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## For the Renewal Theology of Sacramental Priesthood

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Sacramental priesthood has always been a challenge not only for the priests themselves but also for the believers, that is for the whole Catholic Church. It is about its key feature, the sacramentality which is at present confronted with the common priesthood. In the history of the sacrament one can find diverse definitions and concepts of the priesthood (cf. Słomka W., 2002, p. 398; Migut B., 2000, s. p. 681; Schiffman L. H., 1999, p. 508; Ratzinger J., 2014, pp. 613–614)<sup>2</sup>. The latest document *The Youth, Faith and the Recognition of Vocation* (89) uses the definition “Sacrament of Holy Orders”<sup>3</sup> even though *Lumen gentium* (10) of Vatican II uses the definition “the ministerial or hierarchical priesthood”. The document RFIS (11),

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Słomka W., 2002, p. 398. When reaching to the Bible we will find the following terms describing such a person: “Hebrew, *kohen*; Septuagint – *hiereus*; Vulgate – *sacerdos*”. In pagan religions the term used to describe such a person is Hebrew *komer*; Sepruagint *hiereus* or *homarim*, cf. Migut B., 2000, p. 681. Another source indicates Latin word *capallanus* meaning a clergyman connected with *capella* that is a place where a religious cult is held. This is a man who mediates between God and people, having authority because he was chosen by God, performing religious cult and guarding its correctness and properness, cf. *ibid.*, p. 680; Schiffman L. H., 1999, p. 508. The approach of J. Ratzinger is very important. Following his thought, it should be stated that for New Testament terminology the term “priest” was not used to avoid identification with Judaism or paganism. The secular terms “supervisor”, “elder”, “servant” were used. This secular terminology has become a breakthrough because the humanity of Jesus Christ, who did not belong to the priesthood, shows His fullness of holiness, cf. Ratzinger J., 2014, pp. 613–614.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Final Document of the Synod of Bishops *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, 89. “The Church has always taken particular care of vocations to the ordained ministry, in the knowledge that it is a constitutive element of the Church’s identity and is necessary for Christian life”.

elaborated by the Congregation for the Clergy states after *Optatam totius* (2): “Among many vocations, continuously inspired by the Holy Spirit in the people of God, vocation to ministerial priesthood calls for «the participation in the hierarchical priesthood of Christ»”. It is not about the discussion over the definition itself, even though it may seem rather crucial, but it is necessary towards present-day, fairly common outer- and inner-threats concerning this sacrament. Another extremely important dimension is inner-ecclesial awareness of both the common priesthood, which results from the sacrament of Baptism and the identity of the called for the sacramental priesthood. These necessities influence directly the work in creating the perspective of vocational culture as well as the paths of ongoing priestly formation.

## 1. The clarity of classification

The present-day tendencies within the Church, which are unfortunately influenced by Pentecostal movements disclose the attempts of covering up the differences between the common and the sacramental priesthood. The fact is that, following the teaching of Vatican II, we are aware of the universality of vocation to sanctity (cf. LG 39), which neither depreciates any of other vocations nor allows predestinational glorification of any of them. The diversity of vocations reveals the charismatic richness of Church, therefore it seems that the definition of “Sacrament of Holy Orders” coming from the Final Document of the Synod – *The Youth, Faith and the Recognition of Vocation* (89) may lead to a threat of reductionism facing towards functionalism.

Referring to the teaching of Vatican II, (cf. LG 31) the feature of functions within Church and the rediscovered and properly understood position of laity, which was also reminded by pope John Paul II (*Christifideles laici* 1), need to be stated. Therefore, both clericalisation of laity and accepting the laic style of life by priests and consecrated people or even secular one are improper (cf. Słomka W., 1996, p. 74). *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1546), following the teaching of *Lumen gentium* states: “The whole community of the faithful is as such priestly. The faithful fulfil their priesthood, resulting from the Sacrament of Baptism, through their participation in the mission of Christ, Priest, Prophet and King, everyone according to their life vocation”. The document of Vatican II marks the character of relations between the two categories of priesthood really clearly, referring to the words of St. Peter: “...and, like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer

spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1P 2, 5.9). These words of St. Peter create a full view with teaching of St. Paul who claims “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you” (1Kor 3, 16). At the same time the teaching of Church in the same document clearly states that the difference between the common priesthood and the sacramental one results from its nature not its rank. At present, it has a specific meaning since some tendencies, however, already known from the history of Church, try to subordinate, make dependant the hierarchy of priesthood as far as its nature is concerned from the democratic mechanisms (cf. Ratzinger J., 2012, pp. 168–174). This truth was noticed and stated by John Paul II (PDV 17) who claimed that: “The ministerial priesthood conferred by the sacrament of holy orders and the common or “royal” priesthood of the faithful, which differ essentially and not only in degree, are ordered one to the other – for each in its own way derives from the one priesthood of Christ. Indeed, the ministerial priesthood does not of itself signify a greater degree of holiness with regard to the common priesthood of the faithful; through it Christ gives to priests, in the Spirit, a particular gift so that they can help the People of God to exercise faithfully and fully the common priesthood which it has received”.

As well as *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which is the explanation of its teaching, also the content of *Pastores dabo vobis* and the above mentioned document *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (12), leave no doubt as far as the clear distinction between the common and the ministerial priesthood is concerned. The later document states that the ministerial priesthood “occurs within the wider realm of the Christian vocation”.

Its core essence is the key vocation, that is the vocation to faith and sanctity. If a time-linear character of defining is adopted, it should be stated that the common priesthood creates a situation in which the basics and foundations towards the whole Christian mission and disposes every believer to priestly functions in Church that are proper to each individual are created (cf. LG 10).

The theological explanation based on the deep analysis of the texts of both the Old as well as the New Testament can be found in the teaching of the unquestioned authority of a present-day theology, that is Joseph Card. Ratzinger. The proper understanding of one and the other type of priesthood needs referring them to the only source which is the priesthood of Jesus Christ (cf. Ratzinger J., 2012, pp. 44–45). This return to the source gives the correct answer, especially in confrontation to the present-day thesis, or even hypothesis of the necessity of the change of the doctrine

in favour of the developing civilisation. The postulate of Joseph Card. Ratzinger orders this essential problem. Therefore, we reach for the fundamental thesis that maturation to the life of Gospel forms a person, not the interpretation of the Gospel for the needs of a person or the pragmatic usefulness. This gives us the light in which one can see the ability of a real threat in using the term from the range of the canon law “the Sacrament of the Holy Orders”, not to reduce the sacramental priesthood to the level of performing the specified functions only. J. Ratzinger (2012, p. 45). refers to the above mentioned fragment of 1P. 2, 9 as well as Apoc. 1, 6 indicating that they are rooted in Ex. 19, 6. The connection that is present here really clearly reveals the relation of priesthood to the choosing of Israel, then the Church as the new God’s People based of the Baptism as covenant. This way the Church as well as the Baptised one become the home of God. This Church was also given the ministerial apostolic office which is a novelty towards the reality of the Old Testament, as it is the participation in the novelty of Jesus Christ. Joseph Card. Ratzinger referring to the words of Jean Colson claims that we deal with the essential change. As far as the Old Testamential priestly action led to maintaining the consciousness of the dependence from God, the priesthood of Jesus Christ allows one to attend in his acting which leads to the fullness of recapitulation (cf. 1 Cor. 15, 28).

## **2. Recognitions of the identity – the core essence of the problem**

The theology of establishing and the meaning of priesthood have very rich study. Synthetic interpretation can be found in *Lumen gentium* (19)<sup>4</sup>, *Presbyterorum ordinis* (2), as well as in *Pastores dabo vobis* (15)<sup>5</sup>. J. Card.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. LG 19. “The Lord Jesus, after praying to the Father, calling to Himself those whom He desired, appointed twelve to be with Him, and whom He would send to preach the Kingdom of God; and these apostles He formed after the manner of a college or a stable group, over which He placed Peter chosen from among them. He sent them first to the children of Israel and then to all nations, so that as sharers in His power they might make all peoples His disciples, and sanctify and govern them, and thus spread His Church, and by ministering to it under the guidance of the Lord, direct it all days even to the consummation of the world”. “That divine mission, entrusted by Christ to the apostles, will last until the end of the world, since the Gospel they are to teach is for all time the source of all life for the Church. And for this reason the apostles, appointed as rulers in this society, took care to appoint successors”, *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. PDV 15. “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.” (...) “Through the laying on of hands (cf. Acts 6:6; 1 Tm. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tm. 1:6) which transmits the gift of the Spirit, they are called and empowered to continue the same ministry of reconciliation, of shepherding the flock of God and of teaching (cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Pt. 5:2)”.

Ratzinger (2012, p. 38) referring to the Trinitarian bases claims that this is the basic model of priesthood which found its realisation in the wholeness of the priesthood of Jesus Christ transforming the “figure of the Twelve” and sending them after His Resurrection. Ratzinger states that Christ created the analogy to His own mission. The basis of this claim are His words “Whoever receives the one I send receives me,” (Mt 10, 30; Lk. 10. 16; Jn. 13, 20). Continuing its thought he (2012, p. 39), justifies the Biblical establishing of the priesthood, emphasising its mission character and stressing the words of Christ at the same time: “without me you can do nothing” (Jn. 15, 5). The key fragment for him is “nothing” which means at the same time human powerlessness in God’s cases and the power of the apostolic office resulting from the dependence on Christ. The following statement deserves to be stressed: “The ministry, in which we are totally given to the ownership of the Other, the handing out of what does not come from us, the language of the Church calls the Sacrament”. This means that in the context of sacramentality one cannot state that there is any self-determination or auto-creativity on the part of a person. Because of that, the priesthood cannot be treated in categories of self-realisation or self-fulfilment.

This auto-creative-sacramental impossibility exists at the human side as well. Therefore, the priest is not a person who can be considered in the categories of a delegate or the representative of a community. This knowledge leads us to asking a basic question about the priesthood identity. It is therefore about the new insight into the relation, i.e. is he who he is because of what he does or if he fulfils his mission because of the fact of who he was appointed. This question concerning the identity of a priest is also in the centre of *Ratio fundamentalis sacerdotalis*, whose main subject is the formation. However, it needs drawing the basic aim. Therefore, the document (30) states unambiguously: “For an integrated formation of the candidate, it is necessary to reflect on the identity of the priest”. It is, thus, about what we call the charisma. This definition will not be found either in *Lumen gentium*, *Presbyterorum ordinis* or in *Optatam totius* of Vatican II. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (cf. 799-801) tells briefly about the nature of charismata and their relation to the Holy Spirit, the Church and the discernment. Yet, it (1581) claims: “This sacrament configures the recipient to Christ by a special grace of the Holy Spirit, so that he may serve as Christ’s instrument for his Church. By ordination one is enabled to act as a representative of Christ, Head of the Church, in his triple office of priest, prophet, and king”<sup>6</sup>. The above mentioned *Ratio fundamentalis*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. CCC 1585. “The grace of the Holy Spirit proper to this sacrament is configuration to Christ as Priest, Teacher, and Pastor, of whom the ordained is made a minister”.

*institutionis sacerdotalis* (32) in turn, referring to the teaching of the Council stated that: “Every believer is anointed by the Holy Spirit, and actively participates in the mission of the Church according to his own proper charismas”. However, it states, quoting the words of *Presbyterorum ordinis* (2): “[Christ] has established ministers among his faithful to unite them together in one body in which, «not all the members have the same function» (Rom 12:4). These ministers in the society of the faithful are able by the sacred power of orders to offer sacrifice and to forgive sins, and they perform their priestly office publicly for men in the name of Christ”. Considering the fact that the priest’s identity is included in being *persona Christi*, i.e. in life that is identified and made similar to Him. This process is accomplished in three ranges: Christ the Head, Shepherd, Minister and Bridegroom. Sacramental-charismatic character causes that priests become “in the Church and in the world a visible sign of the merciful live of the Father” (RFIS 35). In his expression John Paul II in *Pastores dabo vobis* (16) states that a priest “He is a servant of the Church as communion because – in union with the bishop and closely related to the presbyterate – he builds up the unity of the Church community in the harmony of diverse vocations, charisms and services. Finally, the priest is a servant to the Church as mission because he makes the community a herald and witness of the Gospel”. It directly refers to the phrase that the Holy Orders are “consecration for the mission”, and its author is the Holy Spirit. It is based on two key statements of St. Paul. The first of them: “do not neglect the gift you have (χαρίσματος), which was conferred on you through the prophetic word (προφητείας) with the imposition of hands of the presbyterate (μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου)” (1Tim 4, 14), and the other: “For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God (χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ), that you have through the imposition of my hands (διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου)” (2Tim 1, 6) (cf. PDV 24). They do not leave any doubts as far as the understanding of administering the Sacrament of Holy Orders through the imposition of hands as receiving the charisma connected with this sacrament is concerned. This accent sounds with a great force in the teaching of pope (PDV 70) who claims unambiguously: “The words of St. Paul to Timothy can appropriately be applied to the ongoing formation to which all priests are called by virtue of the «gift of God» which they have received at their ordination”. In a particular way it refers to a special place and responsibility of the bishop. In his document the pope (PDV 41), states: “As the father and friend of his presbyterate, it falls primarily to the bishop to be concerned about «giving continuity» to the priestly charism and ministry, bringing it new forces by the laying on of hands”. This truth is connected with other charismatic gifts for the

proper and saint life of a priest (in purity, poverty and obedience), officiating the priestly ministry (cf. PDV 26, 29) and discerning the vocation (cf. PDV 3). Finally, the pope (PDV 35) concludes: "Hence we can say that every priest receives his vocation from our Lord through the Church as a gracious gift, a grace gratis data (charisma)".

The above quoted document *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* describing the identity of a priest refers to vitally essential content enclosed in the *Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priests* (11.02.2013). Therefore, it confirms that the content of the document is highly up-to-date in this context. The document puts this question matter at the very beginning. It means that the proper cognition of the identity determinates the proper character of its realisation. The document, referring to the missionary character of the Church stated that it remains in intrinsical communion with Christ, the Head of his Body. The continuous realisation of this ecclesial mission is only possible when: "As a result, through this ministry the Lord continues to accomplish among his People the work which as Head of his Body belongs to Him alone. Thus, the ministerial priesthood renders tangible the actual work of Christ, the Head, and gives testimony to the fact that Christ has not separated Himself from his Church; rather He continues to vivify it through his everlasting priesthood" (DMLP 1). It needs to be noticed that the missionary character, which is intrinsically related to the priesthood has its specific character in the ministerial priesthood. It is necessary to emphasise this fact because of the missionary character of life of every single Christian resulting from the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The topic of mission as the other element of identity (cf. DMLP 2) will be discussed in the next paragraph. However, it is necessary to refer to this aspect in this place because the identifying character of Christ as the sender and a priest as the one sent is present in it. It also means that Christ-centric identity of a priest remains inseparable with the Church. This way the priest, the ordained one "becomes, in the Church and for the Church, a real, living and faithful image of Christ the Priest, «a sacramental representation of Christ, Head and Shepherd»" (DMLP 2). Referring to *Pastores dabo vobis* of John Paul II (21) the consecratory-charismatic character in the Sacrament of Priesthood needs to be emphasised. It is, thus, the key element influencing the proper understanding of the identity of a priest, granting of the spiritual authority (cf. DMLP 2) is connected with. Therefore, it can be stated that the identity has an identification character and spreads between the Trinitarian mystery, in which it is introduced by Christ in to order to find its realisation in the ecclesial mystery that takes the ultimate pastoral dimension towards the faithful as well as towards those who are still seeking Christ.

### 3. The charisma of a priestly mission

The completeness of the priesthood of Jesus Christ and the completeness of mediation put us towards the question of the charismatic-missionary dimension of sacramental priesthood. Prof. Father Cz. Bartnik (2003, p. 760) places it the following way: "As a result, the service is about realising the unity of the creation with God, the spiritual reconciliation, sanctity, the meeting in the soul and in the body and deep inseparable and eternal bond thanks to which a person reaches some kind of resemblance to God through the God's gifts and gains a sense of one's existence that cannot be lost". As the dogmatist from Lublin clearly proves, a human being was introduced into the mystery of priesthood and the service of the God Himself. While talking about the "neutral priesthood", he (cf. 2003, p. 760) justifies that from the moment of bringing to life in the universe a man plays the role of a mediator (cf. Gen. 1,28). The situation changes radically in the New Testament. Jesus Christ focuses in Himself the height of priesthood (cf. 1Tim. 2, 5; Eph. 1, 7; Heb. 4, 15-16, 5, 5). It can be stated that the whole of His mystery has an emissary-missionary and sanctifying character (cf. J 17, 6-26). He Himself becomes a sacrifice (cf. Mk 10, 45; 14, 24), a perfect fulfilment of the law and has the authority over it (cf. Mt 5, 17next; Mt 5, 20-48), He reveals the Father, and He fulfils the Father's will completely. (cf. J 18, 37; 4, 34).

The proper treating of such a role of priesthood in its charismatic-missionary character demands, however, stating the truth that this character of priesthood results from its nature. While clarifying the question matter, one needs to concentrate mainly on the New Testament. J. Ratzinger (2012, p. 104) in his perspective reaches for the text of St. Paul (cf. Ga. 3, 19n), pointing at Jesus Christ who is not "a mediator but the directness, the presence of acting of God Himself". Equally essential text, which justifies this thesis and, as it can be stated, is a key one for it, is 1Tim. 2,5 and the Letter to the Hebrews. On this basis he claims that in Jesus Christ we can find "directness". In Him the crossing of *sarks* – σάρξ, which is the Old Testament synonym was done towards a "new man" (*pneuma* – πνεῦμα) living in the space of God. Basing on this, he claims that Jesus Christ is "the only real priest". In turn, the First Letter to Timothy, when being analysed in this context, reveals the possibility of seeing His mediation as exclusive and the only one (cf. Ratzinger J., 2012, pp. 105–106). The Sacrament of Priesthood remaining in a lively and direct relation to common priesthood, resulting from the Sacrament of Baptism and having different essence in relation to it (cf. Ratzinger J., 2012, pp. 105–106), again finds its climax point exactly *in persona Christi* (cf. *Pontificale Romanum. Ordo*



*presbyteratus*, 14, 15, 22; Tatar M., 2013, pp. 422–423). It is Jesus Christ who called the Twelve (cf. Mt. 10, 1-4; Mk. 3, 13-19; Lk. 6, 12-16), prepared them and gave them the power (cf. Mt. 10, 8. 40; 18, 18) connected with teaching and giving Sacraments (cf. Mt. 28, 19-20). The priest's consecration and entrusting the Holy Eucharist to the priest is a special occasion (cf. Lk. 22, 17-19). The priesthood is done in such a spirit from the beginnings of the Church (cf. Acts 14, 23; 20, 17; 1Cor. 4, 1next; 2Cor. 3, 6; Rom. 1, 9; 15, 15; Tit. 1, 5). The priest's mission *in persona Christi* contains, thus, the mission of proclamation the Word of God, sanctifying and the pastoral dimension in Church and through Church. Therefore, similarly to the Church, it cannot be of an exclusive character, but it is emissary-missionary in its nature. The emphasising of acting *in persona Christi* by Vatican II (cf. LG 10), clearly shows that this is not only about representing Jesus Christ, that is "in the name of Christ" but in "the person of Christ". This points significantly at the character of sacramental priesthood, revealing its Trinitarian, Christological and ecclesial identity (cf. Słomka W., 1996, p. 32).

The sacramentality of priesthood has, thus, far much broader meaning than only missionary functionality and task-orientation. The latter aspect which is quite reductionist is a very dangerous phenomena both for the Church and the priesthood itself. Stating functionality and task-orientation is often reduced to the civil, charity or social dimension. As a sacrament of mission it is the sign and the realisation of Jesus Christ. As John Paul II (PDV 15) states: "In the Church and on behalf of the Church, priests are a sacramental representation of Jesus Christ – the head and shepherd". This way the priest "participates in a specific and authoritative way in the «consecration/anointing» and in the «mission» of Christ (cf. Lk. 4:18-19) (PDV 16). It needs to be stated that it means that priesthood cannot be reduced in this dimension to the private or individual space.

The above mentioned texts really clearly point at the ecclesial dimension of priesthood. This bond and relation with the Head make the connection with the Church a truly and separable one. *The Directory on the Ministry and Life of Priest* (12) clearly underlines this identification element with the Church, stating: "... the priest is in the Church, he is also set in front of it". It can be, thus, claimed that there is a specific paradox, as the priest at the same time is, lives, develops and sanctifies in the Church and as well he sacrifices and serves for the Church. He is, therefore, both the subject and the object of the mission of Church. A kind of feedback can be observed here which shows quite a characteristic relation of its charismatic-sanctifying actions and at the same time he is sanctified himself through the Church. It presents the mystical character of the Church and the identity character of priesthood (cf. DMLP 13).

In this context, it is worth underlying the constitutive element, which is the unity of presbytery with their bishop (cf. LG 28)<sup>7</sup>. A priest, while being present in the community of Church, at the same time lives in charismatic community of priests. Therefore, he needs to be aware of it. This fact has really important inclinations which protect against strong temptation of democratism and clergying the laity and at the same time secularising the clergy.

John Paul II, referring to the conclusions drawn by the VII Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, points out that the proclaimed Word of God and sacramental realisation of Jesus Christ are “elements of Church”. It is also worth stating that the realisation of the priesthood takes place directly in local Church. In this sense, as well, one cannot take the exclusivist attitude. It is true that the priesthood by its nature is not and should not be utopian-ideological. It has a specific context of time, culture, history as well as social, and in some dimensions the economic and even political dimension. Therefore, it cannot be other-worldly. It is shown even by the realism stated in the canon law defining the frames of the life and ministry of priests. In this context, a specific element which seems to be quite neglected in the process of the formation of priests should be noticed and underlined, that is the awareness of the universality of Church and the fact that the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the priesthood are for the common Church. Therefore, the charismatic-missionary priesthood by its nature has to be missional-dispositional towards the whole Church (cf. PDV 16). Mature recognition of vocation and the acceptance to take the Holy Orders causes that, in the cooperation with the Holy Spirit, priests take the call of following Christ on the path of this sacrament. Therefore there is a necessity of full and honest disposal towards His will. This fact was clearly stated by John Paul II in *Pastores dabo vobis* (35) when he claimed that: “The vocation of each priest exists in the Church and for the Church: Through her this vocation is brought to fulfillment”.

Priesthood results from the community character of the Church and its mission. It is the communion with Jesus Christ and the missionary service directed to building the supernatural structures of the world. J. Ratzinger (2005, p. 142) presenting his view of the theology of priesthood claimed that putting the strong accent on the communion-ecclesial dimension is the specific novelty of Vatican II. When continuing his analy-

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. PDV 17. “By its very nature, the ordained ministry can be carried out only to the extent that the priest is united to Christ through sacramental participation in the priestly order, and, thus, to the extent that he is in hierarchical communion with his own bishop. The ordained ministry has a radical communitarian form”.

sis, J. Ratzinger points at the claim of Jesus Christ concerning the choice, that is those “whom he wanted” (ἠθέλην αὐτοῖς) (Mk 3, 13). The decisive factor is the will of Christ who chooses, sends, and enables to complete the sanctify priestly mission. This is the decisive element which depravities the sense of the uniqueness of the choice and vocation in favour of being disposal and obedient to Jesus Christ. For this reason, as J. Ratzinger (2012, pp. 168–17) states: “A priest seeks for people and wants to gather them in a new Man, Jesus Christ, in the saint communion of the Church of God”. It is crucially essential from the point of view of the sacrament of priesthood and its spirituality as it points at the priest, who is the “intermediary” and the “mediator” but he points out at the same time that the priest’s life is the space of sanctifying others. In this context, the understanding of the meaning of his actions (*ex opere operantis*) is, therefore, not indifferent. Thus, we pay attention to the importance of the priest and the priesthood located in his manhood. The sense of acting *ex opera operato* is very often emphasised in theology, which is undoubtedly right, yet in the context of sacramentality of the priesthood and its missionary-depending role, the supernatural condition of a priest is of a great value. It is especially due to the fact that the communion of the missionary vocation takes into account the necessity of authentic and live testimony (cf. Hume B., 2000, p. 141).

The theologian of communion, Prof. Father M. Jagodziński (2008, pp. 393–394) states, following W. Kasper and K. Rahner that, that proclamation of the Word of God as well as holding the pastoral office have a communication-communion character. This way of perception has its reflection in a kind of reorganisation of the ecclesial model. That is why, as he postulates, it is necessary to engage a man in whom the charisma of orders has been set. Following his thought one should admit that he is right in his concept of the communicative acting of priesthood to which a man accepting it must be properly prepared. It has its reflection in the priestly work directed to eschatological dimension of the unity in Jesus Christ, realisation and bringing up-to-date the God’s Kingdom at present and the critical-normative review of the world (cf. Jagodziński M., 2008, pp. 388–391).

#### **4. The present-day challenges that radicalise the formation of a priest**

Life and service, as it results from the analysis of identity, do not have an episodic character. They are related to the conception of the whole life connected with aiming at sanctity, that is the unification with Jesus

Christ. This is the fundamental aim of the vocation. For this reason, the process of formation must be of a permanent character as it results from the dynamics of a human's development in physical, psychological, intellectual and spiritual space. None of them can be omitted or neglected. It means the necessity of a proper balance of them. The excess of any of them leads to the equilibrium disturbance, and at the same time to a dangerous overemphasising. This necessity is very clearly stated in the teaching of Vatican II (OT 21) in the words: "...priestly training, because of the circumstances particularly of contemporary society, must be pursued and perfected even after the completion of the course of studies in seminaries". John Paul II (PDV 71), in turn, does not leave any doubts concerning this matter stating: "The ongoing formation of priests, whether diocesan or religious, is the natural and absolutely necessary continuation of the process of building priestly personality".

The charismatic character of vocation has a direct impact on the character and the path of priest's formation and, it can be stated, this is a specific inner imperative. More and more serious challenges of the world in which a priest lives and develops are not without significance. This statement seems to be an obvious one, yet the proper interpretation of surrounding reality remains a problem. The misdiagnosis and misinterpretation of it may lead to a dual dangerous extremity. The increasing challenges may lead to the attitude of withdrawal and enclosing in one's own world, while taking the defensive position. The opposing extremity is such a great engagement in the worldly life, its culture and mentality which leads to the secularisation of priesthood and the life of a priest. The latter attitude is often described as "heresy of collectivism". Vittorio Messori (1986, p. 47) revealed, as early as in 1986, in the *Report on the State of Faith* the diagnosis of J. Ratzinger concerning the crisis of the Church and the priesthood. As the Cardinal stated the inseparable relation is present here. Quoting a theologian whose name he does not list, he cites: "the crisis of a present-day Church is first of all the crisis experienced by the priests and the monasteries" (1986, p. 48). He tracks this crisis first of all in the analysed identity, which is under a threat of being completely lost. This cause, having many sources, should be treated as an inner one. J. Card. Ratzinger adds one more, which is a sort of distance that separates the priest from a present-day society. It makes that both the character of his vocation as well as the functions he services, stop being obvious and understandable. Concluding, he states that this is a very real threat of substituting "the supernatural representative power" by "the service accepted by the majority" (1986, p. 48). It means that the supernatural character of priesthood gives place to humane categories which are understandable and

acceptable. It is, thus, the change of roles from the sacramental one to the social one. The character of priest's life stops being significant towards his activity, indeed his own spiritual growth recedes into the background towards his outer activity. This is the above-mentioned heresy of collectivism which has plenty attitudes and reasons, starting from deeply egoistic-celebrity up to routing functionalism and instrumental treating of the priesthood itself and the Church.

Not remaining on the diagnosis only, J. Card. Ratzinger undertakes the trial of outlining the place of life and the priestly service at the turn of times. First of all, he strongly opposed to reducing priesthood to the level of doing "profession" and stated that the analysis of the phenomena of priesthood does not show features of "profession", therefore, one cannot be yield to temptation of democratisation meaning "choosing" to doing particular functions or dismissing from doing them. The key to the proper understanding is the sacramentality of vocation and the holy Orders, through which the real state of unity with Jesus Christ whose ministry a priest participates in should be understood. This means the way of perceiving the Church and the character of diversity of vocations (cf. Ratzinger J., 2012, pp. 365–366). One cannot claim that there is a confrontation of priesthood and the laymen in Church. This would mean the lack of proper understanding of the Church and its role in the world as well as the improper recognising of vocation. Therefore each confronting attitude reveals dangerous ecclesial and vocational particularism. J. Card. Ratzinger (2012, p. 373) very clearly states that in the priesthood, the vocation is the starting point of the proper understanding of the priesthood and the acceptance of being sent. He defines this character of vocation as the "liturgy of life" in which "self-dispossession of the vocated one takes place in favour of the calling one". This leads to a claim that the priesthood, as well as any other vocation to sanctity bears in itself the call for the clear and visible radicalism. A priest cannot be reduced to the guide of the community or its leader, a kind of an efficient manager, yet the gesture of imposing hands is a sacrament in which a priest being in Church should personify the presence of Jesus Christ, which is the essence of being *in persona*<sup>8</sup>.

John Paul II analysing the question of formation of priests towards the present-day challenges underlines its particular dimensions. At the first place he put the human formation to which he included: formation of human features such as genuineness – authenticity, integrity, justice, faithfulness, consistency, prudence in making judges, the ability to build rela-

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ratzinger J., 2012, p. 374–377. Cardinal clearly states: "(The Church – MT) definitely has to see the primacy of a man over constructions and other investments, otherwise the constructions which are built, as well as the writings published will be of no use soon".

tions (prudence, discretion, generosity, forbearance, openness, sensitivity), emotional maturity, proper ordering of sensuality (the proper formation of sexual life which is necessary for the proper experiencing of virginity and celibacy) and the proper understanding and using of freedom. The next one is a spiritual formation which integrates the whole life of a person. This means, according to the Pope, a specific "freshness" of life and vocation which results from the authentic life in the unity with Christ. The development in this field means a deep life of prayer, sacraments, permeation of the Word of God, aiming at becoming radical through permanent conversion, "walking" in the presence of God, remaining silent, the spirit of penance and self-discipline as well as sacrifice, discerning a man and also oneself and the surrounding world in the categories of faith. The pope also notices the challenges resulting from the development of the world and the necessity of "new evangelization", therefore, in the third place he puts the intellectual formation. It concerns both, the wide spectre of theological knowledge as well as present-day scientific achievements. He stresses the effectiveness of this formation in a close relation to spiritual formation. What is characteristic, however, is that all the spaces of intellectual development should be subdued to cognition in faith and through faith. This is the antidote to intellectual narrowing and incorrect and shallow fideism. The last dimension is the pastoral formation. Placing it in this place gives proper hierarchy to the scheme of the shape of the structure of formation. As it results from the analysis of John Paul II, all above mentioned dimensions come true especially in the pastoral service that takes into account the whole environment, thus, the primacy of a person, the Church, environment, culture, mentality. Especially here, the attitude of service and responsibility is required (cf. PDV 43-59). He states really unequivocally in this respect the characteristic role and time of formation in seminaries, yet he points at the same time that it must be transferred onto the character of life and work in priesthood. This priestly stage is not separated from the whole life of the priest as well as his surrounding, therefore, the formation is absolutely necessary. It allows the permanent development of his communion with Christ and the Church, growth in the community of *presbyterium*. It is the remedy for loneliness, gives the opportunity of reflection, still new at the stages of life and priestly development, therefore it prevents from seclusion and confinement (cf. PDV 73-77).

*Directory on the Ministry and the Life of Priests*, basing on the documents of the teaching of the Church, especially Vatican II, *Code of Canon Law* and *Pastores dabo vobis* of John Paul II does not leave any doubts as far as the necessity of the ongoing formation of priests is concerned. It results from the character of sacramental consecration, the fulfilled service

(cf. DMLP 70, 71) and because of “Rapid and widespread transformations and a secularised social fabric typical of the contemporary world ...” (DMLP 68). Therefore, it relates to every sphere of a presbyter life, as the document states, and widens the dimensions suggested by John Paul II. Describing the formation as complete, i.e. containing: human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, systematic and personal one (cf. DMLP 70). The emphasis put on the dignity of every person should be stressed here. In spiritual formation, apart from the above mentioned elements, he points out the importance of spiritual leadership. In the field of intellectual development, he stresses the challenges resulting from the cultural changes and the appearance of new trends which need to be confronted with the Word of God and the teaching of Church. He puts particular emphasis on the meaning of the social doctrine of Church and the influence of media on shaping public opinion. When drawing attention to the pastoral formation, apart from the above mentioned elements, it is characteristic to pay attention to its evangelisation character. It is significantly important to underline the structure of the formation as well as its method. It, therefore, needs personal engagement of every priest as it is related to the whole space of interpersonal unity with Christ (cf. DMLP 70-81). To enable such a formation which allows the presbyters to respond to the civilisation challenges properly it is necessary to create formation structures, places, time as well as proper methods (cf. DMLP 83-87). Equally significant issue is forming the group of formators (cf. DMLP 90), who are authorities, yet they themselves have a deep spiritual life, knowledge, experience and the ability of forming good and right relations. It is vital to stress a very important element, through which the formation goes beyond the overall scheme, that is adjusting it to the age of the formed ones, the stage of priestly development or the functions or services done (cf. DMLP 93-97).

As it can be noticed, there is a vast theological material and studies concerning the basis of formation facing the current challenges that the priesthood and priests face. However, there still exists a need of making reflection resulting from the developing theology of priesthood, the civilisation changes which include the cultural, mental, social, economic and political changes. Such assumptions can be seen in the latest document, that is *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*. It is very characteristic that the document, taking reflection over this issue, puts the formation as a path of making oneself similar to “Christ the Head, Shepherd, Minister and Bridegroom” (RFIS 35) at the first place, therefore it reaches for the core essence and the most proper attitudes. One can notice very definite dimensions of formation in these definitions. The starting point was the reference to the above mentioned root of priesthood. This orders properly

both the seminar formation as well as its continuation in the file and ministry of a priest. In Christ we, therefore, find the basis of human, spiritual, intellectual, pastoral, community and individual formation. This is the most proper answer to the reductionist anthropocentrism, which often takes dangerous forms of psychologism narrowed to therapeutic programmes. It is worth mentioning a range of such programmes, which sometimes are blindly used, ignoring the threats they pose. The following should be included here: the psychology of Wilhelm Reich, Carl Gustav Jung, William James, Erich From, Carls Rogers or John Watson (cf. Wasiukiewicz A., 2017, p. 23–51) as well as therapeutic techniques such as: re-birthing-breathwork, regressive, recovering memories, Bert Hellinger, transpersonal, Tipping, Soul Body Fusion or Jacobson (cf. (Wasiukiewicz A., 2017, p. 115–173).

*Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (42-43) turns to building *communio* with Christ which orders the life of Church as well as the community and individual life (cf. RFIS 42-43). Putting stress to the value of accompanying of both a student of seminary and a priest which takes an individual or community form (cf. RFIS 44-53) should be highlighted here. This way the formation becomes uniform and coherent and it leads to the integration of the man as well as to identification with the community of Church and of priests. Seminar stages of being a student, becoming similar to Christ and a pastoral one find their presentation and extension in the whole life of a priest.

Referring to challenges such as experiencing one's weaknesses, reductionist functionalism, cultural challenges, temptation of power and possessing, difficulties connected with virginity and celibacy, fear of becoming too radical, the document suggests a way out by building priestly communities (brothers' meeting), spiritual leadership, the proper experiencing of retreat, the community of a table, other forms of community life, associations (cf. RFIS 84-88).

It needs to be noticed that it is necessary to integrate the formation which has previously been stressed and undertaken in the process of reflection upon the documents of Church or John Paul II. Therefore, the documents put a lot of stress onto the human formation (cf. RFIS 93-99) because of anthropological disturbance which present-day civilisation faces. It is worth to emphasise the proper understanding of spirituality as a personal and individual bond with Christ (cf. RFIS 101-115), somehow rejecting the anthropocentric spirituality of the moral character which is about "exercising" virtues and attitudes. Life in unity with Christ leads to proper attitudes and behaviour, not the other way round. The intellectual dimension (cf. RFIS 116-118) is of significance, however the document stresses



the necessity of not only obtaining the given knowledge, yet rather apologetic and pastoral abilities. The pastoral dimension (cf. RFIS 119-124), on the other hand, is to become the synthesis of the maturity of a priest and has to be seen in his apostolic zeal.

## Conclusion

The sacrament of priesthood within the whole space of the development of the Church and its presence in civilisation is one of the key issues. It proves its meaning as well as the necessity of undertaking an ongoing reflection in the context of challenges resulting from the civilisation development. Theology of priesthood is also an essential aspect that has a multi-dimension character and, as such, is a subject of various fields of theology as well as non-theological ones. A reflection upon its relation to a common priesthood of all the faithful, resulting from the sacrament of Baptism, comes into special importance nowadays. Present-day challenges resulting from the development of culture post-modernity require a clear and precise drawing of the essence of sacramental priesthood. The Sacrament of Orders which defines the character and charisma of the called one brings the inseparable sacramental bond with the Christ the Highest and the Only Patriarch. We can find a proper charismatic identity of priesthood in this relation. The other dimension of this charisma is the mission, in which a priest acts *in persona Christi*. The dual charismatic dimension makes a proper way of making out and understanding the identity of a priest. It means that a priest cannot be substituted in his vocation and the authority which he receives in The Sacrament of Holy Orders and the unity with his bishop. Properly understood and made out identity needs the competent preparation and formation of the candidates to the priesthood, those who have already received Orders and those who are responsible for it alike. All dimensions of formation must be properly integrated. The essential integrating element in the process of ongoing formation is specific priestly spirituality. It means that the fact who a priest is, and then what his mission is, results from the unity of a priest with Christ. The already mentioned civilisation challenges require permanent studies of the ways and methods of the formation. It needs noticing that on the grounds of theology, the primacy is given to the acting of the grace, which, *supponit naturam* (suppose nature) and it “makes it perfect” (*gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit* – grace does not devastate nature but it makes it perfect). This way the process of formation defends itself from naturalistic or spiritualistic one-sidedness, which a present pope Francis (cf. 2018, 35-62)

reminded of, when he said about two “subtle enemies of sanctity”, which are “a present-day Gnosticism” and “a present-day Pelagianism”.

## O ODNOWIONĄ TEOLOGIĘ SAKRAMENTU KAPŁAŃSTWA

(STRESZCZENIE)

Sakrament kapłaństwa w przestrzeni Kościoła i jego obecności w cywilizacji należy do kluczowych elementów. *Świadczy to o jego znaczeniu*, a także konieczności podejmowania nieustannej refleksji w kontekście wyzwań wynikających z rozwoju cywilizacyjnego. Teologia kapłaństwa to także niezwykle istotny aspekt mający charakter wielowymiarowy i jako taki jest przedmiotem zainteresowania wielu dziedzin teologicznych oraz pozateologicznych. Szczególnego znaczenia nabiera współcześnie refleksja nad jego relacją z kapłaństwem wspólnotowym wszystkich wiernych, wynikającym z sakramentalnego chrztu. Współczesne wyzwania wynikające z rozwoju kultury ponowoczesności domagają się jasnego i precyzyjnego nakreślenia istoty kapłaństwa sakramentalnego. Świecenia kapłańskie, które określają charakter i charyzmat powołanego, rodzą nierozwalną więź sakramentalną z Chrystusem Najwyższym i Jedynym Kapłanem. W tej relacji odnajdujemy właściwą tożsamość charyzmatyczną kapłaństwa. Drugim wymiarem tej charyzmatyczności jest posłannictwo, w którym kapłan występuje *in persona Christi*. Ten podwójny wymiar charyzmatyczny tworzy właściwy sposób odczytywania i rozumienia tożsamości kapłańskiej. Oznacza to, że kapłan jest niezastępowalny w swoim powołaniu i władzy, którą otrzymuje w sakramencie święceń i jedności ze swoim biskupem. Właściwie rozumiana i odczytywana tożsamość domaga się odpowiedniego przygotowania oraz formacji zarówno kandydatów do kapłaństwa, tych, którzy przyjęli święcenia oraz tych, którzy za to są odpowiedzialni. Wszystkie wymiary formacji muszą być właściwie zintegrowane. Właściwym elementem integrującym w procesie formacji permanentnej jest specyficzna duchowość kapłańska. Oznacza to, że ze zjednoczenia kapłana z Chrystusem wynika kim on jest, a następnie, jakie jest jego posłannictwo. Wspomniane już wyzwania cywilizacyjne domagają się ciągłej pracy, poszukiwaniu dróg i metod tej formacji. Należy zaznaczyć, że na gruncie teologii pierwszeństwo przyznajemy działaniu łaski, która akceptuje naturę, ale i udoskonala ją. W ten sposób proces formacyjny broni się przed naturalistyczną bądź spirytualistyczną jednostronnością, o czym przypomniał obecny papież Franciszek, mówiąc o dwóch „subtelnych nieprzyjaciolach świętości”, tj. „współczesnym gnostycyzmie” oraz „współczesnym pelagianizmie”.

## FOR THE RENOWAL THEOLOGY OF SACRAMENTAL PRIESTHOOD

(SUMMARY)

The sacrament of priesthood within the whole space of the development of the Church and its presence in civilisation is one of the key issues. It proves its meaning as well as the necessity of undertaking an ongoing reflection in the context of challenges resulting from the civilisation development. Theology of priesthood is also an essential aspect that has a multi-dimension character and, as such, is a subject of various fields of theology as well as non-theological ones. A reflection upon its relation to

a common priesthood of all the faithful, resulting from the sacrament of Baptism, comes into special importance nowadays. Present-day challenges resulting from the development of culture post-modernity require a clear and precise drawing of the essence of sacramental priesthood. The Sacrament of Orders which defines the character and charisma of the called one brings the inseparable sacramental bond with the Christ the Highest and the Only Patriarch. We can find a proper charismatic identity of priesthood in this relation. The other dimension of this charisma is the mission, in which a priest acts in persona Christi. The dual charismatic dimension makes a proper way of making out and understanding the identity of a priest. It means that a priest cannot be substituted in his vocation and the authority, which he receives in The Sacrament of Holy Orders and the unity with his bishop. Properly understood and made out identity needs the competent preparation and formation of the candidates to the priesthood, those who have already received Orders and those who are responsible for it alike. All dimensions of formation must be properly integrated. The essential integrating element in the process of ongoing formation is specific priestly spirituality. It means that the fact who a priest is, and then what his mission is, results from the unity of a priest with Christ. The already mentioned civilisation challenges require permanent studies of the ways and methods of the formation. This way the process of formation defends itself from naturalistic or spiritualistic one-sidedness, which the present Pope Francis reminded of, when he spoke about two “subtle enemies of sanctity”, which are “a present-day Gnosticism” and “a present-day Pelagianism”.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- CCC – Catechism of The Catholic Church, 06.12.2012.  
 DMLP – Congregation for the Clergy, Directory for the Ministry and the Life of Priests, Vatican11.02.2013.  
 LG – Lumen gentium, The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council.  
 OT – Optatum totius The Decree on priestly training of the Second Vatican Council.  
 PDV – John Paul II, Apostolic exhortation Pastores dabo vobis, Rome 25.03.1992.  
 PO – Presbyterorum ordinis, The Decree on Ministry and the life priests of the Second Vatican Council.  
 RFIS – Congregation for the Clergy Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis, Vatican 8.12.2016.

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