et al. (polish transl.), 9th edition, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Rolnicze i Leśne, 1990, p. 832; BEEBY, A. -BRENNAN, A.M.: *First Ecology*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. XX; BADINO, G.: *Ecologia*, in: FASOLO, A. (ed.), *Dizionario di biologia*, Torino: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 2003, p. 302.

⁶ See: VILLE: *Biologia*, p. 832.

It is not difficult to notice from the characteristics of ecology outlined above that the important issues are the relationships that connect the observable reality with its environment. We can even say that it is a science concerning relationships. It is the perception of the environment, meaning the natural habitat of an individual, and caring for its role in this existence that is the source of ecological thinking. If this environment, a “house” or “home” (Greek *oikos*), from which ecology derives its name, is (according to the name) the basic research subject of our concept, it is impossible not to appreciate the relationships that this environment dictates. In order to talk about the environment at all, we must think about the relationships that determine it.

This is not something abstract, it is not a reality that exists independently (by itself and thanks to itself), but always in combination with another for which this environment is made, thus, it is always a unique derivative (that is to say: it is a “dependent reality”)⁷. Ecology, although it does not ignore it, does not focus on the identity (essence) of the observed individual (this is done by other sciences, for example in the case of ecology in its basic natural meaning, such as zoology or botany), but above all focuses on the effects of contacts within the environment, on the mutual influence between the environment and its reality. To a large extent, in ecological research, the point is to see how the environment affects one’s identity (shaping and preserving identity) and implementing the basic functions and goals of the studied object (and also shaping it). It is also important to understand what effects the environment has on the object that the environmentalists have identified as the basic unit for their research (or for a specific, concrete ecological concept).

The ecologist sees things broadly, beyond the observed individual, and tries to notice the relationship in which the described subject is obviously (naturally) engaged. Thus, it is about such relationships that are not accidental, that do not arise just because of something else, nor are forced by any action, but are formed as a result of the very fact of being a given (analyzed) individual unit (the basic subject of the concept of ecology). They are therefore necessary relationships, necessary for coming into existence and later maintaining the identity of this object; they are relationships thanks to which the object is just what it is and thanks to which it enters into a state that can achieve its natural purpose of existence. Looking at this issue from another viewpoint (“negatively”), we can say that we are referring to relationships whose non-existence or annihilation would mean a change in the subject’s identity, inability or at least a serious impediment in maintaining its natural potential, and hence achieving its sense and purpose of existence.

It is obvious that, despite the fact that ecology naturally addresses relationships, it is also necessary to know the identity (essence) of the studied object. If, as indicated above, and as publications on ecology state and prove⁸, ecological is a unique synonym for compatibility with nature, this means that it is an expression of main-

⁷ See: SOLOMON, E. – BERG, L. – MARTIN, D. – VILLE, C.A.: *Biologia*, BOROWSKA, A. et al. (polish transl.), Warszawa: Multico, 1996, p. 1120-1121; Wyrostkiewicz, M.: *Ekologia ludzka. Osoba i jej środowisko z perspektywy teologicznomoralnej*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2007, p. 25-27.

⁸ See: WYROSTKIEWICZ: *Ekologia ludzka*, p. 71-74.

taining an identity and a tendency to keep such a state. Here, this means a relationship with the environment that makes it possible to achieve the inscribed in this identity natural purpose of the existence of the studied reality, updating its natural potentials, and the knowledge and understanding of nature (its identity, essence and separating it from what is accidental and only seemingly builds identity) is a prerequisite for conducting research using the ecological paradigm.

The research scheme outlined above, generally speaking, requires focusing primarily on the functioning of the ecosystem, meaning to a large extent on the relationships between an individual and their environment which creates an ecological paradigm. A study using it and going beyond the field of biological sciences is a manifestation of trans-disciplinary scientific research (as we have already pointed out). Undoubtedly, this is about transferring schemes and tools developed and used within a certain area of the knowledge (a certain discipline) to another⁹.

Even after such a brief outline of the understanding of ecology and environmentalism, it does not seem necessary to justify the thesis that conducting research using this concept is not limited to developing methods that help to secure some reality (e.g. nature or one of its elements) before man's civilization activity, as some would like. Of course, concern for the naturalness of the relationship and the identity of the observed individual implies taking care that the environment does not suffer sudden and adverse changes, but it is also not limited to preventing and eliminating them. Limiting ecology as a science, and ecological thinking in general, to simply caring for and maintaining something (e.g. nature, but not only) in its undisturbed state is a serious reduction that can distort the actual goals and effects of ecological concepts¹⁰.

The world's natural environment, which we will need to draw our attention to, is dynamic. Ecological research, taking this into account, is also aimed at finding ways to maintain the natural state, or identity, of all studied realities. We can say that it wants the examined beings to function "at home", meaning in conditions conducive to development, and thus achieving their goal and realizing their sense of existence. This is not about introducing a state of equilibrium, but about studying and maintaining the status quo, which is also expressed in dynamism.

⁹ The understanding of trans-disciplinary in science used here is in line with the information in the National Program for the Development of Humanities used by officials of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (see: *Narodowy Program Rozwoju Humanistyki – informacje*, <http://www.nauka.gov.pl/narodowy-program-rozwoju-humanistyki>, [access: 10.1.2018]). However, this is not the only understanding of this term (see: KOZŁOWSKI, J.: *Narodziny i rozwój dyscyplin naukowych*, <http://kbn.icm.edu.pl/pub/kbn/sn/archiwum/9601/kozlow.html> [access: 10.1.2018], B. NICOLESCU: *Manifesto of Trans-disciplinarity*, VOSS, K.C. (english transl.), New York: State University of New York Press, 2002).

¹⁰ See: LISIECKA, H.: *Ochrona środowiska, czy ekologia*, in: DOŁĘGA, J.M. – CZARTOSZEWSKI, J.W. (ed.), *Ochrona środowiska w filozofii i teologii*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo ATK, 1999, p. 260-264; WYROSTKIEWICZ, M.: *Od ekologii do ekologii ludzkiej*, in: NAGÓRNY, J. – GOCKO, J. (ed.), *Ekologia. Przesłanie moralne Kościoła*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2002, p. 89-93.

The subject and object of ecology of the Mass

Based on the above information about the ecological paradigm, particularly thinking about the essence of ecology, and bearing in mind the origin of its name, we cannot come to a different conclusion that the fundamental issue for the ecology of the Mass is to recognize and describe its “home”, meaning that it exists in such and no other form, leading to our examining how this affects its identity. It is also important to notice how its presence affects the environment. The basic unit here is the Mass. The environment is the surroundings that allow it to exist and achieve its goal and realize the meaning of its existence.

In the search for environmentalism, meaning reflecting on some object in the ecological spirit, this is about describing everything that comes from nature and determines its identity, as we have already pointed out. With regard to the Mass, this will mean several factors. The first element, which seems to be obvious on the basis of earlier information, is to emphasize its nature. We cannot talk about the ecology of the Mass without knowing in detail what it is and what it is for.

It seems, therefore, that there is no need to explain that it is a matter of separating all that is a kind of addition created over twenty centuries of celebrating the Eucharist and its entire cult from important matters, that which comprises its essence and testifies to its true identity. It is not difficult to notice that for the ecology of the Mass, not only are the theses worked out by liturgists important, including those dealing with the theology of the liturgy, and not only, as it is sometimes believed, experts in the law. In addition, the research results of dogmatists, moralists and Church historians, especially those on the liturgy, need to be taken into account.

Ecology of the Mass can be associated with a call to work out a way of celebrating that would only use “natural” products that constitute its material needs like robes and so on during the celebration, which in this case would mean things created by “natural forces” without the help of man. Such an understanding is fundamentally wrong, not only because accepting it would require rejecting everything that would be nature’s own work, but above all because it would be difficult to set the boundary of this naturalness¹¹. To a less radical degree, the environmentalism of the Mass could be equated with the use of only such things that were processed by man, but without the participation of any elements and tools resulting from the use of something artificial, i.e., that does not exist as such in nature. This would be about “ecological” wine, bread, candles, and robes, but also about not using electricity.

Undoubtedly, it is not difficult to imagine the existence of such pseudo-ecological approaches. Although some theses emerging in this frame of mind (e.g. concern for the purity of the bread and wine) are commendable, yet as we can see from the present discussion, they cannot be considered the essence of the concept referred to as the ecology of the Mass.

The specialist in ecology in the “possessive case” (with a determiner) does not have to be so in the area of the natural sciences, as it is not difficult to deduce from

¹¹ See: WYROSTKIEWICZ, M.: *Kwiaty i komputery. O przyrodzie i Internecie jako składnikach naturalnego środowiska ludzkiego*, in: MIELCAREK, K. et al. (ed.), *Znaki czasu – czas znaków. Tydzień Eklezjologiczny 2007*, series: *W trosce o Kościół*, vol. 9, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2008, p. 114-117.

the information presented above, and he is not always a naturalist. To practice ecology on “something”, one should understand and use the ecological paradigm outlined above. It is this that places the researcher in the ranks of ecologists, not the subject of reflection related with nature.

An ecologist of the Mass is necessarily a theologian who, understanding its nature, has the tools and methods to subject it to scientific research. Ecology in its original meaning is here only a key ordering our thinking, a template indicating, or even in some way imposing the directions of research. An ecologist of the Holy Mass, meaning a theologian studying the paradigm of environmentalism, possesses pertinent knowledge on the Eucharistic in the area of dogmatic theology and theology of the liturgy, reaches to moral theology, theology of spirituality and pastoral theology when seeking an answer to the question of how in a specific historical and social situation celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass preserve its identity to Christ, as well as analyzes the anthropological and social effects of the Mass. The ecology of the Mass, understood in this way, fits the liturgical theology trend, which recently began to reveal its identity as part of systematic theology and strengthen its place in knowledge.

The ecological habitat of the Mass

The ecological concept of the Mass which has been mentioned many times and which is still worth emphasizing cannot focus only on itself. In accord with the ecological paradigm, which became the main subject of the first part of this reflection, the essence of the ecological approach points to the relationships within the reality constituting the subject of ecological reflection; it is necessary to notice, describe and analyze the environment, i.e. the ecological habitat. Thus, it is about showing with what and how the Mass is connected to it, and this bond determines its identity; it is about working out the concept of the natural environment of the Mass¹².

In the first place, we must draw attention to its need to be in relation to God. In this situation, it is God who appears to be the basic component of the Mass' environment¹³. Its existence depends on God who gives it meaning and determines its identity. Although this thesis appears to be controversial because God can be rightly seen as an integral part of the Mass, the perspective adopted in this study allows us to see God as the environment in which the Mass takes place. It is worth emphasizing that this is not about the very existence of God (or even a god), but about the basic subject of the Catholic faith, which is the Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This God is the initiator of the Mass; it is thanks to Him that it exists and has such and no other nature; it is He who gives the mass meaning. It is faith in this God that creates

¹² See: BEEBY, A. – BRENNAN, A.M.: *First Ecology*, 2nd edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. XX; WIĘCKOWSKI, S.: *Ekologia ogólna*, Bydgoszcz: Branta, 1998, p. 40; VILLE, p. 832.

¹³ Of course, theologians are aware that the above provision is the result of the trans-disciplinary nature of this study, which at this point results in the necessity to include the Mass in the structures of thinking characteristic of ecology. Although, from a theological perspective, treating God as an element of the Mass' environment may seem inappropriate, it is legitimate and correct according to the assumptions underlying this project.

the foundations for the existence of the Mass. In this sense, faith is an integral part of the natural environment of the Mass.

Generally speaking, it must be said that the point here is to emphasize the truth that the Mass is the prayer of a believer, it is a man's attitude towards God; it is the communion of the praying human person with the Person of God; is entering into a relationship with Him. Only in this way, as already noted, the Mass makes sense. It is not just a meeting of people by themselves aiming to read inspired texts and analyzing them, or the experience of an interpersonal community, a sacrifice, etc. Even perfectly following the rubrics and the best external preparation (the way of reading, singing, moving, etc.), using matter identical to the one used by the first Christians during prayer meetings related to the breaking of bread (see: Acts 2:42), and performing identical gestures as theirs, these themselves do not constitute the proper environment of the Holy Mass. It will not exist in a real, fully "ecologically pure" way if God's presence and establishing a relationship with Him are not recognized as the most important matters.

The next matter is our relationship with man through whom and for whom the Mass is celebrated. Ignoring the importance of people or reducing their role in the celebration is seen as a non-ecological activity, because it distorts the nature of the holy sacrifice of the Mass. It can even be said that the Mass not prayed for man is not a Mass wanted by God, it is not a real Mass, but its falsification. Paying attention to people is also connected with this regulation and preparing its prayers, etc., which will serve to establish the relationship of a man praying to God corresponding to the nature of the human person. Yet this is treating the Mass as a kind of integral development tool, and thus puts it in the trend of human ecology¹⁴.

A celebration that would require extraordinary interference in the natural rhythm of a person's life and their natural internal structures would not be ecological, meaning it would be unnatural or inappropriate. It can therefore be assumed that it also does not correspond to the will of God. In an extreme case, an attempt to celebrate such a Eucharist or take part in it would cause a toxic effect. It would destroy the natural environment of the Mass itself. Destroying it would mean attacking the Mass, which in such an unnatural environment would have difficulty with its existence and fulfillment.

The ecology of the Mass also includes its proper relationship with all of creation. Some scholars openly speak of its cosmic dimension¹⁵. The point here is that it should be harmonized with the rhythm of the world and its laws. The world's rhythm means, for example, the right time. Its physical location is also important¹⁶. This physical, cosmic reality appears to be another important component of the Mass' environment. This is clearly visible when a negative thesis is formulated: without the material, without nature (without bread, wine, water) and the appropriate pla-

¹⁴ See: WYROSTKIEWICZ: *Ekologiczny wymiar Eucharystii*, p. 259-306.

¹⁵ See: BENEDICT XVI: *Apostolic Exhortation "Sacramentum Caritatis"*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2007, no. 92; JOHN PAUL II: *Encyclical "Ecclesia de Eucharistia"*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2003, no. 8.

¹⁶ See: *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983, can. 1205-1239.

ce (at least temporarily constituting a sacred space), it is impossible for the Mass to take place and to maintain its proper identity; it is impossible to achieve the effects, which naturally imply participating in this type of a Eucharistic celebration.

Variability as an ecological category

By conducting research centered on the ecology of the Mass and using the ecological paradigm as an ordering instrument, we cannot fail to pay attention to variability, which is one of the fundamental categories of ecology¹⁷. In its context, we must refer to the concept of evolution, which occupies an important place in the research undertaken by ecologists¹⁸. The fact is that these changes taking place in the environment become the source of evolutionary changes. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the emergence of new species is also the result of evolution. In other words, it is about the current situation in the world (natural for the earth), when some species die and new ones emerge, and these are the result of the actions of evolutionary processes.

However, as far as the natural world is concerned, it must be viewed, as we mentioned, as the natural state of affairs (*status quo* of nature), therefore, in relation to the Mass, it cannot be considered to be something natural. Anticipating potential questions or allegations, it should be said that this is not going beyond the ecological paradigm, for it concerns the research scheme, and it is not about calculating all theses from ecology to theology. This is also where we clearly see and confirm the statement that an ecologist of the Mass must be a theologian who understands the essence and meaning of the Eucharist.

The emergence of another form of the liturgical celebration of the Eucharist cannot be the reason for the disappearance of the Mass. In relation to it, the evolution that can and must be accepted means such changes that do not affect its essence. As we can see, in the ecology of the Mass, the concept of evolution leads to changes in the celebration, and even to the emergence of new liturgical forms. However, we can never treat them as things that replace the Mass. Concern for maintaining the existence and identity of the Mass appears to be one of the fundamental problems of the ecology of the Mass. This is about caring for the right relationship between the environment and the Mass, a relationship that will not destroy it. It is caring that the changes caused by the broadly understood progress of civilization natural for the world do not destroy and change the main element of the ecosystem, an element that determines the identity and functioning of not only one, but many ecological systems.

Although without a doubt, striving not to destroy a given reality is one of the postulates of ecology as a science and an expression of ecological thinking, it is necessary to emphasize the truth already pointed out that not every transformation of something means its destruction. Reliable reflection leads to an unequivocal belief

¹⁷ See: SOLOMON – BERG – MARTIN – VILLE: *Biologia*, p. 1082-1084; A. MACKENZIE – A.S. BALL – S.R. VIRDEE: *Ekologia*, KOZAKIEWICZ M. – KOZAKIEWICZ A. – Dmowski K. (polish transl.), series: *Krótkie wykłady*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2000, p. 5-10.

¹⁸ See: WYROSTKIEWICZ: *Ekologia ludzka*, p. 23-57.

that in many cases, blocking variability is a non-ecological activity. This would be the case in the situation of stopping such an activity that is part of the nature of an active natural subject and, in this sense, integral element of the ecosystem which testifies to the identity of that element, and thus its existence enables achieving its natural purpose¹⁹. Violating even the smallest natural factor may cause disrupting the proper functioning of the entire world, which, from an ecological perspective, is after all nothing but a collection of many inter-connected and dependent ecosystems²⁰.

The above claims are not only related to natural resources, whose variability and use are on the one hand natural, and on the other, their use appears to be natural for the human person, but also applies to the Mass. It is, therefore, such changes in the liturgical regulations that, without changing the essence of the celebration, will allow for its better adaptation to the environment; they will allow for a closer encounter with God and will better meet the needs of modern man who, after all, is subject to various changing external conditions. In other words: the Mass in this world must make God present to every particular man.

In view of the above, an important element of the ecology of the Mass appears to be taking a position on the liturgical regulations, their elaboration and confirmation or repealing those which prove to be unnecessary. This is a reference to the concept of evolution, as mentioned above, which is important for ecology. The effect of the proposed action will become a catalog of these standards, whose behavior will guarantee preserving the identity of the Mass, and its message will be understandable to the person taking part in it. It will always concern a person in a specific situation; it will always be about specific personal and social conditions. This personal and social reality constitutes the basic natural environment of the Mass. The effect of ecological thinking rooted in anthropology on the Mass will not be, we must repeat, sticking to the existing regulations at all costs, but searching for those that are really relevant (appropriate to the essence of the Mass).

Ecology of the Mass cannot be seen as a thoughtless return to the “sources” or its original form, but should cultivate its nature as well as the nature of all those who take part in it and all that is linked to the Mass. Concern for one ecosystem cannot, as already noted, mean consent to the degradation of another system. The ecologist, as we clearly stated, must see things in a broad perspective. Noting the world’s natural variability, we must see it as a tool for development resulting from a better adaptation to the environment and conditions prevailing in it, which are not static by their very nature. Thanks to variability, the observed individual not only exists, but also functions to maintain their identity, and thanks to their adaptation, they actually influence the environment. With regard to the Mass, this means adjusting it to God and man.

¹⁹ An example here can be the integral development of a human person who is significantly connected with civilization and cultural progress. The radical prohibition of human activities that are the factors that make up this progress is an offence against the human person and, ultimately, against the unity of the whole world (see: M. WYROSTKIEWICZ: *Kwiaty i komputery*, p. 114-123).

²⁰ See: ZIĘBA, S.: *Teologiczny wymiar kryzysu ekologicznego*, in: NAGÓRNY, J. – GOCKO, J. (ed.), *Ekologia. Przestanie moralne Kościoła*, p. 15-24.

In concluding the topic of the ecological category of variability, we can say that only focusing on the basic concept of the ecological unit (in this case the Mass) understood as seeking to maintain its existing static state is to erroneously interpret it as an unchanging manifestation of an unchanging nature, without paying attention to the whole environment, and this is a distortion of the ecological paradigm. The environment and relationships within it shape the observed object, and in a sense they even create its identity. This is due to how we perceive the environment. In connection with the natural course of change taking place in it, a change in an object should not be interpreted as something improper, and therefore not ecological. A natural tendency should be seen in it. Dynamics belongs to the nature of the world and the various realities occurring in it. In general (but not deviating from the truth), it is difficult to talk about realities that are complex (meaning they would not be the simplest elements, but only some basic particles) and at the same time stable. Yet almost everything in the world undergoes change.

The variability of any one system causes movements in another, connected with the first system (as it was previously proved, the realities found on the same plane of existence are inherently linked together). As we can see, naturalness itself is also dynamic. What was once natural does not have to be so presently.²¹ In reference to the Mass, this means that the attempt to introduce unjustified or at least improperly prepared changes into a modern man's life, even those that would mean purifying the Mass of its historical traces, could result in its destruction²².

Conclusions

The ecology of the Mass presented here is a supplement to the existing knowledge about the theory according to which the ecological paradigm should be included in theological research. It is also an example of a theological concept using this scientific scheme. The results of the undertaken research also include the unequivocal distinction of the trans-disciplinary scientific concept called the ecology of the Mass here described, which, according to the title, encompasses the contents of this study in the description of the ecological dimension of the Eucharist. An additional value is the outline of the characteristics of the Mass ecologist. In this sense, the study has a descriptive-normative or descriptive-ordering character and is included in the field of the methodology of theology.

An important result of the publication is the answer to the (unasked and possible) questions in a potential discussion on making almost everything in the modern world "ecological". It also exposes a rather common error consisting in understanding environmentalism as striving to abandon interfering in nature and

²¹ For example, the reconstruction of dinosaurs and their introduction into the modern world could not be considered something natural and therefore ecological, although they were once a natural element of the environment; bringing animals out of a zoo's garden and allowing them to freely live in a city cannot be considered an expression of environmentalism, because in many cases it could prove deadly for them. Only man-made reservations give endangered species the chance to survive.

²² For example, an attempt to introduce the language used by Jesus during the Last Supper; a return to incomprehensible gestures used in the liturgy before the reform based on the teachings and regulations of the Second Vatican Council.

to “keep” nature in its current state, being minimally affected by human actions and our condition (which is, after all, inconsistent with both the natural and theological visions of the world). The text clearly shows that environmentalism in relation to the Mass’ rituals does not mean looking at it through the prism of nature protection. The concept of the ecology of the Mass proposed here uses the ecological paradigm, fundamentally a theological theory emerging at the meeting point between liturgical studies, dogmatic theology, moral theology, Church history and liturgy, and anthropology.

Undoubtedly, the above reflections on the ecology of the Mass may be the reason for asking the question about the purpose of undertaking such a reflection. In other words, we can ask why and for what purpose it is undertaken. What expresses the possible sense of “including” the Mass into the framework of ecology? The answer to the first question cannot be other than positive, and so it states: yes, such a reflection is reasonable. The reason for this will be the answers to the following questions: the undertaken reflection brings us closer to the truth. It shows that regardless of the path chosen and the scientific method, the same conclusions are reached. This in turn is their positive verification, or the confirmation of their truth.

In addition, undertaking inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research has a cleansing effect, if we can say so figuratively or colloquially. There is no doubt that moving about the field of research into other areas of knowledge results in the removal of dubious and less important or even marginal contents, which researchers often focus on for a long time when deeply studying a specific topic. In this case, it also serves science, truth and ultimately mankind.

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