

Rev. Krzysztof Gózdź

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland

# The crisis and the power of faith

Reflecting upon the thought  
of Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI

In the summer semester of 1967 Joseph Ratzinger lectured to the students of all faculties at the University of Tübingen on the topic “Introduction to Christianity,” which later served as a title to his book.<sup>1</sup> The following year – 1968 – constituted the apogee of a great academic revolt that swept through Western countries. It was during the time of this, so-called, “cultural revolution,” that the university professor saw the peak of the social crisis in the Euro-Atlantic region, and to react to this lack of faith, he decided to give lectures on the essence of Christianity. His intention was to promote a new interpretation of faith as an opportunity of a real humanity in this world.<sup>2</sup> This “program” must have been working, as in a very short period there were many editions of the book and it was translated into many languages.

---

1 J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity*, 2nd edition, San Francisco 2012.

2 J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, München 1968, p. 10.

The topic under discussion is best explained through Kierkegaard's parable about a clown and a fire in a circus, which was quoted by Ratzinger at the beginning of his lectures.<sup>3</sup> Once there was a fire in a travelling circus in Denmark. The manager sent the clown to a neighbouring village to ask the villagers for help, as there was a danger that the fire would spread out. But the villagers only laughed at the pleading clown, not believing a word he said. Finally, the fire did reach the village and both the circus and the village were burned to the ground.

Nowadays a theologian plays the role of a clown who tries to spread the message but the people do not believe him. Would it help if the theologian changed his clothes, wiped off the make-up from his face and used different vocabulary, or maybe even preached a nonreligious Christianity – would people without faith finally believe him then? Maybe they would then rush to put out the fire of disbelief that threatens their lives too? But the idea itself is hollow, naive and empty. It is not enough to have a clergyman wear layman clothes, change a Roman collar into a tie, nor is it enough to make him wash his face, change his hairstyle and the way he speaks. A change of the form is not enough to preach the word of God; a deep personal conviction, i.e. believing in what you are saying, has to follow. Therefore, the crisis of faith is not only noticeable on the outside: in a town, in a village or in any other community. The crisis exists within a man, in this clown, in his heart, in his lack of certainty and knowledge. In man himself, this peculiar power of disbelief has settled in within his own faith, which implies that the faith is fragile and short-lived, and its sense is lost. Today we are witnessing the same situation. We are torn between the clown and the village, between faith and disbelief. It is in the atmosphere of such tension that the present and the ultimate fate of man is being decided.

The dilemma of faith is therefore connected with the gap between the things that are “visible” and “invisible.” We do not trust the words of the clown. On the other hand, there is also an enormous gap between the things that were “then” and that are “now,” which can be professionally described as a dilemma of “tradition” and “progress,” or a dilemma of

---

<sup>3</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, pp. 39–40.

“yesterday” and “today.”<sup>4</sup> Christian faith is not only interested in the things that “were,” that belong to the “past,” but the faith means *christophora* – the bridge between the things that were and are, between eternity and temporality. It means carrying the eternal Christ into the present day. It means showing the eternal power of faith in a new way. As it is the power of faith that confronts us with God in our history, with God that became man, the eternal one that became mortal. As a result of the Incarnation of the Logos, we met God in Jesus and were able to see and touch Him. The eternal God became historically present. But there is also one more dilemma of a contemporary man who asks: “Maybe it is not true?” The faith of the Church will answer: “What if it is true?”<sup>5</sup> The latter dilemma of disbelief and belief creates a problem of understanding the reality. Does the reality only comprise things that we can comprehend? Or maybe our human interpretations lead to a distortion of the truth and consequently of our existence?

The aforementioned dilemmas imply that the crisis of faith has not been prevented by Ratzinger’s book referred to above. Sometime later it reappeared in the world on a scale that had not been seen before and took the form of an open criticism of the Church for being an “outdated” institution, which employs incompetent stewards who stubbornly hold on to tradition and cannot keep up with the times. To make the matters worse, those fault-finders, who are, using the words of Plutarch from the 1st century AD, like “empty vessels void of sense or wit, but making a hideous noise,” demand for a new Church to be created, the so-called Church of the future, that is the Church created by them. This way they want to dissociate themselves from the mission of the Church of Christ and fail to notice there anything that is permanent and offers hope to man.<sup>6</sup> This is how the power of faith continuously confronts with its crisis.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, pp. 56–57.

<sup>6</sup> The current situation on the political scene in Poland and abroad, as well as the general blindness of the society seem to illustrate the matter in question. Cf. C. S. Bartnik, *Siódma pieczęć*, Lublin 2012; *Dlaczego jeszcze jestem w Kościele?*, red. K. Gózdź, S. Kunka, Lublin 2013.

Ratzinger’s response to the criticism of the Church of Christ seems to be clear. It is his opinion that we should focus on the internal message of the faith, according to which the Church is the power in weakness, or a synthesis of human resistance and God’s mercy.<sup>7</sup> The Church is at the same time human and divine, poor and rich, gloomy and bright. So the Church is degraded by human infidelity, by our own wrongdoing, but on the other hand, there is something permanent (divine) about it which gives a man hope for salvation. In other words, there are two parts of the same Church: one with a succession of corruption and the other with a succession of hope. The first one is influenced by the human factor (slogans that are frequently repeated: inquisition, witch hunt, persecution of Jews, or nowadays paedophilia, etc.), whereas the second one constitutes the divine element, or “the beam of light” that leads to Christ through the centuries. Sometimes it gets stronger, sometimes weaker, but it never disappears totally. The beam of light is the Church believing in Jesus as a Son of God, who is the sign of salvation.

To emphasise the image of the beam of light Ratzinger recalls distinctive images from the history of the Church. Not a lot of people know that in 217 AD a slave became the pope. In the light of law, in ancient Rome a slave was considered to be more of a thing than a person. And then a slave became somehow a lord to all the Christian world. He assumes the biblical role of Christ who washes the feet of his disciples (Jn 13). It was him – the one who was freed by his master Aurelius Carpophorus and raised as a Christian, who became not only a brother, and thus equal to all, but also the head of them all – as Pope Callixtus I.<sup>8</sup> In this man, a freed slave, we can see the characteristic feature of the Church, which has in mind equality and fraternity of all people. The faith is for everybody, not only for the rich or powerful, but also for the poor and weak.

<sup>7</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów*, Lublin 2013, p. 110 (Opera Omnia, 8/1).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. R. Sawa, *Kalikst I*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, t. 8, red. B. Migut, Lublin 2000, cols. 381–382. The previous pope ordered him to take care of the cemetery at via Appia Antica. That is where the name Catacombs of St. Callixtus came from.

Similarly, a few centuries later Christian faith became a unifying force on a higher level. On the one hand, there is the weary culture of ancient Rome, on the other there are German tribes hungry for victory. Those barbarians, who defeated the heirs to the ancient culture, managed to unite and build a new world thanks to Christian faith.<sup>9</sup> Those who were once enemies started to serve one God, who suffered for all of them. With this attitude in mind, while the Vandals were besieging Hippo Regius, St. Augustine spoke of the peace of Christ, which is bigger than the peace of the empire, meaning that both the citizens of the empire and barbarians can embrace faith.

Then, the Middle Ages brought us yet another significant example of the light of faith in the figure of St. Francis of Assisi. He decided to criticize the contemporary society and joined the poor, consequently separating faith from the ruling elites. At the same time he managed to introduce a new idea of internal and external peace. It was a shocking concept for that time. The former idea means ceasing the struggle for power, whereas the latter refers to the introduction of missions in the place of crusades.<sup>10</sup>

We could see a similar situation a few centuries later on a newly discovered continent of America that was being colonised by the Spanish. Today there is this one-sided tendency to focus on the atrocities and corruption that these actions brought, and the light of Christ is forgotten; the light that manifested itself, for instance, in the figure of a Dominican Friar – Bartolomé de las Casas, who fought for the human rights of the oppressed. Spanish monarchs listened carefully to these pleas and attempted to create legal regulations for the colonies, which would be based on respect for other human beings. We know that these ideas are rooted in Christian tradition. And although some rulers often used the faith of the Church for their own personal gain, the embers of faith were glowing brightly like a prophetic salt that burns those who are high and mighty, and does not let them rest.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów...*, p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów...*, p. 111.

<sup>11</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów...*, p. 112.

Nowadays, we can say – at the time of prosperity – the power of the faith of the Church can be expressed in a different way. It turns out that man does not live by bread alone. This prosperity turned into over-satiety and finally became a protest not against poverty but against this very prosperity. The one who has almost everything suddenly comes to the conclusion that it is still not enough, and still does not feel satisfied. Then comes the moment of illumination, a realisation that man cannot find salvation in this bread of prosperity, nor through great sums of money. Therefore, what man needs is something more, as Jesus said during the temptation in the desert (Mt 4:4): Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Only faith can give it. That is where its power resides. Material and physical powers are not sufficient, mental and spiritual powers are also necessary. While the former powers become just a rivalry of the forces of nature, the latter are the result of faith or serving other people. It is not surprising then that today the attributes connected with serving others, such as: humility, patience, limitation of one's own freedom for other person's freedom, are mocked and ridiculed, since members of society are focused on a constant struggle with one another. At this point a real vision of the Church comes into play, the vision comprising both the dark side of human resistance, on the one hand, and the bright hope for life, eternal life, on the other. This fluctuating resistance of man, depending on the period of history, clashes with the everlasting fidelity of God, which is the hope for salvation. Then we can compare the Church to a biblical field, which becomes the measure of our responsibility. When the field is tended to with care, you can have a bountiful crop of the best wheat, but when it is left alone, it will become overgrown with weeds.<sup>12</sup>

The example presented above shows clearly that the humanity needs to see the point in serving other people, in working selflessly for the benefit of others and the world, and at the same time to distance themselves from this world. A real and deep faith is necessary to achieve this distance. What is faith? How can we define it? Where can it be found?

---

12 J. Ratzinger, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów...*, p. 114.

## 2. Personal faith in Jesus as the Son of God

Classic theology differentiated between the faith by which we believe – *fides qua*, which is an act of faith; and the faith seen as a collection of revealed truths – *fides quae*, which is the object, the essence of faith. Here we are going to focus mostly on the first aspect of faith, *fides qua*, though the second aspect, *fides quae*, shines through it in a necessary way. This is the reason why our discussion on the topic of faith will concentrate on its three essential aspects: the personal, the intellectual and the real one.

We have to assume that the Christian existence expresses itself first of all through the word *credo* – I believe.<sup>13</sup> The essence of the whole Christianity consists in the belief in Jesus Christ as the incarnated Son of God. The belief in the Son of God cannot be compared to “seeing” or “touching” Him, as it is usually the case with people or things in the material world. There is a different way that leads to believing, a different route to the invisible reality. It is “taking a stand for” the things that can neither be seen nor touched. To take a stand for Jesus actually means to “see” this reality as the one that “supports and makes all the rest of reality possible.” As it makes all the rest of reality possible, it also makes my existence possible, so it makes it possible for me to be a human, to exist in a humane way. “Belief signifies the decision that at the very core of human existence there is a point that cannot be nourished and supported by the visible and tangible, that encounters and comes into contact with what cannot be seen and finds that it is a necessity for its own existence.”<sup>14</sup> Such an attitude can only be reached through a process that in the words of the Bible is described as a “turn,” “conversion.” Man has to “turn away” from the things that are visible and follow the things that are invisible. He has to make a turn in his existence: a turn away from his natural aspirations to follow the visible, and to turn to the invisible. “Indeed belief is the conversion in which man discovers that he is following an illusion if he devotes himself only to the tangible. This is at the same time the fundamental reason why belief is not demonstrable:

<sup>13</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 50.

<sup>14</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 51.

it is an about-turn; only he who turns about is receptive to it.”<sup>15</sup> This is the essence of faith.

Modern times brought about a change in the way we understand not only the reality of faith, but also its place. If we were to limit our understanding of the reality to the observable phenomena, as natural sciences encourage us to do, then there would be no place for supernatural thinking, and the very comprehension of the truth would be limited. When the scholasticism coined the equation “being is truth” (*verum est ens*), the modern times juxtaposed it with the formula “fact is true” (*verum quia factum*).<sup>16</sup> This means that we comprehend only what we make ourselves. That is how the old metaphysics ended. The skill of craft (*techne*) took over the place of the true understanding. The old equation of truth and being was replaced by the equation of truth and fact. Only a fact (thing), that I made by myself is comprehensible.<sup>17</sup> In such a way, human hands gained control over human mind. Before, it was the sense of a given being that was investigated, now a thing that is made (*factum*) or can be made (*faciendum*) is sufficient. Man has robbed himself of heaven, of metaphysics, and tied himself to the ground with his *factum* or *faciendum*, on the way to nowhere, as it was ultimately exemplified by Marxism or Communism.

What is therefore to be the position of the belief in God Jesus Christ in the light of the problems presented above? Ratzinger offers a two-part answer: first of all faith means “standing by something” (*stehen*), and then “understanding” (*verstehen*). It stands in opposition to the modern concept of *techne*: “to know” and “to make.”<sup>18</sup> Faith understood as “standing by” God implies being loyal and faithful to Him. So this is the essence of faith. It is defined as taking a stand trustfully on the ground of the word of God, so it means taking a stand whereas “understanding” means an intellectual concept of faith, the one brought by the Greek translation

<sup>15</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 51.

<sup>16</sup> This phrase was coined by an Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico (1688–1744). Cf. J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 59.

<sup>17</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 64.

<sup>18</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 68. Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum*, Freiburg i. B. 2014, pp. 72–84 (Gesammelte Schriften, 4).

of the Scripture (the Septuagint), through the Hellenistic tradition of Logos: "If you do not believe, then you do not understand, either." So here we have got not only acceptance of faith from somebody, but also our own interpretation of it. There is also the juxtaposition of belief to the other plain of comprehension, which consists in the words "to know" and "to make." It turns out that the essence of faith means entrusting something or somebody, not oneself nor what man has made by himself. It is trusting the One who is the foundation of our making (to God).<sup>19</sup> To believe means to trust the Sense, which holds together me as a man and the whole world. So, my existence is a response to the Word-Logos that holds everything in existence. This response constitutes man's consent to this sense, which he can only receive but cannot give. This is the reason why faith means acceptance and entrustment to this Sense.<sup>20</sup> It means acceptance of the things that are invisible, or in other words, acceptance of this reality that man entrusts himself to, the one he relies on. And it is just the source of the contemporary world's resistance: the acceptance of the primacy of the invisible over the visible and that of receiving over making.<sup>21</sup>

So we can see that faith has a personal character. It means a quest for the sense seen as a foundation of the world, or the ultimate truth. It is God, who manifested Himself in Jesus of Nazareth, who is this sense and truth. Thus, it is the figure of Jesus that embodies the sense of the world. Jesus, having His life from the Father, and being – to the fullest possible extent – unified with the Father, is God's witness, is the presence of the eternal in this world, and through Him the eternal becomes the historic, the intangible becomes the tangible, and the distant becomes the close, mine. "In his life, in the unconditional devotion of himself to men, the meaning of the world is present before us; it vouchsafes itself to us as love that loves even me and makes life worth living by this

<sup>19</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 69.

<sup>20</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 63. Cf. K. Gózdź, *Logos-Christologie nach Joseph Ratzinger*, in: *Logos et Musica. In honorem Summi Romani Pontificis Benedicti XVI*, Hrsg. E. Szczurko, T. Guz, H. Seidl, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, pp. 153–162; K. Gózdź, *Logosowy charakter wiary według Josepha Ratzingera-Benedykta XVI*, "Polonia Sacra" 17 (2013) nr 2 (33), pp. 43–52.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 74.

incomprehensible gift of a love free from any threat of fading away or any tinge of egotism.”<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Rational faith

Now we should investigate further the relationship between faith and reason.<sup>23</sup> The Latin word *credo* and Hebrew *amen*, the first and the last words of the Creed, derive from the same source, which means: to place myself with trust on a ground that upholds me, the one that has not been made by me, but by the Sense of the world. Which is why I entrust myself to this Sense, and by doing so, I can get closer to the truth contained within it, which is disclosed to me.

And here the antithesis between knowledge and belief comes into being. Modern knowledge is, unfortunately, confined to what is given and the things that can be measured using our own criteria. So it does not ask about the truth, but whether the result of a measurement is correct. Thus, science does not enquire about the essence, what the thing is in itself, as being, but only about the function that this thing can perform, about its relation to me and what practical benefit I can take from it. As a result of such practical treatment of knowledge, the concept of truth is separated from being and shifted to our doing (*factum, faciendum*). As a result of such approach, the concept of truth changes: instead of the truth of resulting from being, we have got that of the utility of a given thing for us, which is confirmed by the rightness of the results.<sup>24</sup> Whereas faith, understood as trust, entrust, fidelity, firmness, firm ground, truth – ultimately means taking a stand on this ground that constitutes for a man the sense of life. This ground is the truth that comes from the sense, from *logos*. Which is why faith is not the knowledge of functionality that can be measured, but the understanding of sense that has entrusted itself to us. Therefore, faith must hold on to sense, stand

<sup>22</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 79.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. K. Gózdź, *Realność i racjonalność wiary chrześcijańskiej*, in: *Catechetica Porta Fidei*, red. A. Kiciński, P. T. Goliszek, Lublin 2012, pp. 19–21.

<sup>24</sup> J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 75–76.

by it, as it constitutes the ground suitable for man to stand upon.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, “understanding grows only out of belief. [...] Believing and understanding belong together no less than believing and “standing,” simply because standing and understanding are inseparable.”<sup>26</sup> In this context, we speak of mystery, the purpose which does not destroy reason, but to render belief as understanding possible. This rational faith holds on to *logos* to speak of God as of the mystery that precedes us and always and ever goes beyond us. Finally faith is reflected through this personal confession: “I believe in you, Jesus of Nazareth, as the meaning (*logos*) of the world and of my life.”<sup>27</sup>

Ratzinger elaborates on this profession of faith during the homily he delivered prior to the beginning of the conclave in 2005: “Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labelled as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism, that is, letting oneself be “tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine,” seems the only attitude that can cope with modern times. We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive [...]. We, however, have a different goal: the Son of God, the true man. He is the measure of true humanism. An “adult” faith is not a faith that follows the trends of fashion and the latest novelty; a mature adult faith is deeply rooted in friendship with Christ. It is this friendship that opens us up to all that is good and gives us a criterion by which to distinguish the true from the false, and to separate the wheat from the chaff.”<sup>28</sup> This definitive stance that Ratzinger adopts in his speech as a cardinal explicitly defines Christian faith. It has a rational dimension, a “*logos*” character and an existential aspect.<sup>29</sup> Then, in his first speech as Pope Benedict XVI, he confessed: “My real programme of governance is not to do my own will, not to pursue my own ideas, but to listen, together with the whole Church,

25 J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 76.

26 J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 77–78.

27 J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity...*, p. 81.

28 Mass “Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice”, Homily of His Eminence Card. Joseph Ratzinger, Dean of the College of Cardinals, Vatican Basilica, 18.04.2005, par. 11–12, [http://www.vatican.va/gpII/documents/homily-pro-eligendo-pontifice\\_20050418\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/gpII/documents/homily-pro-eligendo-pontifice_20050418_en.html) (05.07.2016).

29 Cf. M. Bartosiak, *Wiara według kard. Josepha Ratzingera*, Łomża 2005, pp. 10, 12.

to the word and the will of the Lord, to be guided by Him, so that He himself will lead the Church at this hour of our history.”<sup>30</sup> Through these words, Ratzinger managed to add a christological and ecclesial dimension, i.e. a communal dimension of our faith.

#### 4. Real faith

As a result, Christian faith is the real faith in the Father, Logos and Pneuma,<sup>31</sup> formed in the apostolic tradition linked to the one subject that is the Church.<sup>32</sup> This faith is based upon the holy events of the Incarnation, the Cross and the Resurrection,<sup>33</sup> arises from listening to the word of God<sup>34</sup> and manifests itself in the cult and liturgy of the Church, which is directed towards Logos, the creative Reason, which through Christ became flesh.<sup>35</sup> Therefore this faith, being the belief in the Incarnate God, constitutes a profession of faith and becomes real, full and unifying while “He Himself is flesh, when He is a sacramental event in which the bodily Lord encompasses our carnal existence.”<sup>36</sup> Through this Eucharistic sacrifice, a great transformation of our existence in Logos and the communion with Him take place. This way, such a cult makes us similar to Logos;<sup>37</sup> we fulfil ourselves in the shape of Logos and through our faith we become Logos – “this is true sacrifice and the true glory of God in the world!”<sup>38</sup>

And although today the world forgets about divine qualities, such as: truth, love, justice; and among them there is also faith that is not only

---

30 Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, St. Peter's Square, 24.04.2005, par. 3, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2005/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20050424\\_inizio-pontificato.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_inizio-pontificato.html) (05.07.2016).

31 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii*, Lublin 2012, p. 125 (Opera Omnia, 11).

32 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii...*, p. 134.

33 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii...*, p. 92.

34 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii...*, p. 524.

35 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii...*, p. 644. On the primacy of Logos and personal God – cf. J. Ratzinger, *Einführung in das Christentum...*, pp. 148–156.

36 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii...*, p. 324.

37 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii...*, p. 615.

38 J. Ratzinger, *Teologia liturgii...*, p. 50.

forgotten, but simply negated and defied and attempts are made to deprive it of its power, faith is not powerless, as it is not something that has been made up,<sup>39</sup> it is not an obsolete idea, but “finding a way towards wisdom, rationality and factuality; [that is] a way towards perceiving reality in full.”<sup>40</sup> To see faith as an authentic reality, as a rationality, it needs to be passed to the world in a comprehensible way. Faith comes from the Holy Spirit and it always implies gathering, uniting, putting together the things that were once dispersed.<sup>41</sup> The Holy Ghost unites us through our common confession of faith, which is the faith of the Church, and her theology is the interpretation of the common faith and its measure.<sup>42</sup>

Therefore we need to have humility and courage, and first of all a deep faith to be able to stay transparent to the love of Christ in our life, standing amidst the decay of faith, the negation of faith or simply the negation of God. Essentially, the experience of faith means acceptance, and an invitation to rejoice. For Christian faith is not an endless discussion, nor does it involve incessant questioning. “Faith in its core means acceptance. It is ‘yes.’ It is joy. It comes for God’s ‘yes’ in us and for us.”<sup>43</sup> It is only then that faith can become the driving force of man, when it simply becomes love. It is such faith – faith understood as the presence of the truth among us, the truth that changes and teaches us about the reality and gives us an ability to answer to other people – that we are all responsible for: a bishop, a pastor and the whole Church, everyone in their own way.<sup>44</sup> If we understand the Church as the coexistence of Jesus with us and our coexistence with Him, then the comprehension and profession of Christ is the starting point of our faith.<sup>45</sup> We are then aware that Christian faith involves meaning, i.e. the comprehension and profession, not only a good opinion. This is the reason why this meaning cannot be manipulated with at will as it constitutes the integrity of faith.<sup>46</sup>

39 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*, Lublin 2012, p. 41 (Opera Omnia, 12).

40 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*..., p. 459.

41 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*..., p. 515.

42 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*..., p. 516.

43 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*..., p. 606.

44 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*..., p. 708.

45 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*..., p. 705.

46 J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*..., p. 619.

Joseph Ratzinger – Pope Benedict XVI is aware both of the power and of the crisis of faith. The present crisis of faith is not only manifested in the external factors, such as widespread relativism or liberalism, but can also be seen inside every man who cannot fully identify the essence of his own faith because of the negative influences he is saturated with. Therefore, he presented first the path of the faith of the Church, its true power, which is not a streak of corruption (existing on the human part), but first of all a streak of hope. In the latter streak, faith is expressed in its unchanging primal essence as a belief in Jesus Christ – the Son of God, so it is a belief in a specific, real Person of the incarnate Logos. As a result, faith has a personal, and at the same time, trinitarian, communal, and more than anything else, rational, *logos* character.

For it is rationality that characterises Joseph Ratzinger's perspective of the Christian faith. To believe means to entrust to Logos, Sense, which sustains the whole world, including man. Logos is not the ordinary Greek reason, but Divine Logos, which became flesh in Jesus Christ. Then Christianity is really the "religion of Logos," the religion of creative power, which not only created the world, but sustains and develops it towards the Pleroma. Is it not then reasonable to claim that the contemporary lack of faith is simply a loss of rationality? Maybe this will at last wake up *homo sapiens*, as long as it is still reasonable in that respect.

## Bibliography

- Bartnik C. S., *Siódma pieczęć*, Lublin 2012.
- Bartosia M., *Wiara według kard. Josepha Ratzingera*, Łomża 2005.
- Dlaczego jeszcze jestem w Kościele?*, red. K. Gózdź, S. Kunka, Lublin 2013.
- Gózdź K., *Logos-Christologie nach Joseph Ratzinger*, in: *Logos et Musica. In honorem Summi Romani Pontificis Benedicti XVI*, Hrsg. E. Szczurko, T. Guz, H. Seidl, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, pp. 153–162.
- Gózdź K., *Logosowy charakter wiary według Josepha Ratzingera-Benedykta XVI*, "Polonia Sacra" 17 (2013) nr 2 (33), pp. 43–52.
- Gózdź K., *Realność i racjonalność wiary chrześcijańskiej*, in: *Catechetica Porta Fidei*, red. A. Kiciński, P. T. Goliszek, Lublin 2012, pp. 19–21.

- Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, St. Peter's Square, Sunday, 24 April 2005, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2005/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20050424\\_inizio-pontificato.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2005/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20050424_inizio-pontificato.html) (05.07.2016).*
- Ratzinger J. (Pope Benedict XVI), *Introduction to Christianity*, 2nd edition, San Francisco 2012.
- Ratzinger J., *Einführung in das Christentum*, Freiburg i. B. 2014 (Gesammelte Schriften, 4).
- Ratzinger J., *Einführung in das Christentum*, München 1968.
- Ratzinger J., *Glaube in Schrift und Tradition*, Freiburg i. B. 2016 (Gesammelte Schriften, 9).
- Ratzinger J., *Głosiciele Słowa i słudzy waszej radości*, Lublin 2012 (Opera Omnia, 12).
- Ratzinger J., *Jezus z Nazaretu*, Lublin 2015 (Opera Omnia, 6).
- Ratzinger J., *Kościół – znak wśród narodów*, Lublin 2013 (Opera Omnia, 8).
- Ratzinger J., *Teologia liturgii*, Lublin 2012 (Opera Omnia, 11).
- Sawa R., *Kalikst I*, in: *Encyklopedia katolicka*, t. 8, red. B. Migut, Lublin 2000, cols. 381–382.