

## THE THEOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE RIGHT TO DECENT SUPPORT OF THE CLERGY

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**Summary.** The right to decent support is undoubtedly one of the most basic rights that each person has. The Codex legislator states that: “Since clerics dedicate themselves to the ecclesiastical ministry, they deserve the remuneration that befits their condition, taking into account both the nature of their office and the conditions of time and place. It is to be such that it provides for the necessities of their life and for the just remuneration of those whose services they need” (can. 281 § 1). This article analyzes the theological basis of the right to decent support of the clergy, including the Holy Bible, both Old and New Testaments, as well as writings of the Church Fathers and early Christian writers.

**Key words:** sustenance, remuneration, clerics, Holy Bible, writings of the Church Fathers and early Christian writers

Receiving a salary for work is a natural right of every human being. Pope Leo XIII in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* emphasizes that fair payment is a requirement of natural justice: “Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the working classes should be carefully watched over by the administration, so that they who contribute so largely to the advantage of the community may themselves share in the benefits which they create – that being housed, clothed, and bodily fit, they may find their life less hard and more endurable. It follows that whatever shall appear to prove conducive to the well-being of those who work should obtain favorable consideration. There is no fear that solicitude of this kind will be harmful to any interest; on the contrary, it will be to the advantage of all, for it cannot but be good for the commonwealth to shield from misery those on whom it so largely depends for the things that it needs.”<sup>1</sup> In a similar way, following the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*,<sup>2</sup> the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: “A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold

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<sup>1</sup> Leo PP. XIII, Litterae encyclicae de conditione officium *Rerum novarum* (15.05.1891), ASS 23 (1890/91), p. 641–70, no. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum II, Constitutio pastoralis de Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis *Gaudium et spes* (7.12.1965), AAS 58 (1966), p. 1025–115.

it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. «Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good». Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.”<sup>3</sup>

Legislator in can. 281 § 1 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law,<sup>4</sup> proclaims the right of the clergy to appropriate remuneration.<sup>5</sup> At the same time in can. 384 obliges the diocesan bishop to care for the decent support of the clergy. The source of the teaching and legislation of the Church in the matter of the right of the clergy for decent support is found in the Holy Bible and in the writings of the Church Fathers and early Christian writers. In this article, the theological basis of the right to decent support of the clergy will be analyzed.

## 1. HOLY BIBLE

Analyzing the biblical basis for the right to decent support of the clergy, following the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, it is customary to indicate the two fundamental passages of the New Testament in this matter: “Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house” (Lk 10:7) and “In the same way, the Lord gave the instruction that those who preach the gospel should get their living from the gospel” (1 Cor 9:14).<sup>6</sup> In fact, however, in the Old Testament, one can find the source of the clergy’s right to decent support, resulting from belonging to the priesthood.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1. Old Testament

In accordance with the teaching of the Inspired Author in the Book of Exodus, the Chosen People were appointed by God “a kingdom of priests, a holy nation” (19:6). In this nation, Yahweh in a special way distinguished

<sup>3</sup> *Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1997, no. 2434.

<sup>4</sup> *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* (25.01.1983), AAS 75 (1983), pars II, p. 1–317.

<sup>5</sup> See: Rozkrut 2002, 104–109; Kantor 2008, 251–65; Idem 2011, 191–222; Lewandowski 2015, 95–108; Idem 2016, 53–76; Idem 2017a, 151–69; Idem 2017b, 131–47; Idem 2018, 109–27.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum II, Decretum de presbyterorum ministerio et vita Presbyterorum ordinis* (7.12.1965), AAS 58 (1966), p. 991–1024, no. 20 [henceforth cited as: PO].

<sup>7</sup> In the Holy Bible the noun ‘priest’ is very common, in various configurations: priest 815x, priest-levite 8x, priest-writer 2x, priestly 48x, priesthood 21x, high priest 169x, high priestly 7x, high priesthood 3x [Dąbek 2010, 9].

one of the twelve tribes of Israel – the tribe of Levi – assigning them to the service of God (cf. Lev 1:48–53). Of these, Aaron and his sons were appointed priests (Ex 28:1).<sup>8</sup> But God did not give the Levites, like other tribes, the heritage in the Land of Canaan: “You will have no heritage in their country, you will not have a portion like them; I shall be your portion and your heritage among the Israelites” (Num 18, 20b). In this way, the Levi tribe became part of the heritage of Yahweh himself (cf. Josh 13:33). The special destiny and fulfillment of important priestly functions meant that the Levites were granted the right to decent support. It was carried out by putting at their disposal forty-eight cities, four on territory of each tribe, together with pastures necessary for grazing the herd (Josh 21:1–42).<sup>9</sup> They also received the right to the tithe<sup>10</sup> from harvest and from cattle and the firstfruits of initial crops, as well as some gifts brought to God in offering (Lev 27:30–33, Num 18:20–24). In addition, the Israelites were obliged to invite the Levites to all the sacrificial meals (Deut. 12:12, 18; 14:27, 29; 16:11).

The priests, in turn, lived in thirteen of the forty-eight cities assigned to the Levites. They were all near Jerusalem, in the territories occupied by the tribe of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin (Josh 21:4). They were supported from the offerings that the Chosen People were obliged to offer to God: “The priests shall have a right to the following things from the people: from those who are offering a sacrifice, whether the victim is from the herd or from the flock, the priest shall receive the shoulder, the jowls and the stomach. You shall also give him the first fruits of your grain and wine and oil, as well as the first fruits of the shearing of your flock; for the Lord, your God, has chosen him and his sons out of all your tribes to be always in attendance to minister in the name of the Lord” (Deut 18:3–5). In addition, the Levites, who had the right to the tithe handed down by the Israelites (cf. Num 18:20–24), were obliged to give

<sup>8</sup> In the Levi’s tribe, therefore, one should distinguish between priests from the Aaronic family from whom the high priest came, and the other Levites who came from Levi but not from Aaron [Rienecker and Maier 2001, 428].

<sup>9</sup> “The Lord gave these instructions to Moses on the plains of Moab beside the Jericho stretch of the Jordan: Tell the Israelites that out of their hereditary property they shall give the Levites cities for homes, as well as pasture lands around the cities. The cities shall serve them to dwell in, and the pasture lands shall serve their herds and flocks and other animals. The pasture lands of the cities to be assigned the Levites shall extend a thousand cubits from the city walls in each direction. Thus you shall measure out two thousand cubits outside the city along each side-east, south, west and north-with the city lying in the center. This shall serve them as the pasture lands of their cities” (Num 35:1–5).

<sup>10</sup> The Tithe for the first time appeared in the Book of Genesis, when Abram, in return for God’s blessing, gave to the king of Sodom the tenth part of everything he possessed (14:17–24). The provisions of the Mosaic Law sanctioned the tithe as a tax for maintaining the priesthood. This tax was also charitable (cf. Lev 27:30–33, Deut 14:28–29). Prophet Malachi in Mal 3:6–12 warns about frauds related to tithing [Zarosa 2015, 56–57; Guthrie 1962, 654–55; Thomson 1965, 1284].

the tenth part to the priests as a holy offering (Num 18:25–32) [Rienecker and Maier 2001, 428].

## 1.2. New Testament

The priesthood of Jesus Christ, fulfilling the Old Testament promises of God and various forms of mediation between God and man, differs essentially from the priesthood of the Old Covenant [Baigent 1981, 34–44; Brown 1980, 314–22]. For the priesthood of the New Testament, it is characteristic that the Twelve Apostles who were called to fulfill the order of the resurrected Christ, have committed themselves to continue His priestly mission. For this reason, they themselves zealously proclaimed the Gospel and established in the nascent Christian communities superiors (bishops, presbyters and deacons) by laying on of hands (Acts 6:6; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6) and transmitting the Holy Spirit who called and empowered to be *witnesses* for *Jesus Christ* (Acts 20:28, 1 Pet 5:2) [Migut 2017, 415–18]. For the unhampered fulfillment of this momentous mission, they received the right to decent support from Christ.

In the pericope about the mission of the seventy-two, cited only in the Gospel according to St. Luke, Jesus Christ established the principles that should be followed by *missionaries* preaching the Good News (10:1–12). By giving the rules of missionary work, he also allowed the apostles to use the universal principle of hospitality, and as the basis for this right he pointed to the sentence: “The labourer deserves his wages” (Lk 10:7b). In the parallel text of the Gospel according to St. Matthew’s analogous motivation takes the form of a proverb: “The laborer deserves his keep” (10:10b). In both cases one should see an allusion to the Book of Deuteronomy in which the Inspired Author wrote: “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out grain” (25:4). In Biblical history, this prohibition assumed the nature of the principle commonly referred to the employer-employee relationship. If the ox, which was put on a threshing ground with cereals has the right to feed on grain, the more man has the right to receive a fair payment for the work.<sup>11</sup> In following this line of reasoning, St. Paul in the First Letter to Timothy juxtaposed the verse Deut 25:4, which transposes the norm regarding the treatment of an ox working at the threshing ground with the apostolic activity of presbyters, faithfully preserved by St. Luke of the Christ’s logion (10:7b), who used the sentence of the law of nature to emphasize the law proclaiming the Good News to decent support of the teaching ministers: “Presbyters who preside well deserve double honor, especially those who toil in preaching and teaching. For the scripture says, «You shall not muzzle an ox when it is threshing» and «A worker deserves his pay»” (5:17–18) [Haręzga 2011, 59]. The

<sup>11</sup> “You shall pay him each day’s wages before sundown on the day itself, since he is poor and looks forward to them. Otherwise he will cry to the Lord against you, and you will be held guilty” (Deut 24:15).

apophthegmata therefore includes the conviction that the disciples proclaiming the Good News work for the benefit of those who give them hospitality.<sup>12</sup> Being equipped only with what is most needed, they are dependent on the help of others. On this basis, they have the right to decent support<sup>13</sup> [Mickiewicz 2011, 537–38; Langkammer 2005, 278–79; Idem 2006, 67; Keener 1999, 319].

Although Jesus required of his disciples total detachment from material wealth, he did not, however, forbid to use them. Admittedly, his apostle was to give up everything, sell and distribute all the goods he possessed (cf. Mt 19:21; Mk 10:21; Lk 18:22), but he constantly heard the assurance that he would receive a hundredfold in the present age (cf. Mk 10:28–30; Lk 18:28–30; Mt 19:27–29). He was not to take anything away when he set off to proclaim the Good News and he was to do it for free, but he was worthy of his keep and had the right to hospitality and support from the faithful (cf. Mt 10:8–10; Mk 6:8–10; Lk 9:3–4; 10:4–8). Christ's disciples benefited from the privilege they received: they functioned with the help of those to whom they preached the Gospel, and women often assisted them in their wandering ministry (cf. 1 Cor 9:5) [Wronka 2010, 364–65]. Passage: “The labourer deserves his wages” (Lk 10:7b) and “The laborer deserves his keep” (10:10b) should be understood that God's Providence will take care of the livelihood needed by the apostle, using human goodness, kindness and gratitude. In these words one can also see indirect instructions for those who use the apostolic ministry, so that they do not forget about the usual needs of apostle proclaiming the Good News. The implementation of the right to decent support allows the apostles to maintain the necessary freedom from temporal concerns, and thus fully devote themselves to the work of evangelization [Homerski 1979, 187].

The right to decent support of the apostles is also confirmed by St. Paul in the First Letter to the Corinthians. Having found the authenticity of his apostolate: “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? Although I may not be an apostle for others, certainly I am for you” (9:1b–2a), he declares that the apostolate is connected with the right to support: “My defense against those who would pass judgment on me is this. Do we not have the right to eat and drink?” (9:3–4). What's more, it results from natural law: “Who ever serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating its produce? Or who shepherds a flock without using some of the milk from the flock?” (1 Cor 9:7);<sup>14</sup> from the posi-

<sup>12</sup> Apophthegmata – short and succinct story, culminating in the significant statement of Jesus [Szlaga 1995, 748].

<sup>13</sup> Christ did not specify the magnitude of this support, he only indicated that the food that his disciples who fulfill the apostolic mission would receive should be considered as their equivalent [Gryglewicz 1974, 211].

<sup>14</sup> St. Paul puts forward three rhetorical questions which, by analogy, constitute an irrefutable

tive law of God: "It is written in the law of Moses, «You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain». Is God concerned about oxen, or is he not really speaking for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope, and the thresher in hope of receiving a share" (1 Cor 9:9–10); from religious law, both Jewish: "The rest of it Aaron and his sons may eat; but it must be eaten in the form of unleavened cakes and in a sacred place: in the court of the meeting tent they shall eat it" (Lev 6:9), and pagan: "Do you not know that those who perform the temple services eat (what) belongs to the temple, and those who minister at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?" (1 Cor 9:13); and finally from the words of Christ: "In the same way, the Lord ordered that those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel" (1 Cor 9:14, cf. Mt 10:10b, Lk 10:7b) [Bielecki 2000, 134].

## 2. CHURCH FATHERS AND EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS

The biblical basis of the right of the clergy to decent support is the starting point for further consideration. A significant influence on Church legislation in the analyzed matter was made by the teaching of the Church Fathers. From the very beginning, they proclaim the right of the clergy to decent support because of their ministry.

The argument of St. Cyprian made in a letter, addressed near the year 249 to the priests, deacons and residents of Furni, authorizing intervention on the news of the failure to observe ecclesiastical regulations regarding the wills of the clergy.<sup>15</sup> The Bishop of Carthage, recalling the binding ordinances, explains: "[...] everyone honored by the divine priesthood and consecrated for the clerical ministry ought only to serve the altar and the Sacrifices and to have time for prayers and petitions."<sup>16</sup> Eloquent in this regard is St. Cyprian's refer-

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argument for the thesis that the apostle has the right to be supported by the community he proclaims the Gospel. The general rule is not subject to discussion: whoever works is entitled to use the fruits of his own work. The first example is the profession of a soldier who receives appropriate pay for his work. The cultivating vineyard and shepherd use the same principle. The first uses the fruit of the vineyard he grows, the second of the herds that grazes. The image of a soldier is a reference to 2 Tim 2:4, and an example of a vineyard to Deut 20:6. St. Paul justifies his arguments with reference to the law revealed by God, therefore his argument is not only human [Rosik 2009, 300].

<sup>15</sup> Furni – a city of Tunisia in the precincts of Carthage and an episcopal seat then vacant. St. Cyprian was concerned at the failure of a citizen to observe the decree of the council prohibiting the employment of a cleric in secular business [Bogucki 1971, 210].

<sup>16</sup> S. Cyprianus, *Epistula 1*, in: *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Epistularium ad fidem codicum summa cura selectorum necnon adhibitis editionibus prioribus praecipuis edidit G.F. Diercks*, Turnholt 1994, p. 1–5; English text in: St. Cyprian, *Letters 1–81* [*The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 51], translated by R.B. Donna, ed. H. Dressler, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1981, p. 3–5, no. 1.

ence to the words of St. Paul: "To satisfy the one who recruited him, a soldier does not become entangled in the business affairs of life" (2 Tim 2:4). Since this recommendation applies to all people, it applies the more so to clerics, whose duty is "to serve the altar and the Sacrifices and to have time for prayers and petitions." In the opinion of Bishop of Carthage, the pattern for them should be the tribe of Levi: "[...] when the eleven tribes divided the land and distributed the possessions, the tribe of Levi, which had time for the temple and the altar and the divine ministries, received nothing from that apportionment of the division but, while others cultivated the land, that tribe honored God only and received from the eleven tribes for its food and nourishment tithes of the crops which were growing. This whole matter was carried out by divine authority and arrangement so that those who devoted themselves to divine service should, in no way, be distracted nor be forced to consider or to transact secular business. This plan and form are now kept among the clergy so that those who are advanced into sacerdotal ordination in the Church of the Lord may, in no way, be distracted from their divine ministry, that they may not be hindered by worldly troubles and occupations, but, receiving in honor the gifts of the brethren as if tithes of the crops, they may not withdraw from the altar and the Sacrifices and both day and night may serve heavenly and spiritual interests."<sup>17</sup>

One of the most prominent Christian writers of the Patristic era, Origen of Alexandria, reminded the right of clergy to decent support: "Thus, therefore, also at this time the Levite and the priest, who have no land, are bidden to dwell together with the Israelite, who has land, so that the priest and the Levite may obtain from the Israelite earthly things that they do not have, and so the Israelites may obtain from the priest and Levite heavenly and divine things that they do not have. For the Law of God has been entrusted to the priests and Levites so that they may devote their work to this alone and that they may have time for the word of God apart from any care. But, again, in order that they may be able to have the time, they must use the services of the laity. For if the layperson does not offer the necessities of life to the priests and Levites, they will be busy with such matters, that is, bodily concerns, and have less time for the Law of God. And if they do not have time and do not devote their work to the Law of God, you are endangered. For the light of knowledge that is in them will be obscured, if you do not supply oil for the lamp; and it will be your fault if that which the Lord affirmed will come to pass: «The blind offering guidance to the blind, both will fall into the ditch»."<sup>18</sup> Origen, like St.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Origenis, *Homilia XVII: De eo quod Levitae non acceperunt in haereditatem terram*, in: PG, vol. XII, col. 909–13; English text in: Origen, *Homilies on Joshua* [*The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 105], translated by B.J. Bruce, ed. C. White, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1981, p. 157–62, no. 3.



Cyprian, argues, referring to the entitlement of the Old Testament generation of Levi. It is therefore the duty of the clergy to devote themselves exclusively to proclaiming the Word of God. All other activities, including support, are an obstacle to fruitful pastoral activity. An effective way of fulfilling the duty imposed on the faithful to provide “what is necessary to them,” Origen sees in the firstfruits of initial crops<sup>19</sup> and the tithe.<sup>20</sup>

Following the example of the Levites of the Old Testament, whose only heritage was God, also the Levites of the New Testament – in the opinion of St. Ambrose – should be free of this burden.<sup>21</sup> Although the Bishop of Milan distributed his private goods to the poor, he did not expect the priests to get rid of everything they had: “The Lord does not want us to give away all our goods at once, but to impart them little by little; unless, indeed, our case is like that of Elisha, who killed his oxen, and fed the people on what he had, so that no household cares might hold him back, and that he might give up all things, and devote himself to the prophetic teaching.”<sup>22</sup> Clerics deserve decent support. They also have the right to possess personal material goods, which undoubtedly make it easier for the Church to ensure the proper standard of living for the clergy. That is why St. Ambrose emphasized that one can not be called an imperfect such cleric, who “being unwilling to burden the Church, does not give away all that he has, but does honourably what his office demands.”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> “Primitias omnium frugum, omniumque pecudum, sacerdotibus lex mandat offerri: ita ut omnis qui possidet agrum, vel vineam, vel olivetum, vel etiam hortum, et si quid est quod exercetur in terris, sed et si quis peculia cujuscunque pecoris nutriat, offerat ex iis Deo omne quod primum est, id est ad sacerdotes deferat. Deo enim offerri dicit quod sacerdotibus datur. Et hoc est quod docemur ex lege, quia nemo licite nec legitime utatur fructibus quos terra produxit, nec animantibus quae pecudum protulit partus, nisi ex singulis quibusque Deo primitiae, id est sacerdotibus offerantur. Hanc ergo legem observari etiam secundum litteram, sicut et alia nonnulla, necessarium puto. Sunt enim aliquanta legis mandata quae etiam novi Testamenti discipuli necessaria observatione custodiunt.” Idem, *Homilia XI: De primitiis offerendis*, in: PG, vol. XII, col. 640–41, no. 1.

<sup>20</sup> The teaching of Origen (and St. Cyprian) stands at the beginning of the tithe institution in the Christian world, which is still an optional contribution of the faithful. In the 6th century it took on an obligatory character, although the first synod regulations come from the 4th century. The secular penalties against the reluctant were introduced by the Carolingian legislation from the end of the 8th century [Dudziak 1983, 600; Gołaszewski 2016, 18].

<sup>21</sup> “Neque aliqua commoda in facultatibus et copiis opum constituimus: sed incommoda haec putamus, si non rejiciantur; eaque oneri cum sint aestimari magis, quam dispendio cum erogantur.” S. Ambrosius, *De officiis ministrorum. Libri tres*, in: PL, vol. XVI, col. 23–184, no. I, 9, 28.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; English text in: St. Ambrose, *Three Books on the Duties of the Clergy*, in: *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of Christian Church. Second Series. Translated into English with Prolegomena and Explanatory Notes*, vol. X, translated by H. de Romestin, E. de Romestin, H.T.F. Duckworth, ed. P. Schaff, H. Wace, The Christian Literature Company, Parker & Company, New York–Oxford–London 1896, p. 1–89, no. I, 30, 149.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., no. I, 30, 152.



The spiritual right to decent support was also obvious to St. Basil the Great. In the letter to the management he condemns the theft of grain belonging to the presbyter Dorotheus: "The cause is right for which we are pleading; it is dear to me who am numbered among your friends; it is due to those who are invoking the aid of your constancy in their sufferings. The grain, which was all my very dear brother Dorotheus had for the necessities of life, has been carried off by some of the authorities at Berisi, entrusted with the management of affairs, driven to this violence of their own accord or by others' instigation. Either way it is an indictable offense. For how does the man whose wickedness is his own do less wrong than he who is the mere minister of other men's wickedness? To the sufferers the loss is the same. I implore you, therefore, that Dorotheus may have his grain returned by the men by whom he has been robbed, and that they may not be allowed to lay the guilt of their outrage on other men's shoulders."<sup>24</sup>

Interesting considerations are led by St. Jerome, who, in an allegorical commentary on Mt 10:9: "Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts," by gold understands the meaning of speech, by silver, speech itself, and copper money is the voice of the disciples of Christ. For this reason, all those who preach the Gospel can not receive gold, silver and copper from others. Only God is the giver of these goods.<sup>25</sup> Referring to Mt 10:10, he reminds about the right of the clergy to decent support: "«But let the one who is instructed share in every good thing with him who instructs». Thus as the disciples reap spiritual things, they make their teachers sharers in their own material things. This is done not out of greed but out of necessity."<sup>26</sup>

Another Father of the Church affirming the right of clergy to decent support is St. Augustine, Latin writer, theologian and Christian philosopher. Commenting on the passage from Ez 34:3–5, he criticizes the bad shepherds "who have been pasturing themselves, not sheep." The indicated passus connects with 1 Cor 3:9 and rhetorically asks: "Who plants a vineyard and does not eat from its fruit? Who pastures a flock and does not drink from the milk of the flock?" and continues: "Thus we learn that the milk of the flock is whatever

<sup>24</sup> S. Basilius, *Epistola LXXXVI: Petit Basilius ut per quos direptum Dorothei presbyteri frumentum, per eosdem restituatur*, in: PG, vol. XXXII, col. 465–69; English text in: St. Basil, *Letter LXXXVI: To the Governor*, in: *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of Christian Church. Second Series. Translated into English with Prolegomena and Explanatory Notes*, vol. VIII, translated by J. Blomfield, ed. P. Schaff, H. Wace, The Christian Literature Company, Parker & Company, New York–Oxford–London 1895, p. 174–75.

<sup>25</sup> "Aurum saepe legimus, pro sensu; argentum, pro sermone; aes, pro voce; haec nobis non licet ab aliis accipere, sed data a Domino possidere." S. Hieronymus, *Commentariorum in Evangelium Matthaei ad Eusebium. Liber primus*, in: PL, vol. XXVI, col. 21–70, no. 10, 9–10.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.; English text in: St. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew [The Fathers of the Church]*, vol. 117], translated by T.P. Scheck, ed. T.P. Halton, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 2008, p. 118.

temporal support and sustenance God's people give to those who are placed over them."<sup>27</sup> Bishop of Hippo, giving the example of St. Paul, who preferred to live by his own work than to use "the milk of the flock," emphasizes: "The Apostle did say that he had the right to receive the milk, for the Lord had established that they who preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel. Paul also says that other of his fellow apostles made use of this right, a right granted them, and not unlawfully usurped."<sup>28</sup> Therefore, all clerics who are unable to maintain their own work "let them take from the milk of the sheep, let them receive what is necessary for their needs, but let them not neglect the weakness of the sheep."<sup>29</sup> Equally vividly St. Augustine confirmed the analyzed right in the *Exposition III of Psalm 103*: "But I see in this verse other cattle, which are referred to in the injunction, «You shall not muzzle an ox while it is threshing» (Dt 25:4; 1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim 5:18). And on this prohibition an ox itself demands, «Does God care about oxen? Scripture is talking about us, clearly» (1 Cor 9:9–10). In what sense does the earth bring forth grass for cattle? «The Lord ordained that those who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel» (1 Cor 9:14). He sent out his preachers and instructed them, «Eat what they set before you, for the laborer deserves his pay» (Lk 10:8.7). He had said to them, «Eat what they set before you», and the disciples might have objected, «We shall have no right to eat at people's tables when we have no means to pay. Do you intend us to be so shameless?». «No», he might have replied. «It is not a donation from them, but the wages you deserve». Wages for what? What are they giving, what receiving? They give spiritual goods and receive carnal payment; they give gold and receive grass."<sup>30</sup>

St. Gregory the Great, the author of numerous exegetical works, commenting on the fragment of Lk 10:1–9, similarly proclaims the right of the clergy to decent support. Every cleric deserves two payments: temporal and eternal. The temporal salary supports him at work, and eternal remuneration is the reward of the Kingdom of Heaven. The material goods that the cleric receives from the faithful for his pastoral ministry are to provide a decent standard of support and become a motivation to care for eternal reward.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> S. Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermo XLVI: De Pastoribus in Ezechiel*, in: PL, vol. XXXVIII, col. 270–95; English text in: St. Augustine, *A Sermon on Pastors*, in: *The Liturgy of the Hours*, Office of Readings, Ordinary Time, Week 24, Monday, no. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, no. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, no. 5.

<sup>30</sup> S. Augustinus Hipponensis, *Enarratio in Psalmum CIII. Sermo III*, in: PG, vol. XXXVII, col. 1358–378; English text in: St. Augustine, *Exposition III of Psalm 103*, in: St. Augustine, *Expositions of the Psalms (Enarrationes in Psalmos)*. 99–120, vol. III/19, translated by M. Boulding, ed. B. Ramsey, New City Press, New York 2003, p. 139–66, no. 9.

<sup>31</sup> S. Gregorius Magnus, *Homilia XVII: Habita ad episcopos in fontes Lateranensium*, in: PL, vol. LXXVI, col. 1138–149.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the sources of law and literature carried out in the article leads to the following conclusions:

1) The Christian community determined who should be provided with Church funds. Among those entitled there were clerics. The explication of the right of the clergy to decent support requires an analysis of the theological basis.

2) Numerous sections of the Holy Bible, both Old and New Testament, confirm the right to decent support of the clergy. In this aspect, the following should be pointed out above all: Josh 21:1–42; Lev 27:30–33; Num 18:20–32; Deut 12:12.18; 14:27.29; 18:3–5; 25:4; Mt 10:8–10; Mk 6:8–10; Lk 9:3–4; 10:4–8; 1 Cor 9:3–14; 1 Tim 5:17–18.

3) The teaching of the Church Fathers and early Christian writers have had a significant impact on the proper understanding of the right of the clergy to decent support. This problem was taken up by, among others: St. Cyprian, Origen, St. Ambrose, St. Basil the Great, St. Jerome, St. Augustine and St. Gregory the Great.

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## TEOLOGICZNE PODSTAWY PRAWA DO GODZIWEGO UTRZYMANIA DUCHOWNYCH

**Streszczenie.** Prawo do godziwego wynagrodzenia bez wątpienia należy uznać za jedno z najbardziej podstawowych praw przysługujących każdemu człowiekowi. Ustawodawca

kodeksowy stanowi, że „wypełniając kościelną posługę, duchowni zasługują na wynagrodzenie odpowiednie do swojej pozycji, z uwzględnieniem zarówno natury ich zadania, jak również okoliczności miejsca i czasu, tak by mogli zaspokoić potrzeby własnego życia, a także wynagrodzić tych, którzy potrzebują pomocy” (kan. 281 § 1). W niniejszym artykule analizie zostały poddane teologiczne podstawy prawa do godziwego utrzymania duchownych, do których należą: Pismo Święte, zarówno Starego, jak i Nowego Testamentu, oraz pisma Ojców Kościoła i starożytnych pisarzy chrześcijańskich.

**Słowa kluczowe:** utrzymanie, wynagrodzenie, duchowni, Pismo Święte, pisma Ojców Kościoła i starożytnych pisarzy chrześcijańskich

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