

CANONICAL MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO STEFAN WYSZYŃSKI BASED ON PUBLICATIONS IN “ŁAD BOŻY”

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Abstract. This article is an analysis of sixteen texts written by Stefan Wyszyński, founder and first editor-in-chief of the weekly “Ład Boży”, which were published in the author’s series “Ład w myślach”. Wyszyński published in-depth and thoughtful studies on ecclesiastical marriage law in the weekly, under various pseudonyms. The reason for this was the promulgation of the Decree of 25 September 1945 Marriage Law, which implemented compulsory civil weddings for all Polish citizens and legally permitted divorce. Wyszyński, using the teaching of the Popes, in particular Pius XI, and the Polish Episcopate, warned the Christian faithful of the dangers of ideologies striking at the institution of marriage, defended it and showed the way forward.

Keywords: Stefan Wyszyński; Ład Boży; Ład w myślach; canonical marriage.

Stefan Wyszyński, born on 3 August 1901 in Zuzela in the Mazovian Voivodship, son of farmers: Stanisław (organist of the local church) and Julianna, née Karp, presbyter of the Diocese of Włocławek, Bishop of Lublin from 1946 to 1948, Archbishop Metropolitan of Gniezno and Warsaw and Primate of Poland from 1948 to 1981, Cardinal-Presbyter from 1953, rightly called the Primate of the Millennium, an outstanding statesman and, since 2021, blessed of the Catholic Church [Romaniuk 1994, *passim*; Idem 2011, *passim*], was still extremely active as a writer in the pre-Primate period. Marian P. Romaniuk, author of a several-volume bibliography of the life, works and ministry of Cardinal Wyszyński, in a bibliography of printed works prepared with Benedictine patience, counted over 800 publications by Wyszyński up to the time he assumed the episcopal capital in Lublin [Idem 2018, 83-137].

It should be emphasised that a number of very interesting and valuable studies were produced from the years when Wyszyński was Primate of Poland, i.e. publications from the end of 1948 onwards,¹ which were

¹ Romaniuk himself, for the years 1949-1981, lists 1,942 printed works by Wyszyński in his subject bibliography [Romaniuk 2018, 142-371]. After Wyszyński’s death, Wyszyński’s writing output continued to be printed, so that the aforementioned study for the years

repeatedly printed, often in multi-volume series, and accompanied by ample critical commentaries.² Unfortunately, Wyszyński's publication output prior to this period has never really become the subject of full analysis. It is to be expected that this situation will be changed by the effect of the grant *Prelude to the Collected Works. Stefan Wyszyński vis-à-vis totalitarian regimes – analysis and critical edition of sources for the years 1924-1949*, which is being carried out under the supervision of Professor Mirosław Sitarz at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, as it is to result in a critical edition of Wyszyński's scholarly output and social thought from 1924-1949 published in five volumes.

The aim of this article is to analyse a narrow source resource, relatively difficult to access due to the time caesura,³ allowing to determine Wyszyński's worldview of the years 1945-1946 on the subject of canonical marriage on the basis of the author's publications placed only in the weekly "Ład Boży" (English: "God's Order"). The issues of ecclesiastical marriage law, given Wyszyński's specialist training in canon law,⁴ remained in his area of interest. It can be said that the articles published in "Ład Boży" constitute, as it were, a cursory lecture on this subject matter.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE "ŁAD BOŻY"

In the autumn of 1945, Jakub Berman, a member of the presidium of the secret Central Bureau of the Communists of Poland and of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party, forming with Bolesław Bierut and Hilary Minc the innermost leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party from 1949 to 1956, reported to Joseph Stalin: "The Catholic clergy, especially after the arrival of Cardinal Hlond⁵ with

1921-2017 contains a total of 3,331 bibliographic units, numbered continuously with the layout of the publishing chronology [ibid., *passim*].

² It is enough to mention the twenty-three-volume publishing series: *Stefan Kardynał Wyszyński. Prymas Polski, Dzieła zebrane* (published since 1991).

³ Note, however, the reprint of S. Wyszyński's articles [Wyszyński 2001] and studies: Kukołowicz 1982, 27-34; Karasinski 2020, 60.

⁴ Wyszyński was sent by Bishop Stanisław Zdzitowiecki in 1925 to the University of Lublin for specialist studies. He studied canon law, although at the same time he attended lectures in the social sciences. On 10 December 1927, he obtained the degree of Licence of Canon Law with an optime grade, i.e. the best grade, and on 21 June 1929 a two-hour public defence of his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Rights of the Church to the School* took place [Sitarz 2020, 18-25]. On the rights of the family, Church and State to the school as interpreted by Wyszyński, see Romanko 2018, 165-83.

⁵ August Hlond – born on 5 July 1881 in Brzęczkowice, died on 22 October 1948 in Warsaw. A Polish clergyman, a Salesian. In 1925 he was appointed Bishop of Katowice, in 1926 he was appointed Archbishop of Gniezno-Poznań and Primate of Poland, in 1927 he was elevated

instructions from the Vatican, is developing a feverish organisational and propaganda activity (14 Catholic weeklies) directed against the government, with the decree on civil marriages⁶ serving as a pretext.”⁷ These words emphatically show the dramatic context in which Stefan Wyszyński, shortly after his return to the diocese, decided to found a new Catholic weekly in Włocławek.

The decision to publish the weekly “Ład Boży” was made definitively in May 1945 as a result of the conviction that efforts to revive faith and piety in the extensively affected diocese of Włocławek, which had been affected by the Second World War,⁸ would not bear the desired fruit if the work of evangelisation was not supported by the printed word [Szurgot 2021, 81]. In this context, Pope Pius X’s proclamation in the first issue of the weekly becomes understandable: “If I even had to give up my episcopal cross and pawn my furniture and chasubles to ensure the existence of a Catholic newspaper, I would do so wholeheartedly.” As Rev. Antoni Borowski, Prelate of the Cathedral Basilica and Vicar General of the Diocese of Włocławek, wrote, the newly founded weekly had the “aim of promoting Catholic thought in family and social life, spreading the principles of the Kingdom of Christ, not forgetting current affairs in the life of our nation and others, while introducing a section on practical matters of everyday life and a section devoted to our children and youth” [Borowski 1945, 1].

“Ład Boży” was one of three Catholic magazines, along with “Głos Katolicki” (“Catholic Voice”) and “Tygodnik Powszechny” (“Universal Weekly”), which started to come out in Włocławek through the efforts of the local diocesan curia immediately after the end of the Second World War, in the years 1945-1953 as a weekly, in 1982-1997 as a biweekly and in 1998-2004 as the Włocławek edition of “Niedziela” [Warmiński 2006, 353]. Although officially the editor-in-chief of the weekly in 1945-1946 was Adrian Turczynowicz,⁹ in fact the editorial board was headed by Wyszyński, who explained the name of the weekly as follows: “In the world there was already a pagan *order* and a capitalist *order*, there was a godless *order* and a Nazi *order*. They have turned the world into a rubble. The world needs a order based

to the dignity of Cardinal. Servant of God of the Catholic Church [Kosiński 1993, 1088].

⁶ This refers to the Decree of 25 September 1945 Marriage Law, Journal of Law No. 48, item 270 [hereinafter: Marriage Law].

⁷ *Spuścizna Jakuba Bermana*, Archive of New Records in Warsaw, VI/0, ref. no. 325-33, col. 12, quote from: Stefaniak 2001, 527.

⁸ More than half of the clergy of Włocławek lost their lives during the Second World War, the vast majority of them in the Konzentrationslager Dachau.

⁹ Adrian Turczynowicz (1902-1979) – journalist, director, underground activist, editor-in-chief of “Gazeta Kujawska”, associate editor of “Ład Boży” and other Catholic periodicals, honoured with numerous decorations, including: Order of Virtuti Militari and Commander’s Cross with the Order of Polonia Restituta [Ziółkowski 2004, 174-77].

on peace and justice, and this will be born of God. God's love and power are needed so that Europe ceases to be a rubble and a perpetual battlefield. We desire the order of God on earth" [Wyszyński 1945d, 2]. Turczynowicz himself remembered Wyszyński from that time in the following way: "He spared no time for his *child*, what he called *Ład Boży*. He attended all meetings of the editorial committee and fed us not only with his articles, but above all with his knowledge and enlightened advice. He would drop by the Editor's Office several times a week, taking an interest in the breaking of the weekly, often standing for several hours at a time in the late evenings at the column-breaker, helping to carry out proof-reading. Always helpful, always absorbed in his work, equally quiet and polite" [Turczynowicz 2001, 109].

By the standards of the time, the weekly "Ład Boży" was small in size, as it was printed on A4 format (20.5 x 29.5 cm). The volume of each issue was 4 sheets, i.e. 8 pages, with the exception of two issues which were published once in reduced volume (after trimming by the communist censors) and once in increased volume (the Easter issue). Noteworthy, the weekly's circulation increased very quickly, as already in 1946 it amounted to 25,000 copies from the initial 8,000 (the combined Włocławek and Płock editions) [Iwańska-Cieślik 2012, 216-17].

In the weekly, Wyszyński ran an authoritative series of articles entitled "Ład w myślach" (English: "order in thoughts"). Between 1945 and 1946, i.e. until he became Bishop of Lublin, he published a total of 46 articles in it, in which he explored the triad of issues: man – family – canonical marriage.¹⁰ He published, for many reasons, above all his own safety, under numerous pseudonyms: 'X. S. Wyszyński', 'X. St. Wyszyński', 'X. S. W.', 'X. St. W.', 'S. W.', 'St. W.', 'S.', 'R.', 'Redakcja', 'S. Oracz', 'St. Oracz', 'Br. Ozimina', 'Dr' and 'Dr Z.'¹¹ It should also be noted that several of the articles included in the analysed series did not bear a pseudonym, but the rank of the topics covered there, as well as the similarity of the writing style, undoubtedly testify to its authorship.

¹⁰ A separate article submitted for publication in the journal "Kościół i Prawo" has been devoted to the issue of man and family.

¹¹ M.P. Romaniuk claims that the provenance of the pseudonyms 'S. Oracz', 'St. Oracz' and 'Br. Ozimina' has not been fully clarified, but he cites that he received information about them orally from Wyszyński's fellow students at the seminary or from residents of Włocławek from the interwar years. Nevertheless, both the language and the very manner of narration of the articles signed with these pseudonyms testify to Wyszyński's authorship [Romaniuk 2018, 22-23]. Similar conclusions, but only with regard to the pseudonym 'Br. Ozimina', are raised by W. Karasiński [Karasiński 2020, 60].

2. CONFRONTATION OF MARRIAGE LAW IN POLAND WITH ECCLESIASTICAL MARRIAGE LAW

The cession of the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795 to the Kingdom of Prussia, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Russian Empire, which was the last of the three partitions of Poland under the reign of King Stanisław August Poniatowski, as a result of which the common state of Poland and Lithuania ceased to exist and Poland reappeared on the maps of Europe only after 123 years of slavery in 1918, undoubtedly contributed to the lack of a uniform marriage law in Poland that would be binding on all its citizens. This legal situation also failed to change in the inter-war period. This situation was scrupulously exploited after 1945 by the communists who, referring to the legal records and pointing to the lack of changes in the legislative legacy of the former partitioning states, proceeded to amend the Marriage Law [Gancarczyk 2008].

This decree provoked strong opposition from the Polish Episcopate, which on 7 December 1945 addressed a special message to the Nation¹² in which it recalled the main principles of Catholic teaching on marriage, above all that: 1) marriage is an institution of natural law based on ethical norms and called to sacred tasks in the service of humanity; 2) Catholic marriage, by the will of Jesus Christ, should be holy and morally pure; 3) Catholic marriage, which has been concluded invalidly, can be dissolved by a declaration of nullity, while Catholic marriage, validly concluded and completed, is indissoluble; 4) the State should directly concern itself with the institution of marriage, since the family is the pillar of the collective, and all matters that are defined as the civil effects of marriage are almost exclusively within the sphere of the State's tasks; 5) theories that want to subject all areas of life to State regulation, regulating them unilaterally without taking into account God's law and the religious-moral views of citizens, are unacceptable (Message, Chapter I).

Without questioning the need, or even the urgent need, to develop uniform marriage legislation in Poland,¹³ the Polish Episcopate, after analyzing the Marriage Law, uncompromisingly questioned the following legal provisions (Message, Chapter II): 1) introducing compulsory civil weddings for Catholic citizens without leaving the freedom to choose the wedding

¹² Episkopat Polski, *Orędzie w sprawie małżeńskiej* (07.12.1945), in: *Listy pasterskie Episkopatu Polski 1945-1974*, Éditions du Dialogue. Société d'Éditions Internationales, Paris 1975, p. 25-28 [hereinafter: Message].

¹³ Wyszyński himself was of a similar opinion, believing that the marriage law should be uniform in two dimensions: 1) external, i.e. systemic-administrative – introducing the same law in all parts of the state; 2) internal – bringing order to the souls of citizens [Wyszyński 1946a, 3].

according to the religious form or in the form of the so-called civil wedding (Article 11);¹⁴ 2) introduction of divorces at the request of one of the spouses (Article 24); 3) subjecting Catholic marriages previously concluded according to the religious form to the jurisprudence of state courts (Article 36).¹⁵

3. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF MARRIAGE AND ITS AIMS

The above-mentioned legal and political situation, affecting the lives of faithful Christians in a very profound way, was not without a response from the Catholic press. In the pages of the author's series of articles "Ład w myślach", Wyszyński first emphasised the divine origin of marriage. This is evidenced in the biblical account of the creation of the first human beings, when God called man and woman into existence in his image and blessed them by saying: "Be fertile and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28a).¹⁶ Marriage creates a unique community: "Between two people, under God's patronage, a new knot is formed, a new marital community, which is an association of equal persons, in a spirit of friendship and help, complementing each other" [Wyszyński 1945a, 3].¹⁷

¹⁴ "Marriage is contracted by the future spouses making a consensual declaration publicly before a civil registrar in the presence of two witnesses that they are entering into marriage" (Article 11). See also Decree of 25 September 1945 Law on Civil Status Acts, Journal of Law No. 48, item 272, Article 73.1.

¹⁵ This provision took effect from 1 January 1946 after the entry into force of the Decree under review.

¹⁶ *The African Bible. Biblical Text of the New American Bible*, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 1999.

¹⁷ On the divine origin of marriage, the Church has invariably taught. It suffices to recall encyclical *Arcanum divinae sapientiae*: "Nota omnibus et nemini dubia commemoramus; posteaquam sexto creationis die formavit Deus hominem de limo terrae, et inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae, sociam illi voluit adiungere, quam de latere viri ipsius dormientis mirabiliter eduxit. Qua in re hoc voluit providentissimus Deus, ut illud par coniugum esset cunctorum hominum naturale principium, ex quo scilicet propagari humanum, genus, et, numquam intermissis probationibus, conservari in omne tempus oporteret. Atque illa viri et mulieris coniunctio, quo sapientissimis Dei consiliis responderet aptius, vel ex eo tempore duas potissimum, easque in primis nobiles, quasi alte impressas et insculptas prae se tulit proprietates, nimirum unitatem et perpetuitatem." Leo PP. XIII, Epistola Encyclica *Arcanum divinae sapientiae* (10.02.1980), ASS 12 (1880), p. 385-402; or the encyclical *Casti connubi*: "Atque ut ab his ipsis litteris initium faciamus, quae totae fere sunt invindicanda divina matrimonii institutione eiusque sacramentali dignitate et perpetua fuitate, primum quidem id maneat immotum et inviolabile fundamentum: Matrimonium non humanitus institutum neque instauratum esse, sed divinitus; non ab hominibus, sed ab ipso auctore naturae Deo atque eiusdem naturae restitutore Christo Domino legibus esse communitum, confirmatum, elevatum; quae proinde leges nullis hominum placitis, nulli ne ipsorum quidem coniugum contrario convento obnoxiae esse possint." Pius PP. XI, Litterae Encyclicae de matrimonio christiano spectatis praesentibus familiae et societatis condicionibus, necessitatibus, erroribus, vitiis *Casti Connubii* (31.12.1930), AAS 22 (1930), p. 539-92 [hereinafter: *Casti Connubii*].

Marriage, as an institution derived from divine law, was elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. From now on, a man, leaving his father and mother, is united with his wife and they are two in one flesh (cf. Mt 19:5) [Idem 1945e, 3].

For obvious reasons, Wyszyński based his studies on the Pio-Benedictine codification.¹⁸ The 1917 code legislation presented a juridical vision of marriage, enclosing a rich spiritual and human reality in purely legal terms. The legislator essentially interpreted marriage as a form of contract through which the spouses transfer to each other and at the same time assume certain obligations and rights, among which characteristic was the so-called *ius in corpus* referring to acts directed to the generation of offspring [Góralski 2011, 28-29]. According to the disposition of Canon 1013 § 1 of the CIC/17, the primary purpose of marriage was to give birth to and bring up offspring, while the secondary purpose was to help each other and satisfy the sexual urge.¹⁹ In the correct realisation of the marital purposes indicated by the universal legislator, Wyszyński saw a great danger in the error of individualism claiming that man possesses the highest rights in the world, and that these rights should be subject to marriage, the family and the nation in a total way. Such reasoning was detrimental to the institution of marriage because, on this basis, man was ready to reject a number of duties towards his fellow men, even those closest to him, especially those that stood in the way of his – falsely conceived – happiness [Wyszyński 1945b, 3].

4. THE ESSENTIAL PROPERTIES OF MARRIAGE AND THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DIVORCE MENTALITY

Wyszyński devoted a lot of space in his articles published in the pages of “Ład Boży” to fighting the divorce mentality.²⁰ Undoubtedly, the reason for this was

¹⁸ *Codex Iuris Canonici Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus* (27.05.1917), AAS 9 (1917), pars II, p. 1-593 [hereinafter: CIC/17].

¹⁹ “Matrimonii finis primarius est procreatio atque educatio proles; secundarius mutuum; adiutorium et remedium concupiscentiae” (Canon 1013 § 1 of the CIC/17). This conception of marriage was dominated by the biological-procreative aspect. The 1983 Codex legislature already provides otherwise, which in Canon 1055 § 1 defines marriage as a covenant directed by its nature to the well-being of the spouses and to the begetting and rearing of offspring. *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (25.01.1983), AAS 75 (1983), pars II, p. 1-317.

²⁰ He interpreted that the propagation of the divorce mentality by various circles, but also by totalitarian systems, began with the attack on wives and mothers. “And that’s why all the work to detach women from the family was started. The means to do this was to liberate women from ‘pots and nappies’, economic independence, divorce and so on. And when all this was not enough – the press, the novel (romance), the theatre, the cinema, fashion – all these powerful means directed by secret forces, began work on the planned humiliation of woman” [Wyszyński 1946b, 3].

the aforementioned reform of matrimonial law in Poland, which allowed spouses to apply to the ordinary courts for a divorce on the basis of a wide plethora of grounds, which could be: adultery by the spouse, having designs upon the life of the spouse or his or her child, refusal to contribute to the maintenance of the family, failure of the spouses to cohabit without just cause for more than a year, commission of a dishonourable crime, leading a licentious or promiscuous life, inciting a spouse or his/her child to lead an immoral life, engaging in a disgraceful occupation or profiting from it, compulsive drunkenness or drug addiction, venereal contagious disease, mental illness lasting more than one year, sexual impotence of any duration in persons under 50 years of age (Article 24 of the Marriage Law).²¹ With a view to allowing the dissolution of validly contracted marriages, and to an extent unprecedented in the legislation of other Christian nations, the Polish Episcopate, in the aforementioned Message, stated: “Since Catholic notions on this point are dogmatically strict and justified by Christ’s unconditional abolition of divorce, the Episcopate and the Polish Catholic community see in the divorce provisions of the new marriage law a fundamental deviation from Catholic teaching, a disregard for the religious and moral convictions of the Nation, and at the same time an undermining of the very institution of marriage and family” (Chapter II).

Following the Code legislator (Canon 1013 § 2 of the CIC/17), Wyszyński taught that the essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which in Christian marriage gain special power because of the sacrament.²² “Christian marriage has received from God a great power to combat all forces of decay and disintegration. It is not only the happiness and joy of two people, not only a social duty, but it is also a sacrifice and a school of self-education for the spouses. He who remembers this will not destroy the permanence of marriage” [Idem1945c, 3].

Fighting for the unity and indissolubility of families in Poland, Wyszyński argued that the child had a “sacred right to his own family,” because the family exists first and foremost for the child. The defenceless child derives the right to its own defence not from man, the family, the state, but from the Creator of the law of nature, i.e. God Himself. For this reason,

²¹ Wyszyński, with paternal understanding, nevertheless harshly judged the indicated reasons for pronouncing divorce, considering them insufficient and above all dangerous. “If today this law does not immediately bear its bitter fruits, it is only because the moral level of society is still quite high, that the Church’s teaching on marriage still moves consciences. But what will happen to the family, to marriage, when this level falls; further moral decline will open up the desire for abuse. And then the stone rejected by the builders – high Catholic morality – will become the head of the corner-stone. The Church saves divorced societies from the terrible consequences of supposedly progressive laws” [Idem 1946k, 3].

²² “Essentiales matrimonii proprietates sunt unitas ac indissolubilitas, quae in matrimonio christiano peculiarem obtinent firmitatem ratione sacramenti” (Canon 1013 § 2 of the CIC/17).

the child's right to the family should be considered more sacred than the parents' right to personal happiness or comfort [Idem 1946i, 3]. Wyszyński regarded as insufficient the provisions arising from Article 31 para. 1 sect. 1 of the Marriage Law, which obliged the common law court, when pronouncing a divorce, to entrust the child and the administration of the child's property to one of the parents with the priority of the innocent or even to a third person, if the child's interests so required. He believed that the "property interests of the child" were not the most important thing and that raising their importance only showed a false concern on the part of the proponents of divorce. Children need more heart and love during their childhood than material goods. Parents can never be replaced. "For between father, mother – and child there is not only a bond of duty, but a bond of common blood, a bond of love. These create the natural conditions for the sacrifices and offerings necessary for upbringing" [ibid.]. This is why Wyszyński, using the figurative comparison that no sensible person cuts down a tree just because a few wormy apples have been found on it, encouraged spouses to overcome various difficulties and infirmities precisely in order to protect and preserve the marital community. "It is therefore necessary to remedy human deficiencies and weaknesses rather than to break up the family" [ibid.].

Divorce has a destructive effect on social virtues – in a divorced society, resilience to family difficulties weakens and the sense of marital and parental responsibility is lost [Idem 1946g, 3]. In addition, a commonly perceived phenomenon in divorce-affirming societies is a drastic decrease in fertility rates and therefore a decline in population [Idem 1946h, 4].²³

5. EQUALITY OF SPOUSES IN SACRAMENTAL MARRIAGE

For Wyszyński, equality in sacramental marriage was very important, but interpreted in an evangelical way. In explaining this truth, he referred to misguided opinions referring to the removal of the words about obedience from the Polish version of the rite of the marriage vow,²⁴ which would

²³ Wyszyński referred to statistics from France, where divorce law has the strongest tradition. In 1910, a third of divorced couples were childless. In 1919, 36% of married couples who filed for divorce were childless. In Paris alone in 1919, out of 2,568 divorced marriages, 64% were childless [Idem 1946h, 4].

²⁴ The oath with the vow of marital obedience was introduced by the Polish bishops into the Polish version of the post-Tridentine *Rituale Romanum*, which was used until the end of 1928. It had no equivalent in the Latin edition. The groom vowed: "I N. take thee N. to be my spouse and vow to thee in love, faith and honesty in marriage that I will not leave thee till death. So help me Lord God Almighty in one Trinity and all the saints." In turn, the bride vowed: "I N. take thee N. to be my spouse and vow to thee love, faith, honesty and **obedience in marriage** [distinction – P.L.], and that I will not leave thee till death. So help me Lord God Almighty in one Trinity and all the saints." The *Rituale Romanum* of 1925, renewed and

naively prove that the Church follows the spirit of the times and progress [Idem 1945e, 3].

Referring to the teaching of St Paul the Apostle: “Wives should be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is head of his wife just as Christ is head of the church, he himself the saviour of the body” (Eph 5:22-23), he explained what gospel obedience consists of and what it obliges.²⁵ He interpreted the husband’s primacy in marriage as an obligation to serve, as placing on the husband the full responsibility for the family, as the husband’s duty towards his wife. In addition, he also invoked the words of St Paul the Apostle: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her” (Eph 5:25). In order that a husband’s love for his wife may be compared to Christ’s love for the Church, the husband should always bear in mind that Christ gave his life for the Church. On the husband’s part, this implies a serious obligation to care for his wife and to give up his own desires and inclinations in favour of her needs and those of the established family. “When a wife feels that her husband loves her, or tries to love her according to the pattern prescribed – as Christ loved the Church – then she can easily submit to her husband in all matters. For the love she has experienced will make this total submission to her husband easy and desirable for her” [ibid.].

6. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL FUNCTION OF MARRIAGE

Wyszyński saw not only the personal character of marriage, but also the social one. He believed that it serves both the good of the individual man and the good of society as a whole. In fact, the aims of marriage, and the fulfilment of the duties and rights arising from it, can only be truly and fully achieved when the personal duties and rights of man are reconciled with those of society. The marital community is therefore a natural need of man’s social being and the source of its existence has its origin in man’s social nature [Idem 1946], 3]. This view of marriage was based largely on the teaching of Pope Pius XI, who, as early as the introduction to his encyclical *Casti Connubii*, emphasised that marriage is the basis of the domestic community on an individual level and of the human community as a whole: “How great is the dignity of chaste wedlock, Venerable Brethren, may be judged best from this that Christ Our Lord, Son of the Eternal

approved by Pius XI, was adapted to the traditions of the Polish dioceses and then sent to the Holy See for approval (*recognitio*). Probably on 24 September 1928, the Holy See gave its approval. The Polish version of the ritual came into force on 1 January 1929 and in fact did not contain the *passus* concerning the obedience of marriage [Śliwiński 2022].

²⁵ “If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35).

Father, having assumed the nature of fallen man, not only, with His loving desire of compassing the redemption of our race, ordained it in an especial manner as the principle and foundation of domestic society and therefore of all human intercourse, but also raised it to the rank of a truly and great sacrament of the New Law, restored it to the original purity of its divine institution, and accordingly entrusted all its discipline and care to His spouse the Church.” (Introduction).

For the reason that marriage is not only individual, but also social, its duration and nature must not be decided by the will of the individual – because no one is obliged to marry, but everyone has the right to marry. By the same token, a person does not have the right to give up his marriage based on his own preference. “He may or may not want marriage, but the moment he entered into it he bound his will and submitted it to the dictates of reason and the law of God” [ibid.]. For the sake of personal well-being, therefore, the marriage bond must not be nullified, since personal happiness is not the supreme right in marriage. This is because marriage fulfils a very important social task.

7. PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

A huge role in the mission to renew the institution of marriage [Idem 1946c, 3],²⁶ in Wyszyński’s view, is played by good preparation for the reception of this sacrament. Following Pope Pius XI, he argued that the way in which young people experience their childhood and adolescent years will have an enormous impact on their future married life. In the encyclical *Casti Connubii*, in section 6 on preparation for marriage, in point A addressing the issue of further preparation for marriage, the Pope wrote: “There is danger that those who before marriage sought in all things what is theirs, who indulged even their impure desires, will be in the married state what they were before, that they will reap that which they have sown; indeed, within the home there will be sadness, lamentation, mutual contempt, strifes, estrangements, weariness of common life, and, worst of all, such parties will find themselves left alone with their own unconquered passions.” It was for this reason that Wyszyński emphatically stressed that a clean and sober youth life was very important for a future marriage, a happy and fulfilled one. “A boisterous and promiscuous youth will not create faithful and lasting

²⁶ Among a number of measures for the renewal of the institution of marriage, Wyszyński included, above all, a thorough instruction on what marriage is in general, what dignity it possesses, what duties it gives rise to and what rights it confers, and what it means that marriage is a sacrament [Idem 1946d, 3; Idem 1946e, 3].

families. The reason for the impermanence of many marriages should be sought in how the spouses spent their youthful years” [Idem 1946f, 3].

Wyszyński objected to the commonly held view that “young people need to have their fling.” He believed that there were no special moral laws for either boys or girls to enjoy life during adolescence. He was of the opinion that everything a man does, the way he behaves and the decisions he makes have an impact on his future life, in particular on what condition his future marriage will be in. Everyone is bound by one morality, lofty, responsible, binding in the same way at every period of life [ibid.].²⁷

In addition to the further preparation for marriage, which includes childhood and adolescence, the direct preparation is very important and should be devoted, among other things, to the careful choice of a spouse. “It is difficult to combine a hooligan with an angel and expect good results. Surely a pure spouse, a righteous and wise husband – can have a good effect on the other party. But it is difficult for the bankrupts of life to look for sacrifices of sometimes the best people in order to save ruins at their expense. Rather, care must be taken to prevent bankruptcy, to give the clean and sober to the clean and sober” [ibid.]. It is for this reason that the choice of a future spouse must not be the result of a whim, a momentary fancy or a fleeting feeling. Wyszyński stressed that such a choice, which determines the entire life of a person, must be made with care, because it affects whether the future marriage will be happy or unhappy. He encouraged the nupturients to get to know each other thoroughly, in every respect – so that the choice of a spouse is not decided only by the heart, feelings or passion, but above all by reason enlightened by a living faith. In choosing a spouse, the law of God and the good of the Christian faith must be taken into account. One should ask whether the future husband or wife loves God, practices the faith and respects the laws of the Church. A good spouse should also be earnestly prayed for. “When one considers that one will have to live with the chosen person, always, until death, that one will have to endure calmly all his or her faults and enjoy the advantages – then the primacy of the role of reason in the choice of a person becomes obvious” [ibid.].

²⁷ In the article analysed, Wyszyński also referred to the encyclical on the Christian education of the young, in which Pope Pius XI emphasised the effects of original sin also affecting children and young people, and therefore saw the need for educational work: “Disorderly inclinations then must be corrected, good tendencies encouraged and regulated from tender childhood, and above all the mind must be enlightened and the will strengthened by supernatural truth and by the means of grace, without which it is impossible to control evil impulses, impossible to attain to the full and complete perfection of education intended by the Church, which Christ has endowed so richly with divine doctrine and with the Sacraments, the efficacious means of grace.” Pius PP. XI, *Litterae Encyclicae de christiana iuventutis educatione Divini illius Magistri* (31.12.1929), AAS 22 (1930), p. 55-86.

CONCLUSION

The mission that Wyszyński undertook by founding the weekly “Ład Boży”, managing its editorial board and publishing articles in the author’s series “Ład w myślach” was of great importance for the reconstituting diocese of Włocławek, especially in the pastoral field. How much of a threat the activities of this weekly posed, even in the later period, is evidenced by the opinion of the Provincial Press Control Office, which made the following observation in issue 4 for 1949: “In connection with the appointment of Rev. Stefan Wyszyński as Archbishop of Gniezno and Warsaw, and thus Primate of Poland, *Ład Boży* gave on the front page the Primate’s likeness, and on the second page an article by Turczynowicz, entitled *New Primate of Poland*. Up to this point, *Ład Boży*, being at the service of the clergy, had been an oasis for the pernicious clerical-capitalist policy, deftly masked by platitudes of Christian ideology. After Hlond’s death, *Ład Boży* hung in wait for a new political direction. Despite the interferences made for tactical reasons, one senses that the policies of the new Primate will change the face of *Ład Boży*.”²⁸

In a concise, logically and substantively organised series of articles, the reader of “Ład w myślach” received a rich compendium of knowledge in the field of ecclesiastical marriage law. Using simple, clear and illustrative language, which was important for a large part of uneducated readers, Wyszyński showed the dangers facing the institution of marriage at the time, also in connection with the promulgation of the Marriage Law on 25 September 1945. Alongside his analysis of the dangers, he courageously pointed the way forward, which he faithfully drew from the teaching of the Pope and the Polish Episcopate. The reading and analysis of the 16 articles from “Ład Boży” used in this study represents a commitment to extracting from Wyszyński’s spiritual legacy those values that are not diminished by time. Wyszyński himself used his Włocławek experience from the editorial board of the weekly in his further pastoral ministry as Bishop of Lublin and later as Archbishop and Metropolitan of Gniezno and Warsaw and Primate of Poland.

²⁸ Archive of New Records in Warsaw, Central Office of Press, Publications and Performances Control, *Oceny czasopism i dzienników w 1949 r.*, ref. no. 122/9/19 b. Ocena „Ładu Bożego” nr 16, Kierkowska Helena, Bydgoszcz (19.01.1949), quote from: Iwańska-Cieślak 2012, 223.

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