



# History and Development of Clergy Training in Poland

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**Abstract:** Among the many issues related to priesthood, questions often arise about how the Church prepares pupils/students for priestly service, what this formation involves and who is responsible for it. The article attempts to answer these questions from a historical perspective. It begins by presenting the idea of seminary life and the beginnings of the institution of theological seminaries. Then it discusses the decision of the Council of Trent, which obliged the Church to establish theological seminaries in all dioceses. The next stage in the education of the clergy was introduced by the document of the Second Vatican Council, *Optatam Totius*, which defines the nature and mission of a priest. It obliged local churches to develop their own *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis*. The Polish *Ratio Fundamentalis* drew its inspiration from this document. The analysis of the new *Ratio* for Polish seminaries developed in 2021 concludes the latest stage in the history of clergy formation.

**Keywords:** Priesthood, seminary, formation, *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*

## 1. The Phenomenon of Vocation

In approaching the consideration of the vocation to the priesthood or, in general, the vocation of man to a life dedicated to God, it should be noted that the very concept of vocation goes beyond the purely religious sphere of human existence. It has a broader meaning, although it always refers to the sense and shape of a person's life – a sense that every person seeks to some extent, and the shape that he or she more or less consciously gives to his or her life. After all, vocation is determined by the abilities that everyone is equipped with, although unevenly, when coming into this world; it is determined by interests that can change or be less or more extensive; it is determined by the dispositions of person's will and character, as well as living conditions in which a person lives. One man manages to develop and multiply his abilities and talents, while another wastes and loses them; one deepens his interests and passions, finding in them the fulfillment of the meaning of his life, while another drops them somewhere on his paths, allowing them to be replaced by deep emptiness; one is able to direct his will in a consistent pursuit of a clearly defined life goal, while another allows the weaknesses of his character and will to take control, achieving nothing or very little in life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Selej dak, *Stawać się kapłanem*, 11–13.

Thus, vocation concerns any profession a person chooses, any social role they perform, all their skills, abilities, aptitudes, predispositions, talents and passions. When we say of someone that they are called, what we mean is that they are chosen or predisposed to perform a certain task, or appointed to fulfill a certain function or role. To call someone also means: to point to them, to select, to make a choice, to mark, to entrust, to summon.

These terms bring us closer to the religious context of the meaning of vocation. They suggest that in the matter of a person's vocation we are dealing with something much more than their natural, innate abilities and interests or their mental and character predispositions. It is as if the cause of this vocation was someone else, someone outside of these purely natural dispositions of every human existence. Someone, who chooses this existence, who marks it, who points to it, who reads it by name.

Taking a closer look at the semantics of the word "vocation," tracing its multiple meanings, we found ourselves in the circle of those that showed us its religious meaning. It is God that is the Author and Cause of this vocation. He calls a person when he endows them with existence, and when, by giving them the grace of faith, he makes them always attentive to God's voice, living in a relation to God, filled with his love.<sup>2</sup>

Vocation, in the religious sense, can refer both to specific nations and to individuals. The Book of Deuteronomy takes us back to the time when God, by his creative power, called the nations into existence, and chose one of them, the nation of Israel, as especially beloved by him. "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries" (Deut 32:8); "And the LORD has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised" (Deut 26:18–19).

The people of Israel, called by God to a close friendship with him and to obey all the laws, commandments and regulations revealed to them, probably did not immediately discover the peculiar pedagogy that this extraordinary Covenant carried. This pedagogy was revealed to us by Vatican II, stating in the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation that the Creator, by allowing the people of Israel to be so close to himself, desired "that Israel came to know by experience the ways of God with men. Then too, when God Himself spoke to them through the mouth of the prophets, Israel daily gained a deeper and clearer understanding of His ways and made them more widely known among the nations" (DV 14).

With these words, the Church has conveyed to us the truth about the role of the nations as participants in God's plan of salvation. God directs his message to people, reveals his salvific intentions to them, unveils his "ways in relation to men"

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<sup>2</sup> Selejdak, *Stawać się kapłanem*, 13–15.

through the nations, through the peoples, and thus through that form of man's existence on earth which he, the Creator, predestined for him from the beginning.<sup>3</sup>

Among the calling of specific nations and people to special missions and tasks, there is a calling to priestly ministry. The vocation to the priesthood in the "hierarchy" of all forms of vocation that God bestows on people, faithful Christians, is something unique. To it is attached the highest dignity, it is the highest degree of God's choice. The Holy Father John Paul II in his exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* stated briefly: "the priestly ministry in the life of the Church and in the world knows no substitute" (PDV 10). After all, it is due to the ministry only that the promise of the Lord Jesus is being fulfilled to this day in all the places on earth to which the Gospel has been carried: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"<sup>4</sup> (Matt 28:20).

The priest carries out his pastoral ministry in imitation of Christ, the Good Shepherd. With him – the High Priest – the priest is most closely united, engrafted into his priesthood. The priest undertakes his priestly mission in his name and in his stead, through the work of the Holy Spirit. This exercise of pastoral duties in Christ's name and in his stead are, of course, the proclamation of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments and, above all, the power to forgive sins in the sacrament of Penance and the consecration of the Bread and Wine at the Sacrifice of the Mass, through which each priest becomes the "cause" of the presence of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus among the people. It is primarily through this power of priests to transform the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of the Lord that this promise of the Son of God to remain with us "always, to the very end of the age" is fulfilled in such a perfect way.

Obviously, the direct executors of the mission of Christ were the Apostles, but the priests have also continued it throughout history, for, as John Paul II states in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*: "In their turn, the apostles, appointed by the Lord, progressively carried out their mission by calling – in various but complementary ways – other men as bishops, as priests and as deacons in order to fulfill the command of the risen Jesus who sent them forth to all people in every age" (PDV 15).

In considering the sacramental priesthood, one cannot overlook its close bond with the Church – as close as its bond with Christ. When referring to this relationship, the Holy Father states that they are "interiorly united in a kind of mutual immanence." "We can now see the essential dimension of the Christian vocation: Not only does it derive 'from' the Church and her mediation, not only does it come to be known and find fulfillment 'in' the Church, but it also necessarily appears – in fundamental service to God – as a service 'to' the Church." (PDV 35).

<sup>3</sup> Selejdak, *Stawać się kapłanem*, 13–15.

<sup>4</sup> Spurgiasz, "Aktualizacja kapłaństwa."

Bearing in mind that vocation is a gift to the Church, it should be noted that it is a reflection of the mystery of the Trinity. It has a Trinitarian structure. It refers to God the Father as the One who chooses and situates man in his salvific plan. God himself chooses the moment and place in which he endows a man with a vocation. Jesus sends the chosen ones of the Father to “all days until the end of the world” bring the Gospel, Christ’s message of love and salvation merited by him, to people. Those sent by Christ are anointed and consecrated by the Holy Spirit, and given inner power to be able to carry out their priestly mission.<sup>5</sup> The words of the Lord Jesus addressed to the Apostles: “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me” (Matt 10:40) and: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21) are continually renewed. Even today, in the third millennium of Christianity, young people who are “chosen” and “sent” perceive these words as directed to themselves. Their timeliness is imperishable.

A priestly vocation is a gift of God’s love for a man, a particular man. And however much one may talk about vocation in biblical, theological, sociological, historical terms – it still remains a mystery. There is actually no regularity in God’s granting of this gift. Facing God’s call always means for a young person the necessity to confront the most ambitious plan of their life, the proposal to choose a path not yet known and difficult, as it requires sacrifice. In the heart of the called one there is an intimate dialogue with the One whose voice has proved to be a call, and this voice will not be silenced until an answer is received. This “scenario” of vocation was presented by Pope Paul VI in his Message for the 5th World Day of Prayer for Vocations in 1968: “The call is as extensive as the response. [...] Oblations, we call them: Here lies in practice the heart of the matter. [...] It is the humble and penetrating voice of Christ who says, today as yesterday, and even more than yesterday: Come. Freedom reaches its supreme foundation: precisely that of oblation, of generosity, of sacrifice.”<sup>6</sup>

Certainly, many of these answers, including the positive ones, are perhaps disturbed at first by some fears and apprehensions, or by a sense of not being fit for a grand mission. This internal dialogue sometimes lasts for several months, or even years. Slowly, some kind of readiness is born in the heart that hears this voice. This readiness is the very answer given to God, as if declaring one’s own will. A positive response begins a new path, which we call seminary formation.

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<sup>5</sup> Pontifical Work for Ecclesiastical Vocations, *New Vocations*, 32–39.

<sup>6</sup> Paul VI, “Messaggio,” 134–135.

## 2. Seminaries as a Place for the Formation of Vocations

The idea of seminary life as a separate center of preparation for the priesthood should be traced back to when the Apostles were prepared to preach the Good News. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything (Mark 4:34), they experienced the most important moments of historico-redemptive moments with Christ on their own.

The origins of the seminary as an institution go back historically to the second century after Christ. At that time, the homes of bishops were the first environments for the preparation of future priests. The same century saw the establishment of catechetical schools in Caesarea, Antioch, Alexandria and Rome. And at the end of the same century, a special office of archdeacon was established for the education of new clergy.

A similar motive was behind the establishment of parish and monastery schools, as well as the later cathedral schools, as evidenced by the resolutions of the Synods: Toledo II in 527 and Toledo IV in 633. Leading the way among them was the school at the Lateran Basilica in Rome, especially during the reign of Gregory the Great (590–604), and in Britain the cathedral schools in York and Canterbury, which produced many excellent priests.<sup>7</sup> In the canonical rule of St. Chrodegang of Metz (died 766), can be traced the prototype of seminary regulations, further examples of which were later the relevant passages of the *Decretum Gratiani* (1140) and the resolutions of the Councils: Lateran III in 1179 and Lateran IV in 1215.<sup>8</sup> Special colleges for future clergy established at universities also served the purpose of preparing priests. Established at almost all universities (*universitates studia generalia*), they slowly paved the way for the provisions of the Council of Trent on the establishment and operation of seminaries across the Church. On 15 July 1563, canon 18 of the *De Reformatione* decree of Session XXIII was approved, which established the obligation to establish seminaries in all dioceses for the formation of candidates for the priesthood. Pius IV, in his bull *Benedictus Deus* of 26 January 1564, decreed the establishment of seminaries across the Church as formation houses for future priests. In the second half of the 16th century, a number of diocesan synods were held and convened in order to establish seminaries.

First Vatican Council did not address the issue of clergy formation, despite the many requests from bishops for indication to strengthen seminaries and to establish special schools for the formation of seminary lecturers. It was due to Leo XIII and Pius X that the Holy See's interest in this issue began to develop. The result of this was the creation of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities by Benedict XV on 4 November 1915. The simultaneous establishment of the *Code of*

<sup>7</sup> Sacra Congregatio de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus, *Seminaria Ecclesiae Catholicae*.

<sup>8</sup> Buxakowski, "Znowelizowane 'Ratio fundamentalis.'"

*Canon Law* (1917) gave the Church universal legislation defining the structure of a seminary within church organisation. On 24 May 1931, the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities published, at the request of Pius XI, the apostolic constitution *Deus Scientiarum Dominus* to raise the scientific level of ecclesiastical studies. This was a clear program given by the Holy See to theological studies. In the following years, formation in seminaries developed in the direction of purely scientific studies. This overly scientific nature of seminary training created the need for a new direction in priestly formation, which the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council described as “more pastoral.” The change that Vatican II brought to priestly formation can be put in two aspects: of structure and of substance; but the two are deeply intertwined.<sup>9</sup>

The text on priestly formation was not promptly created. It was preceded by discussions and several editorial stages. The *Acta Antepreparatoria* contains as many as 557 proposals for the document. In 1962–1964, a final proposal was developed and presented to the Synod Fathers. It was debated twice: in November 1964 and October 1965. The final enactment of the decree took place at a public session on 28 October 1965. The decree was adopted almost unanimously – with only three votes against.

### 3. Priesthood in the Teaching of Vatican II

The Second Vatican Council states in the *Optatam Totius* decree that seminaries are necessary for priestly formation. Their purpose is to help those who are called to become “true shepherds of souls after the model of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd” (OT 4). The decree clarifies the nature and mission of the priest. It thus defines priestly identity, which is expressed in sacramental and ontological participation in the priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priesthood comes from Christ and is his – the One and High Priest’s – continuation. Through the anointing in the sacrament of Holy Orders, the Holy Spirit makes the priest similar to Jesus Christ. From the bond between the priest and Christ arises the priest’s relationship to the Church. The priest, representing Christ, performs his function not only in the Church, but also for the Church. The purpose of the priest’s life and action is to preach the Gospel to the world and build up the Church in the name and place of Christ, the Head and Shepherd.<sup>10</sup>

In fulfilling such tasks, the role of higher education seminaries is irreplaceable. The seminary should be, first and foremost, a privileged place to encounter Jesus and

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<sup>9</sup> Marchisano, “L’evoluzione storica.”

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Decree *Optatam Totius*.

to constantly be in him, for anyone aspiring to become a priest. In order to be able to create such conditions for the formation of future clergy, a proper seminary structure is necessary. The Council's decree *Optatam Totius* stated that in view of the great diversity of nations and countries, only its general norms can be given. About the function of seminaries, especially higher seminaries, necessary for priestly formation, it said: "Here the entire training of the students should be oriented to the formation of true shepherds of souls after the model of our Lord Jesus Christ, teacher, priest and shepherd. [...] Therefore, all the forms of training, spiritual, intellectual, disciplinary, are to be ordered with concerted effort toward this pastoral end, and to attain it all the administrators and teachers are to work zealously and harmoniously together, faithfully obedient to the authority of the bishop." (OT 4).

Thus, the Council, while obliging local churches to develop guidelines for their seminaries, established a close relationship between general principles for the formation of future priests and those derived from specific needs and diverse local conditions. This was put in the following terms: "Since only general laws can be made where there exists a wide variety of nations and regions, a special 'program of priestly training' is to be undertaken by each country or rite. [...] In this way will the universal laws be adapted to the particular circumstances of the times and localities [...]" (OT 1). And indeed, work on the creation of basic principles for priestly formation began almost immediately after the Council. The initiative in preparing these principles was to come from the individual Episcopal Conferences.<sup>11</sup>

Each Episcopal Conference was required to submit its own *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis*,<sup>12</sup> which was to be approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education in the Vatican. The obligation to approve priestly formation for each Episcopal Conference was determined by the Council. The Council also required the Congregation to develop a model of rules for priestly formation, in light of which the proposals made by local churches could be evaluated. On 6 January 1970 the Congregation issued the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* instruction, which was a preliminary step in fulfilling the tasks mandated by the first post-conciliar Synod of Bishops. Thus, five years after the Council and three years after the Synod, the first document enriched by the post-conciliar discussion on the formation of future priests appeared. It represented a necessary step on the road to preserving unity in diversity. In drafting the document, the main concern was to address three demands:

- u n i t y, to dispel vague opinions on priestly formation;
- u n i v e r s a l i t y, in order to provide appropriate rules for the issuing of regulations adapted to different locations, appropriate to different conditions;
- r e l e v a n c e, so that, after considering contemporary problems in priestly formation, appropriate measures are taken to avoid emerging dangers.

<sup>11</sup> Jerominek, "Zasady wychowania seminaryjnego."

<sup>12</sup> *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (1970).

The new *Ratio Fundamentalis* provided some sort of a model for post-conciliar collegiality and became a classic example of the implementation of the Council's resolutions. In accordance with the provisions of the first post-conciliar Synod, *Ratio Fundamentalis* was given a normative character, and not merely a recommendatory one. Such character of the document was approved at the plenary session of the Congregation for Catholic Education on 3 October 1969.<sup>13</sup> The document, thus, became binding throughout the entire universal Church. It was intended to serve as a model and guide the drafting of all other documents on formation in the seminaries.

After the distribution of the new *Ratio Fundamentalis* to the Episcopal Conferences, sufficient conditions already existed for the local churches to proceed to draft their own rules for priestly formation. The *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* instruction, prepared by the Congregation, proved extremely helpful to the Bishops in the preparation of their way of priestly formation, adapted to local conditions. The new *Ratio* was followed by further documents from the Holy See that regulated and assisted the formation of the clergy. Thus:

- 20 January 1972 the Congregation for Catholic Education sent a letter to the bishops on matters of teaching philosophy in seminaries;
- 21 April 1975 the Congregation developed a document on the teaching of canon law to aspiring priests;
- 22 February 1976 seminaries received a document on the theological formation of future priests;
- 3 June 1979 the Congregation issued an instruction on the liturgical education of alumni;
- 6 January 1980 the Congregation issued a circular letter on the more important aspects of spiritual preparation in seminaries.<sup>14</sup>

On the fifteenth anniversary of the first elaboration of *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, on 19 March 1985, the Holy See issued another document on priestly formation.<sup>15</sup> In fact, it was a revised *Ratio* of 6 January 1970. The basis for this revision was the promulgation of the new *Code of Canon Law* on 25 January 1983. The section covering education and discipline in seminaries, as well as priestly formation, received a completely new structure. "Basic Program for Priestly Formation" referring to this section was deprived of its legal force. In this way, bishops and educators lost the working tool they had previously been able to use in carrying out their tasks. After considering the matter, the Congregation for Catholic Education deemed it appropriate to review the aforementioned "Basic Program" and amend it to suit the new circumstances. The changes made concerned the provisions that

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<sup>13</sup> Kaczmarek, "Nowe zasady formacji."

<sup>14</sup> Buxakowski, "Znowelizowane 'Ratio fundamentalis,'" 291.

<sup>15</sup> *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (1970).

were expanded, rather than the text of the document itself. The revised *Ratio* was approved by the Holy Father John Paul II.<sup>16</sup>

A continuation of the conciliar thought on priestly formation was promulgated by John Paul II on 29 February 1992 in the exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. It set new directions for priestly formation and became the post-Vatican II reference point in all matters related to the formation of priests. New horizons for priestly formation were opened by the Holy See document entitled *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation. Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* of 8 December 2016. It obliges all Episcopal Conferences to prepare relevant national documents.

#### 4. *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis pro Polonia*

After the Vatican II, the Church in Poland did not wait passively for the publication of the *Ratio Fundamentalis* by the Holy See. At a meeting of rector priests in Kielce in 1964, the problems of educating young clergy and of ways of running seminaries in Poland were addressed.<sup>17</sup> A year later, in Poznań, at a meeting of rectors, a commission was appointed to prepare a project for teaching in seminaries. The rectors' session was accompanied by papers analysing the educational demands of the Vatican II documents and an in-depth reflection on the history of seminaries in Poland.<sup>18</sup> The guidelines of the Holy See and the current needs of the Church in Poland were considered in the context of the changes taking place in the mentality of young people.

The adaptation of the conciliar decree *Optatam Totius* to Polish conditions was the subject of discussion and deliberation at the subsequent conventions of the superiors of seminaries. In 1966 in Lublin, a decision was made to prepare a draft *Ratio Studiorum* according to the decree *De Institutione Sacerdotali Ponenda Sunt* promulgated by the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities. It was also decided to prepare detailed guidelines for spiritual and intellectual formation for the next rectors' meeting, based on the conciliar decree *Optatam Totius*.<sup>19</sup>

Komisja Seminariów Duchownych przy Komisji Studiów i Seminariów Episkopatu Polski [The Commission of Seminaries under the Commission of Studies and

<sup>16</sup> Walachowicz, "Formacja przyszłych kapłanów."

<sup>17</sup> Protokół z posiedzenia księży rektorów w Kielcach During the meeting of rectors, a lecture on seminaries was delivered by Bolesław Kumor, "Struktura seminariów w Polsce XVII, XVIII i XIX wieku" (1964) [Structure of Seminaries in Poland of the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries].

<sup>18</sup> Protokół z posiedzenia księży rektorów w Poznaniu. The lecture was delivered by Władysław Miziołek, "Reorganizacja studiów w seminariach duchownych w obecnych warunkach." [Reorganisation of Studies in the Seminaries under Current Conditions].

<sup>19</sup> Protokół z posiedzenia księży rektorów w Lublinie.

Seminaries of the Polish Episcopate] developed several projects to facilitate the formation of the Polish *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis*. Thus, in 1967, the first guidelines for seminaries in Poland were created. They became the starting point for the development of two more projects: *Regulamin dla alumnów wyższych seminariów duchownych* [Regulations for Alumni of Higher Education Seminaries]<sup>20</sup> and *Zasady życia dla alumnów wyższych seminariów duchownych w Polsce* [Rules of Life for Alumni of Higher Education Seminaries in Poland].<sup>21</sup> At that time, the rectors of the seminaries drafted a project of the examination regulations for the higher education seminaries in Poland in 1967.<sup>22</sup>

This resulted in a comprehensive *Ratio* project for seminaries in Poland. In February 1967, the finished project of priestly formation was sent out to seminaries for feedback.<sup>23</sup> After making corrections, the commission presented the project to the Episcopate, which approved the document and sent it to Rome in 1968. On 12 August 1968, the Holy See approved, for a period of six years – *ad experimentum* – a Latin document entitled *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis in Seminariis Poloniae Decretis Concilii Vaticani II Accomodata*.<sup>24</sup> The implementation of *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis* was monitored with great care. As early as on 9 April 1968, a questionnaire was sent out to all seminaries, asking them to respond regarding the following two questions:

- to what extent the *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, approved by the Congregatio pro Institutione Catholica on 12 August 1968, was implemented during the 1968/1969 academic year, in the respective seminary;
- how to separately distinguish the implementation of the *Ratio Studiorum*, which is a component of the *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis*.<sup>25</sup>

*Ratio Studiorum* refers specifically to the program and content of seminary studies and the forms of their assimilation by the alumni. Both, the introduction of the resolutions of Vatican II in the area of priestly formation, as well as the implementation of the *Ratio Institutionis* were not easy. In Poland, it was a time of struggle for the independence of seminaries, as state authorities tried to spread supervision over them. Appropriate reports were required and attempts were made to visit seminaries. Eventually, as a result of negotiations, the Episcopate – although convinced of the wrongfulness of visitation by the board of trustees – decided to tolerate the visitation of so-called “non-theological subjects.”

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<sup>20</sup> Regulamin dla alumnów.

<sup>21</sup> Zasady dla alumnów Wyższych Seminariów Duchownych z 1967.

<sup>22</sup> Projekt zasad formacji kapłanów w Polsce z 1967.

<sup>23</sup> Projekt zasad formacji kapłanów w Polsce z 1967.

<sup>24</sup> Ratio institutionis sacerdotalis in seminariis Poloniae.

<sup>25</sup> Ankieta: Nowe Ratio.

The 1960s were also a real threat to the existence of several seminaries. Initially, alumni of certain seminaries, and later of almost all, were forced to perform military service. The clerical unit in Bartoszyce, with more than 300 seminarians, was named as the largest seminary in Poland. This gave rise to new problems in the seminary formation of alumni during their military service. Despite unfavorable conditions, work on the implementation of the principles of priestly formation was steadily progressing. At the meetings of rector priests, a keen interest was taken in the implementation of *Ratio institutionis* in Poland, and crisis situations in seminaries in the West were analysed.

An important development in the organisation of the work on improving the formative role of seminaries was the establishment of a separate Komisja Episkopatu ds. Seminariów Duchownych [Episcopal Commission for Seminaries]. It was established on 15 January 1970 at the 107th Polish Episcopal Conference.<sup>26</sup> The work regulations of this Commission were approved four years later, on 15 November 1974, by the General Council.<sup>27</sup> The *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis pro Polonia* project, prepared based on the 1970's *Ratio Institutionis*, was finally presented by the Commission to the Polish Episcopal Conference on 4 April 1971. It was then sent to Rome on October 15 that year and was approved for six years.<sup>28</sup>

On 15 November 1974 in Warsaw, at a meeting of the Komisja Episkopatu ds. Seminariów Duchownych [Episcopal Commission for Seminaries], it was announced that the *Ratio institutionis sacerdotalis* would be addressed again. This was because certain deficiencies and inaccuracies had been noted in the process of its implementation. The *Ratio* did not mention the confession of alumni. Some shortcomings were also noticed regarding the study program. The main reason, however, for undertaking the revision of the *Ratio* were the changing political conditions in Poland, which affected young people enrolling in seminaries. It was particularly concerned with the impact of Marxist ideology on the younger generation.<sup>29</sup>

In order to work out concrete proposals on possible changes and amendments, a survey was conducted among professors of all seminaries. Work on modifying the *Ratio Studiorum* continued until 1975. At a meeting of the Komisja ds. Seminariów [Commission for Seminaries] on November 23 that year, a draft was presented that took into account the suggestions sent in response to the aforementioned

<sup>26</sup> Pawlina, *Młodość i jej duszpasterze*, 17–30.

<sup>27</sup> Regulamin Komisji ds. Seminariów Duchownych z 1974. In the same year, at the 145th Polish Episcopal Conference, at the proposal of the General Council, Bp. Lech Kaczmarek was appointed as the chairman of the Komisja ds. Seminariów Duchownych [Commission for Seminaries]. His deputy was Fr. Czesław Lewandowski, and the secretary was Fr. Władysław Bomba. See Letter from the Primate of Poland, Card. S. Wyszyński.

<sup>28</sup> Buxakowski, "Znowelizowane 'Ratio fundamentalis,'" 290.

<sup>29</sup> Protokół z posiedzenia Komisji Episkopatu ds. Seminariów Duchownych z dnia 15 XI 1974.

survey.<sup>30</sup> Two years later, the partially modified *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis pro Polonia* was approved by the Polish Episcopal Conference and sent to the Holy See for approval. On 10 November 1977, the Congregation authorised the new *Ratio Institutionis* for six years.<sup>31</sup>

Considering the experience already gained, as well as the changing situation in Poland, it was necessary to prepare for possible further modification of the *Ratio Institutionis* during those six years. The rector priests of the seminaries sent their proposals to the Komisja Episkopatu ds. Seminariów Duchowych [Episcopal Commission for Seminaries]. These comments concerned mainly the intellectual formation of the alumni. Particularly at issue were lectures in patrology, religiology and the Polish language conversion course.<sup>32</sup> With help in reworking the *Ratio* came a circular letter from the Congregation for Catholic Education on 6 January 1980 concerning the more important aspects of spiritual preparation in seminaries.<sup>33</sup> Many consultations were prepared, until finally, at the meeting on 7 April 1983, the proposed amendments to the *Ratio Institutionis* were approved. A month later, on May 4, they were approved by the Polish Episcopal Conference and sent to the Congregation in Rome, where the changes were approved for the next six years.<sup>34</sup> The manner and degree of their implementation in the formation process was to be illustrated by a survey sent out on 20 April 1984 on pastoral formation in seminaries. In the following year, on March 9, the Congregation for Catholic Education, following the 1983 promulgation of the new *Code of Canon Law* issued the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*.<sup>35</sup> The new *Ratio* was not really new, but took into account changes in canon law regarding seminaries.

As a result of this change, and after amendments were made and approved by the Polish Episcopal Conference, seminaries in Poland had their own formation rules for future clergy. These were to remain in effect until 1989, when the six-year term of the *Ratio institutionis* for Poland, approved in 1983, expired. *Ratio Institutionis* for Poland.

The turn of the 1980s and 1990s in Poland brought new political, social and cultural problems that had significant implications for the life of the Church and the ministry of the clergy. In this context, the need to revise the existing form of training for priests became particularly urgent. Since a Synod of Bishops devoted to the problem of priestly formation had been announced for 1990, work on a new *Ratio* was therefore not undertaken. The guidance of the Synod was awaited. After it was over, it was announced that another document on priestly formation would

<sup>30</sup> Protokół z posiedzenia Komisji Episkopatu ds. Seminariów Duchowych z dnia 23 XI 1975.

<sup>31</sup> Zasady formacji kapłańskiej w Seminariach Duchowych w Polsce z 1977.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Bp. L. Kaczmarek.

<sup>33</sup> List okólny Kongregacji Nauczania.

<sup>34</sup> Amendments to the "Ratio institutionis" sacerdotalis.

<sup>35</sup> *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (1985).

be published. And, indeed, on 29 February 1992, John Paul II promulgated the exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. The document indicated new perspectives and a new model for the formation of future priests.<sup>36</sup> The indications contained in this exhortation effectively determined the direction of the work on the new *Ratio* for Poland, which had already begun.

Other significant events in the life of the Church in Poland have also prolonged the wait for a new document on formation in seminaries. First of all, on 25 March 1992, a new organisation of the Church in Poland was established. New dioceses were created. During the academic year 1991/1992, an apostolic visitation took place in our seminaries. It resulted in indications given to the rectors of higher seminaries at a special conference held in Częstochowa on 22 April 1993.<sup>37</sup> The then prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Card. Pio Laghi, made clear suggestions concerning the reform of the *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis pro Polonia*.<sup>38</sup> Work already underway at the time to prepare a draft *Ratio Studiorum pro Polonia*, led by Fr. Stanisław Czerwik, entered a more intensive phase. Comments and proposals from rectors, seminary professors and alumni on the direction of the reform were collected. These materials were presented at the rectors' convention in September 1994 in Olsztyn. They indicated the divergence of expectations rather than setting the direction for constructive change.

During the conference of rectors in Kraków on 6 September 1995, archbishop Stanisław Szymecki, the chairman of Komisja ds. Seminariów [Commission for Seminaries] appointed a new team to work on the *Ratio*.<sup>39</sup> This team prepared a draft *Ratio Studiorum* and presented it to the Polish Episcopal Conference, which approved it at its plenary meeting and sent it to Rome. On the feast day of Our Lady of Częstochowa on 26 August 1999, the Congregation for Catholic Education approved the new program for the formation of Polish priests entitled *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis pro Polonia*.<sup>40</sup> This document regulated formation of the priesthood in Polish seminaries until 2016.

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<sup>36</sup> Jaworski, "W kierunku reformy 'Ratio studiorum'."

<sup>37</sup> Documents from the Symposium Following the Apostolic Visitation.

<sup>38</sup> Sugestie dla nowego "Ratio."

<sup>39</sup> The team included rector priests: Waclaw Depo from Radom, Alojzy Drożdż from Tarnów, Marian Florczyk from Kielce, Romuald Jaworski from Płock, Zdzisław Kroplewski from Koszalin, and Tomasz Węclawski from Poznań. See Arch. SEP, t. SD.

<sup>40</sup> Zasady formacji kapłańskiej w Seminariach Duchownych w Polsce z 1977.

## 5. *Ratio Institutionis* of 1999

Young people who are called by the Lord Jesus to carry out his saving work come to the seminary. Simply having knowledge only is not enough there. Thus, the task of the Higher Education Seminaries, in addition to providing an appropriate education, is to create such conditions that these young people, through the years of formation, become men of God. So that they not only tell what they have learned about God, but that they testify about God. The Higher Education Seminary is a university, but a peculiar one, as studying takes place at a desk, in lecture halls and on one's knees.

As a university, the Higher Seminary has its own rules of life and its own specific program of study. A reform of the study in the Higher Education Seminaries in Poland was being prepared for many years. This has been mentioned in previous chapters. Let's focus here on an analysis of the *Ratio* that guided the lives of the alumni during our first series of surveys, conducted in 2000 – the *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis* of 1999. It is made up of eight chapters and gives an integral vision of the formation of priests. It begins with vocations and ends with ways of forming those responsible for the seminaries.

The main points of the *Ratio* are a reminder that the entire Church is responsible for vocations, meaning that every believer has an impact on the maturation of the future priest, and an indication that a priest's identity must flow from a relationship with Jesus. It is him that the clergy person will later represent with his entire life. Therefore, the document under discussion focuses on describing the structure of the seminary and the functions of those responsible for formation and its principles. An alumni in Poland is subjected to intellectual, spiritual and pastoral education. The presumption is that the priest, upon graduation from the seminary, will be a harmoniously formed, educated person with a properly formed conscience.

The second part of the *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis pro Polonia* is the *Ratio Studiorum*. It covers the general principles of the philosophical and theological studies, their formal structure and didactic program. While providing a list of subjects, it also specifies the basic issues to be covered in lectures and the applicable number of lecture hours.<sup>41</sup>

Changes in seminary formation are due to *signum temporis*. The challenge of time has two facets. The first relates to those to whom the Gospel will be preached. The second relates to candidates coming to the seminary. The addressee of pastoral activities today is the man of postmodernism. The modern man often thinks that he knows Christianity, but ceases to be interested in it. He has trouble pausing in silence, reflecting and opening up to the mystery. He relativises the truth, and often has a habit of lying. He experiences a kind of schizophrenia of public and private life. In order to work among people with such mentality, adequate intellectual

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<sup>41</sup> Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Ratio institutionis*, 31–134; Selejdak, “Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis.”

preparation of priests is required, not only on the content side but also on the methodological side.

Thus, there is a need for adequate preparation of priests to confront the problems of modern civilisation. *Signum temporis* also refers to a young man who enters the seminary. The incoming candidates are often poorly prepared from the cultural, intellectual and religious side. They bring the entire legacy of modern culture with them that reveals itself in symptoms such as a yearning for absolute freedom, rebellion, chaos in the world of values, disturbed emotionality and inner restlessness. They often come from broken families, families of alcoholics, single mothers. Although young, they are sometimes already deeply wounded. They also have a different experience of the Church than candidates coming to the seminary years ago. Many of them have experienced the contact with various religious groups and movements. This is a new generation. Not inferior, but certainly different.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, the formation process needs changes that take into account the condition of the younger generation and the expectations of the believers. So, what is this novum in the formation of future generations of priests?

Studies in the higher education seminaries last six years. There has long been a discussion as to whether they should be lengthened. The idea was to have an introductory year before starting seminary. This would be aimed at equalizing the intellectual level of candidates and preparing them for philosophical and theological studies. This concern made its way into the *Ratio pro Polonia*, and even more attention was given to it in the latest *Ratio* of 2021.

To remedy the aforementioned difficulties, the introduction of a propaedeutic period was recommended. Its duration depends on who the candidates are and what they represent. In practice, it is proposed to organise introductory courses and introduce certain classes in the first year of theological studies. *Ratio* calls such classes an “introduction to Christianity.” It considers four issues: the introduction to the truths of faith, the celebration of the Christian mystery, as well as the Christian moral life and prayer.<sup>43</sup>

It seems that the strongest aspect of *Ratio pro Polonia* is intellectual formation. A specific curriculum for each year is given. The manner of its implementation is also outlined. The same applies to pastoral formation. Worse is the case of spiritual and human formation. Although the *Ratio* provides a general vision of this formation, it lacks the means and methods of implementation. For example – a lot of attention is paid to education for freedom. But how to do this? How to balance freedom with discipline in seminaries? Much attention is paid to human formation, but how to conduct it?

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<sup>42</sup> Jaworski, “Problemy metodyki nauczania.”

<sup>43</sup> Węclawski, “Wprowadzenie chrześcijańskie.”

When introducing a new formation program, one should be aware that God himself is the first Formator. And if changes to the existing model of formation are undertaken, it is only because the Church obliges us to do so. And to this command of the Church, those responsible for seminary formation respond – yes. It is obvious that this formation program cannot be imposed. It is to be the property of all those responsible for the formation of future priests. The conviction that one is right in what one is doing provides a guarantee of the right course of formation. Otherwise, one will do more harm than good to the development and formation of future priests. Therefore, mutual openness to comments, indications and advice in the implementation of the new principles of priestly formation in Poland seems most advisable.

Bishop Damian Bryl, within the framework of the Commission of the Episcopal Conference for the Clergy began, together with an appointed team of specialists, to work on the Polish interpretation of the Vatican document *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation. Ratio Fundamental Institutionis Sacerdotalis*. This resulted in the *Ratio Institutionis Sacerdotalis pro Polonia*, which came into effect on 1 October 2021.

## 6. *Ratio Institutionis* of 2021

Let us therefore take a look at the latest document according to which alumni of the last two years are being educated. Although our 2020 survey still covered seminary candidates who began their formation at a time when the latest document had not yet been introduced in Poland, the training of future priests is already taking place according to it. Let us turn here to the opinion of Fr. Tomasz Trzaskawka, secretary of the Team For The Preparation of New Rules for Priestly Formation in Poland, who emphasizes, first and foremost, the priority of the seminarian/priest's relationship to God in the Church.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the emphasis in the training of seminarians has been placed not on preparing them for future tasks in the Church, but on helping them grow in their personal relationship to the Most High. The most important issue is to consider who the cleric is to become. For if he himself is humanly and spiritually more mature, if he is able to build more mature relationships, he will also maturely lead others, that is, according to the spirit of the Good Shepherd.

The *Ratio pro Polonia* states that “there is nothing more important in Christian formation than education in the faith, understood as a relationship.” The priestly kerygma, according to the document, should be founded precisely on the priest's relationship with God, since if the relationship was learned and theoretical – it would be deceitful. Therefore, evangelising and communicating the good news of God must be based on the salvific relationship the priest has built with Jesus. Without it – as

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<sup>44</sup> Trzaskawka, “Priorytetem są relacje.”

the authors of the *Ratio* clearly emphasise – pastoral activity will not succeed. This is very much emphasised throughout the document and is the main point of reference in the training of seminarians. Defining this relationship, Trzaskawka recommends: “seminarians and presbyters are to radiate what is truly essential in Christianity. This must be evident in their entire life, in the way they build relationships with others.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, it can be seen that the *Ratio* clearly shifts the burden from intellectual formation (not in the sense of a lower level of theological knowledge, but in the sense of relying mainly on theory) to spiritual and ethical formation, serving to create a man who experiences his faith deeply, and joyfully shares it with others.

Similarly, Fr. Wojciech Wójtowicz, chairman of the Conference of Rectors of Higher Education Seminaries says<sup>46</sup>:

The new *Ratio* strongly emphasises the importance of the kerygmatic dimension at all stages of formation. There is no priesthood without the experience of a personal encounter with Jesus the Savior, with Christ the Priest and Servant. So the first fruit of good formation for our alumni is simply the visible joy of the saved in their lives. Ultimately, the idea is for future priests to bear spiritual fruit by clearly communicating with each other: it's not me, it's Him – it's God. The second important aspect of the document is the demand for a seminary that, while forming for the hierarchical priesthood, does not create an identity based on a particular role of a person, but strongly shapes the spirit of servitude and Christian brotherhood; it is also a seminary in which the first concern is not the transmission of rules governing ecclesiastical institutions, but the formation of a sense of community. The formation space understood in this way ceases to be mainly a system of control and verification, and becomes, firstly, a space for multidimensional personal development.

In terms of the curriculum, the new *Ratio* proposes unifying the systems of study in the various seminaries and revising the current way of dividing teaching hours for young theologians into different fields of study. The episcopate has also decided to introduce a propaedeutic year in the form envisioned by the Vatican. The year without theological studies, as postulated in the new *Ratio*, presents a very high value at various levels, teaching a young person responsibility for himself, his environment and forming in him the ability to recognise his character.

The educational program for the next stage emphasises the role of “becoming a disciple of Christ” (in line with Pope Francis’ recommendation that the ministry of discipleship must precede the ministry of missionary). These two years, coinciding with philosophical and humanistic formation, include learning to understand the mission of a priest, listening to the words of the Gospel and reflecting on them.

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<sup>45</sup> Trzaskawka, “Priorytetem są relacje.”

<sup>46</sup> Wójtowicz, “Wywiad.”

The next stage of training can be called a time of “becoming similar to Christ.” About that stage, Wójtowicz puts it this way:

It occupies another three years. Thus, this stage is a time of learning servant love and acquiring readiness to carry the cross in order to obediently follow the Lamb wherever he goes. A misunderstood category of ‘alter Christus,’ meanwhile, can serve to form in the spirit of clericalism. Thus, the called one should discover that he, himself, is no one special, but the incomprehensible is Jesus’ grace that he brings, and therefore special is his vocation.<sup>47</sup>

Pastoral training does not occur until the final, sixth year of seminary education, according to the *Ratio*. This is the stage of being a “missionary,” that is, preparing the seminarian for pastoral tasks and service to his community. Throughout the years, alumni work with and for the people, doing internships in, inter alia, hospices, prisons, nursing homes, oases and pilgrimages. The *Ratio Institutionis* also does not forget about gaining experience in evangelisation and catechetical practice.

In summary, priestly formation is to be progressive, that is, to go through successive stages, but with respect for the personal rhythm of development of the candidate for the priesthood. The *Ratio* makes it clear that this development in spirituality and the attuning of one’s worldview and actions to the life of Jesus should continue throughout the priest’s life.

## 7. The Ecclesiology of Pope Francis versus Contemporary Priestly Formation

Having gathered the conclusions on clerical formation according to the *Ratio*, it is worth to present some reflections on the ecclesiological emphases in the formation process. Indeed, the priesthood, especially the diocesan presbyterate, is in its essence called to serve in the changing conditions of social and cultural development. The priest’s desire for personal development – otherwise always right – must be constantly confronted with the realities of the times. While serving Christ in imitation of the apostles, the Church is constantly sent to the “present” world. Therefore, among the formation suggestions, it is precisely the problem of ecclesiology that requires special reflection.

The Church of God is a mystery. The mystery of the Church cannot be adequately formulated by any definition or theological concept. However, it can be attempted to express it through an image that would reflect, in accordance with the will of

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<sup>47</sup> Wójtowicz, “Wywiad.”

Christ, the fullness of the essence of the Church. This “image” of the Church serves as a basis for pastoral, and especially formative, activity. Over the past centuries, various images have been formed referring to what the Church in its essence is. Thus, when thinking about the Church, we refer to it as: People of God, Mystical Body of Christ, Sacrament of Salvation. The Second Vatican Council gave us a new image of the Church – *communio*, community. This concept has dominated theology and pastoral care since 1965. The value of community in the Church of the 21st century is emphasised by Pope Francis, and in his ecclesiology we can find clues as to how candidates for the priesthood should be educated in modern times.

Francis’ ecclesiology is an interpretation of the Church today. The Pope is not engaged in theoretical reflection on the Church, but rather seeks – through his ministry – to make it real. Through his activity, the Church “happens,” and we can have a sense of “being the Church.” Three images of the Church appear in Pope Francis’ teaching. They are, in a way, the dominant feature of his approach to ecclesiology. The first – is the image of the bent woman. St. Luke, in the Gospel, speaks of a woman who had “a spirit of infirmity” for eighteen years, was bent over and could not raise herself up in any way. The Pope uses this Gospel figure to illustrate the state of sickness of a self-centered Church. It is a Church bent over, but not bent over in front of another person, but rather bent over itself – a Church preoccupied solely with itself. The second image of the Church is that of a loss of hope, the image of the disciples going to Emmaus. Francis used it in an attempt to show that there is a loss of hope within the Church today. This is accompanied by a kind of weariness, disillusionment. And finally, the third image is that of the good Samaritan. This is the Church bending over to a person who is on the margins of society.<sup>48</sup>

These three Gospel images are used by Pope Francis to present an “open door” Church. At this point it is worth recalling the memorable words spoken by Pope John Paul II: “Do not be afraid to open wide the doors to Christ.” It was a call to open the door, the door of one’s heart, so that Jesus could enter inside the various spaces of our lives. However, Francis’ call to “open the doors” has a slightly different meaning – it is about opening the doors of the Church so that Christ can come out of it. The Pope calls for going out, saying: “A Church that does not go out of itself, sooner or later, sickens from the stale air of closed rooms.” To a staid Church, concerned with securing what it has, the Pope contrasts the Church that should open up and go out into the world. However, there is a risk that such a Church that goes out into the world could have an accident, just like any person going out on the street. Responding to this doubt, Francis stated: “A thousand times I prefer a Church after an accident to a sick Church.” Typical diseases of a closed Church are self-centeredness, bending over only oneself, staring only at oneself. This state of being closed, locked from the inside is, after all, familiar to the Church. Before Pentecost, the Church remained

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<sup>48</sup> Draguła, “Kościół Franciszka.”

in the Upper Room, closed “out of fear.” Thus, overcoming alumni’s fears of opening up to the world, teaching them to be with people and to accompany people should be a very important part of clerical formation.

After Vatican II, an anthropological attitude dominated ecclesiology. It was expressed in the statement: “Man is the way of the Church.” This phrase became the leading one for pastoral care. Pope Francis introduces a similar, but modified vision, which can be summarised in the statement that “the Church’s task is to go out towards.” Francis emphasises the word “going out” often. It is an encouragement to start some process, some action. The key word often used by Pope Francis in the context of describing the Church is the word “movement.” A movement that should animate the Church. This movement is expressed by three verbs: “walk,” “build,” and “confess.” The first describes walking in the face of God. The second is a call to build on the foundation that is Christ. The third refers to shunning the spirit of worldliness. Movement is necessary because when we are not walking, we are stagnant. The Church – like its Savior – Is on the move because it has been sent to those who are unwell. It is necessary to go with Christ all the way, to the peripheries – the Pope exhorted. “Peripheries” is another term that occupies an important place in the Pope’s teaching. This term did not appear unexpectedly. It was used by Jorge Bergoglio while he was still serving his diocese. In the notes of his speech during the conclave, we read that “the Church is called to go out and direct her steps to the peripheries. Not only the geographical ones, but also the existential ones: the peripheries of the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance; the peripheries of all kinds of poverty.”<sup>49</sup> As pope, he first used the word “peripheries” at the Chrism Mas on Holy Thursday. Since then, the term “peripheries” has constantly appeared in papal teaching.

Francis’ “peripheries” can be understood in three ways. First – peripheries are places and people where God is not present. It is necessary to bring him there. Second, there are the so-called existential peripheries. These include a wide variety of experiences, which are located in areas such as material poverty, spiritual poverty, loneliness, sadness, illness, imprisonment, suffering, indifference, ignorance, pain, and so on. Third, the term “peripheries” can be understood in a theological sense. It defines any situation “where the faithful are most vulnerable to the onslaught of those who wish to rob them of their faith.” This plundering does not necessarily take place as a direct attack on faith, religious beliefs or a fight against the Church. It takes place far more, and far more often, when any negative experiences project religious attitudes and result in doubt about the received salvation. And even more profoundly, the “peripheries” are a state of lack of hope, a state of loss of faith. Pope Francis hints: The Church must go there with Christ.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> The words of Card. Jorge Bergoglio before the conclave, quoted in Błasiak, “Paradygmat misyjny.”

<sup>50</sup> Draguła, “Papieża Franciszka koncepcja ewangelizacji.”

An important category in Pope Francis' ecclesiology is "closeness." The aforementioned images of the Church – the merciful Samaritan and the disciples on the road to Emmaus – speak of "closeness on the road," of "the Lord who draws near to us" when we are unwell, and carries us on his shoulders to the nearest shelter. About the closeness that the Church should have, the Pope says as follows: "Closeness is needed so that the word, justice, love can be proclaimed in such a perfect way that the response is an attitude of faith. Encounter, conversion, unity, communion and solidarity require 'closeness' as a concrete evangelical criterion."<sup>51</sup>

Experiencing the closeness of the Church, which speaks of the closeness of the saving Christ, is a condition for evangelisation. According to the Pope we, as the Church, without closeness, become mere "members of an NGO or followers of a multinational corporation."<sup>52</sup> The Church cannot lose its essence – the Christ present in it accompanies people, is with them in their existential experiences.<sup>53</sup>

Speaking of pastoral style, the Pope warns against promoting a "distant," devoid of closeness, tenderness, cordiality pastoral. At most, a certain dimension of proselytism can be expected from this type of pastoral care, but it never leads to inclusion in the Church. Closeness, on the other hand, creates communion and belonging, enables encounter and creates a culture of encounter. The image of closeness includes the figure of the Church as a Mother who teaches us to walk well through life. But when children grow up and become independent, they sometimes get lost. However, the Mother remains patient in every situation, accompanies the child, and when the child makes mistakes, she tries to understand them. The Church is a merciful Mother. She does not judge, but gives God's forgiveness.<sup>54</sup>

Pope Francis also warns the Church against the so-called spiritual temporalism. The point here is that we are used to a pastoral ministry that is rather static and largely bureaucratic, expressed in concrete norms, regulations, orders. The Pope repeatedly casts doubt on such pastoral care, calling it a clericalisation of the Church. The starting point of this criticism for him is the attitude of the Pharisees: "They were the ones who prejudged the closeness of God wandering with his people, prejudged him, who became man to be one of us and to wander. They filtered him through their traditions, made an idea out of him, made a mere belief out of this truth, and distanced God from the people." The Pope calls such attitude "spiritual temporalism," which characterises those who are "controllers of the faith." "I think," says Francis, "that many times Jesus keeps knocking on the door, but from within, so that we will let him out. The Church behaves as if it wants to lock Jesus inside and not allow him to come out."<sup>55</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Franciszek, *Chciałbym Kościoła*, 51.

<sup>52</sup> Franciszek, *Chciałbym Kościoła*, 78.

<sup>53</sup> Kijas, *Papież Franciszek*, 152–157.

<sup>54</sup> Grimaldi, *Ero Bergoglio*, 105–109.

<sup>55</sup> Duda, "Wyjść jak Jonasz."

Pope Francis' pastoral vision is to move from a Church that "orders the faith" to a Church that "transmits and gives the faith." The Pope speaks of the need to re-orient our pastoral care. He says that it is necessary to change the closed model of evangelisation activity, which is limited to what already was, and in its place create a Church of open doors.<sup>56</sup> He also talks about the so-called pastoral conversion. By this he means balancing the efforts of the Church. The church devotes most of its forces to those who come to it. The Pope suggests dividing these forces. Dedicate half of them to those who are not in the Church. Pastoral conversion also means reducing bureaucracy in favor of building closeness. It also means shifting the emphasis from moralising to mercy.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, the Church that is happening, that is occurring, requires a change of mentality. We talk about the Catholic Church as a universal Church. Over the years we have become accustomed to thinking that universal means European – after all, so many popes came from Italy, and the last two – a Pole and a German – were also Europeans. Everything they said to us was understood in the context of a small piece of the world, which is Europe. Perhaps God gives us a pope from a different cultural background so that we understand that the Church of Christ is not just "our" Church: the European, American or Argentine Church. The universal Church is not the Church of popes – John Paul II's, Benedict XVI's or Francis' – the Church is Christ's. And candidates for the priesthood should be formed to this understanding of the Church.

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