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## **Catechesis of Seniors in the Context of Their Activity**

**Słowa kluczowe:** katecheza; duszpasterstwo; seniorzy; aktywność seniorów.

**Keywords:** catechesis; pastoral care; seniors; seniors' activity.

Today's seniors, after finishing their professional life, often become quite active. Better and better medical care allows many such people to remain in a quite good health condition. With good well-being, many of them take different forms of activity. It happens that despite the right to the rest, they continue to work.

At the same time, they present greater openness to transcendence. Hence, there is a need for religiosity in them and, consequently, for the catechesis, which may deepen forms of religiosity practiced by them. This period of life is connected with making the so-called life balance. In addition to summarizing life's achievements and failures, it brings with them the need to discover the deeper purpose and meaning of their lives (Steuden S., 2014, pp. 109–113).

### **The most popular forms of activity of Polish seniors**

The most popular forms of their activity include: participation in the activities of universities of the third age, participation in the activities of the Family Maria Radio, pilgrimages and religious tourism, and various forms of voluntary service.

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### a) participation in the activities of universities of the third age

Sometimes seniors take up studies they did not have time to do earlier. Universities of the third age were opened in many places in Poland. They gather many students. According to the Department of Social Research and Living Conditions of the Central Statistical Office in Gdańsk, in 2015 there were 464 Universities of the Third Age in Poland (Departament-badańspołecznychwarunkówŻycia GUS, 2015, p.1). According to the "Healthy Senior" portal, in 2017 there were 614 third-age universities in Poland (Uniwersytety trzeciego wieku w Polsce w liczbach, 2017) in 2014/15 93,670 people (GUS, 2016, p.13) participated in classes. Regular classes were led by various categories of people. The largest group was academic teachers (4140). There were also quite a large number of priests (252) (GUS, 2016, p.9). The most numerous group of students were people with secondary education (49%) and university education (39%) (GUS, 2016, p. 17). Women accounted for 86% of students and 62% of students were between 60 and 70 years old (GUS, 2016, p. 15). In 164 universities, there were classes held in the broadly understood scope of religion (GUS, 2016, p. 23). The analysis of the collected data shows that the number of these universities and their students is growing. The religious problems are quite clear in the minds of many students. A group of clergy is also involved in expanding religious awareness of seniors by leading various activities for them.

### b) involvement in the Radio Maryja Family activities

Another large group of seniors participates in the life of Radio Maryja and Trwam Television. They focus primarily on the Family of Radio Maryja. They listen to this radio willingly and they watch TV. (Grabowska M., 2008, pp. 4–5).<sup>2</sup> This television and radio focuses on expanding religious awareness through systematic catechesis as well as on creating opportunities for prayer. It can be said that these institutions quite clearly respond to the needs of the seniors. Hence, a sign of this is their numerous participation in various forms of activities. Radio Maryja organized several pilgrimages of its listeners to Rome during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II and over a dozen thousand participants took part in them (Madera A. J., 2003, p.86).<sup>3</sup> The pilgrimages of the listeners of Radio Maryja to

<sup>2</sup> CEBOS (Centre for Public Opinion Research ) research shows that the radio listeners are most often people over 55 (61%) who are retired (66%) and who identify themselves as believers (68 %) and deep believers (30%). 54% of the audience participate in weekly religious practices. (Grabowska M., 2008, pp. 4–5).

<sup>3</sup> For the first time, on March 23, 1994, 5,000 listeners pilgrimized to Rome (p.85), in 1995 there were 15,000 listeners (p. 86), and in 1996 there were 20,000 listeners. (Madera A.J., 2003, p. 86).

Jasna Góra are very popular, too (Madera A. J., 2003, p.86).<sup>4</sup> Several hundred thousand people take part in them every year (eKAI 2005).<sup>5</sup> This group of seniors gather in Toruń on the occasion of the annual anniversary of Radio Maryja (Kopczyńska Ż., 2018, p.7). It also activates Polish Community Abroad. The sign of this activity is the Pilgrimage of Polish Community Abroad to the American Czestochowa (Radio Maryja, 2018). In response to the needs of the listeners, various forms of educational activity are created at Radio Maryja. A monthly magazine "In our family" is published and it also deals with the problems of seniors (Berdyńska K., 2019, 38). Radio Maryja and Trwam TV inspire various forms of involvement for seniors, various forms of voluntary service. There is a group of volunteers involved in the functioning of the Radio Maryja or Trwam TV stations, who man complicated sound system, work as broadcasters or narrators. They are also focused on the "circles of friends of the Radio Maryja" functioning in many parishes in Poland (Hipsz N., 2014, p. 2).<sup>6</sup> Social activity demonstrating the features of involvement visible in the voluntary service inspires the program "I can, I want to help". Listeners offer various used items for free in it (Burdziej S., 2008, pp. 17–28). Inspiring such activities is a manifestation of social sensitivity inspired by the commandment to love neighbour. It can also inspire various forms of voluntary service.

### c) participation in religious tourism and pilgrimages

The improvement of living conditions and the better state of health of seniors cause that the number of people participating in tourism increases, including religious tourism and pilgrimages. In 2018, the population of people aged 60-84, according to the Central Statistical Office, was 8.6 million (GUS 2018). A significant part of this age group is engaged in various tourist activities. There is activity in the field of religious tourism and pilgrimages in its range. However, the tourist activity of seniors is much smaller than that of young people. It is caused by some restrictions of this group. The most frequently mentioned include: physical limitations in the form of bad health or mobility difficulties, economic restrictions in the form of low income, social restrictions manifested in a low level of educa-

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<sup>4</sup> In 1995, 150,000 listeners took part in the National Pilgrimage of Radio Maryja to Jasna Góra in the 4th National Radio Pilgrimage of Radio Maryja to Jasna Góra 300,000 listeners took part.

<sup>5</sup> According to KAI (Catholic Information Agency), in 2005 there were over 200,000 listeners <https://ekai.pl/jasna-gora-pielgrzymka-rodziny-radia-maryja/> (2.04.2019).

<sup>6</sup> The CBOS surveys conducted in 2014 show that in 22% of the parishes in Poland there are circles of friends of Radio Maryja. See N. Hipsz, Social perception of the parish reality (CBOS research message, 2014, p. 2).

tion, traditional understanding of the role of the elderly, mental limitations such as withdrawal, lack of willingness to explore the world (Grotowska S., 2017, p. 8). The religiosity of Poles favors such forms of tourist activity (Boguszewski R., 2017, p 1–2)<sup>7</sup>. And in the adulthood this religiosity becomes a particularly strong need. Hence, pilgrimage is a frequent phenomenon in the lives of believers. Pilgrimage has been known since ancient times, and the role of a pilgrim is the model of a tourist. There are several similarities between the pilgrim and the tourist. Both leave their place of residence voluntarily. They leave the house to find themselves in an unknown world and return home after a while. Common for pilgrimages and tourism is the liminality, that is, the temporary release from the daily routine and social structures of the place of residence (Grotowska S., 2017, p. 9). In religious tourism, the purpose of the journey is understood in a spatial and geographical sense. Every trip to sanctum sanctorum is such a type of tourism. Religious motives combine with sacral motives. However, in a pilgrimage, the religious purpose comes first. In the pilgrimage, the opportunity to come into contact with the religious reality is not only the place itself, but also the way to this place and religious meditations, prayers or songs singing on the way. There is a similarity between these types of travelling, and the boundary separating religious tourism from pilgrimages is not always obvious to the involved people (Grotowska S., 2017, pp. 11–12). According to the research carried out by S. Grotowska these trips were characterized by special features, in the opinion of seniors participating in religious tourism or pilgrimages. Such features include: adjusting them to the needs and limitations of older people, especially financial and health restrictions, and the relationship-making nature of trips organized by various institutionalized contributors, the purposes of these trips were usually local in nature. Their characteristic feature is also the experience of usually positive emotions related to the variety of everyday life, the break of routine and the experience of travelling together and being in the community. Another property of such trips is sacral character. A priest quite often participates in this experience along with a tourist group, he initiates prayer, chant reflections, and he often presides at religious services in a sacred place (Grotowska S., 2017, pp. 13–16). It is worth noting that some Polish tourist organizations realize that tourism can be an opportunity for intergenerational exchange of experience. This is also indicated by the historical experience of Polish tourist organizations. Among the nationwide tasks undertaken by PTTK is a task called

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<sup>7</sup> In 2018, 84% of respondents declared themselves as believers and 8% as deep believers, which equates to 92%. See. R. Boguszewski, *Religiosity of Poles and the assessment of the Catholic Church* (CBOS, Communication from Research, 2018, pp. 1–2).

“Tourism connects generations”. There were such actions as “Let’s wander together”, “Touristic family” competition, “Intergenerational tourist relay” action as part of this task. Family tourism, in addition to tourism and recreation, enables strengthening family ties, mutual shaping of features and attitudes important in a family and social life. The “Intergenerational tourist relay” campaign is particularly valuable, which children from kindergarten through elementary school or even high school and senior citizens have been invited to. This action has the chance to develop family values combined with the cultural values of the local community. And religious values can also be found among cultural values. In 2015 there were around 4,000 seniors among almost 15,000 participants who took part in this intergenerational relay (Śledzińska J., 2014, pp. 25–34). Some researchers emphasize that tourist activities are taken in intergenerational family and that they allow to establish and maintain family relationships and strengthen intergenerational bonds. The main entities of intergenerational family tourism are grandparents and children are. Their mutual relationship may be strengthened by this form, and grandparents have the opportunity to introduce their grandchildren to the values of culture that they particularly value. Children by nature are curious about the world. Hence the motive of curiosity can be a challenge for seniors and make them participate in or organize various tourist events (Łuszczynska M., 2014, pp. 97–107).

Pilgrimage routes have a chance to strengthen intergenerational family tourism. A. Jackowski distinguished in Poland four basic types of pilgrimage routes: tourist trails, motorized routes (mainly bus routes), railway routes, cycling trails (Jackowski A., Sołjan I., Bilska-Wodecka E., 1999, p. 185). Family tourism has the opportunity to use the papal routes, for which the inspiration is presence of Pope John Paul II during his pilgrimages to Poland. The papal routes are being co-ordinate by the Papal Routes Foundation, under the honorary patronage of Cardinal S. Dziwisz. There are also Marian trails or trails of other saints (e.g. the St. James Trail) or events in the life of the Church. Thanks to this, thanks to intergenerational tourism, grandparents have many opportunities to open their grandchildren on religious values during the tourist experience (Mróz F., 2014, pp. 103–118).

#### **d) senior voluntary work**

Volunteering also belongs to the scope of activity of Polish seniors. Volunteering is usually understood as voluntary work, without any pay, going beyond the family framework (Leszczyński S., 2012, pp. 131–135). The

concept of volunteering is also defined in the Act on public benefit activity, where it is understood as a public benefit activity, socially useful, conducted by non-governmental organizations in the sphere of public tasks (Dz.U. 2003, No 96 item 873). Senior volunteering in Poland is gradually growing. Until recently, social involvement of seniors has not been widely promoted in our country. Many of them had low self-esteem and this favoured passivity after the end of their professional life. Against the background of European countries, the involvement of seniors in this area is relatively low. However, actions taken in many voluntary work environments cause an increase in the number of seniors participating in this activity (Dąbska O., 2014, pp. 139–143) It is currently intensively promoted by Polish society. Senior volunteering can be involved in very different forms. Volunteering towards the elderly or towards children is the most common. Today, it seems necessary to mobilize older people for self-help activities, counteracting their isolation, creating a wide range of leisure activities and expanding the possibilities of voluntary activities in the local community (Założona Z., 2017, pp. 9–25). This is also the case for the Polish government, which implements the strategy under the Government Program for the Social Activity of the Elderly for 2014–2020. Therefore, many forms of volunteering for seniors arise in many larger centers (Dąbska O., 2014, pp. 143–145).<sup>8</sup> It is also noticed that entering support activities results from religious motivation and the influence of religion on the promotion of such behavior (Przygoda W., 2001, pp. 39–58). There are new forms of reflection on Christian volunteering of seniors (Konferencja w Sikorzu 2014). It is emphasized that a large group of these people is involved in volunteering in the Church. The volunteer in his actions imitates the merciful attitude of Christ. You can, therefore, treat volunteering as a form of realizing a call to love. A call to love enables the volunteers to selfless gift of themselves. In this way, they fulfill the Christian vocation to holiness by

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<sup>8</sup> O. Dąbska mentions, among others, the Senior Volunteering conducted by City Bank Handlowy, Seniors KUTW in action implemented by Kazimierz Wielki the Third Age University in Bydgoszcz, The Park Volunteering Academy is a project implemented in 2012 by the Provincial Park of Culture and Recreation in Chorzów and the office of the Ombudsman, Pilot Program for developing volunteering of mature people *The Same Advantages* Volunteering50 + implemented by the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland and the Regional Volunteer Center in Elbląg, Poznań Volunteer Forum 50+ initiative was established in 2012, created by non-governmental organizations from Poznań, working with adult volunteers or those interested in the subject of volunteering development, which is a summary of the Volunteering 50+ project; Pomorskie – Together in action, Flying Grandmas is a project since 2008, established as part of the Kobiety.lodz.pl Association; Volunteer Job Center *Centerko*, an initiative operated by the Association of Youth and People with Mental Problems, their Families and Friends of the *Bridge* from Łódź; The Gdańsk model of senior volunteering is a project implemented by the Regional Volunteer Center in Gdańsk (Dąbska O., 2014, pp. 143–145).

carrying it out through the gift of themselves and helping others (Olczyk M., 2015, pp. 93–103). This volunteering is carried out in hospices, kindergartens, as part of various church and laic organizations. Seniors carry out voluntary work in Caritas, St. Brother Albert Foundation, Polish Red Cross, Polish Social Welfare Committee, Charity Association, Catholic Action. Their participation in volunteering can be temporary, individual or organized (Steuden S., 2014, pp. 98–99). It is necessary to educate people who are already catechized during the school education to be active in senior voluntary service.

### **Catechesis of seniors in relation to their activity**

Forms of senior activity have a strong bond with adult catechesis. The catechesis of adults is strongly emphasized in the teaching of the Church and a special meaning is attributed to it. It is treated as the most important form of catechesis in the process of evangelization done by the Church. At the same time, the Church calls us to careful reading of the signs of the times in this process of evangelization. This is an analysis of the situations in which the process of evangelization takes place. The analysis must be always done in the light of faith. The Church tries to discover the sense of the current situation in the history of salvation by this (see GDC 32).

One of the signs of time in many places in the world is probably the growing number of old people in post-productive age. When they live up to faith or are won to faith, they constitute the great dynamism of the process involved in the transmission of the faith (see GDC 186). By sharing a mature, solid faith, they can have a significant impact on the personality of believers. An important place or a *locus* for the transmission of faith (of Gospel) is the family. Catechesis in the family takes the form of Christian education in the faith. In this family catechesis, the role of grandparents is of growing importance. Their wisdom and sense of religiosity are decisive in creating a true Christian climate (see GDC 255).

The discourse of faith with adults must take serious account of their experience and of their conditioning and of the challenges which they have encountered in life (see GDC 172). Adult catechesis should include mature people and therefore requires taking account of their problems and experiences, their spiritual and cultural resources (see GDC 173). During their lifetime, seniors have gained a lot of experience, which is their special wealth. Also, experiencing problems and solving them leads such a person to greater maturity. Their lives and the multiplicity of contacts with various people and circles of culture gave them the possibility of personal de-

velopment, which manifests itself as spiritual and cultural wealth. It happens that an adult elderly person has reached his age with a mature, solid faith. Then catechesis can motivate them for thanksgiving and to wait for the great moment of meeting the Lord. When a senior or aged experiences their old age profoundly wounded in body and soul, catechesis can help them to live their condition in an attitude of prayer, forgiveness and inner peace. This age requires the catechesis of hope coming from the gradual approach the great moment of meeting the Lord. (see GDC 187). Such catechesis can be done in many forms. Among the special forms of this catechesis is catechesis referring to the Christian use of leisure time, especially during holidays and travel (see GDC 176).

Christians live in a society in which various social and cultural changes are rapidly taking place. Christians are exposed to various dangers. They can cause religious and cultural relativism in the society. "New religious movements" known as sects or cults have occurred. Their activity results in the proclamation of new systems of values, visions of life and social functioning. This may create new dangers for the faith of seniors, raise religious doubts or conflicts of conscience. When faith is put to the test, the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) emphasizes, then the evangelization commitment and integral systematic catechesis should be developed to help the faithful learn the Scriptures, to defend them from the errors and to educate them in responsibility for the faith they have received (see GDC 201).

And what especially helps seniors to live in faith is the community and the communal character of adult catechesis. The participation of the whole community in accepting and supporting an adult is necessary in the process of adult catechesis. An adult matures in his faith not so much by learning religious concepts as by full participation in the Christian community and in its life. Hence catechesis can be realized fully in individual communities when it is treated as an integral part of the overall pastoral program. It is connected with the liturgical formation and upbringing to the service (Międzynarodowa Rada ds. Katechezy, 2001, pp. 28–29).

Catechesis taking place in the context of social pluralism should try to implant the Gospel into the very essence of culture and its form. This requires the inculturation of the faith. Many activities are involved. It is up to them to emphasize that the Gospel can proclaim the profound change, the conversion, witness to the transcendence and the non-exhaustion of the Gospel with regard to culture. It is also necessary to maintain that the doctrinal formulations of tradition are explained and illustrated, while taking into account the cultural and historical circumstances of those being instructed. One must avoid defacing or falsifying the contents (see



GDC 202–203). It is important for catechesis to discern and penetrate these environments, as it is there that the major cultural tendencies have greater impact in creating and popularizing such models of life as urban life, migratory or tourist influxes (see GDC 211).

The situation of social and cultural pluralism can create tensions with regard to ethnic pluralism, religious pluralism, urban and extra-urban living conditions. It can also cause the overwhelming influence of secularization on other areas of life or the excessive influence of strong religiosity in one form on other spheres of social life. Therefore, catechesis should take significant cultural trends in a given territory represented by social and professional groups into account. This requires catechesis to overcome serious obstacles to inculturation, dialogue and mutual listening (see GDC 212–214).

Associations, movements and groups of the faithful often operate in the local Church. In such groups, Christians practice devote themselves to “the practice of piety, the direct apostolate, charity and relief work, or a Christian presence in temporal matters”. What is necessary in them, is formation implanted in the experience of apostolic life and at the same time giving the opportunity for integration. Catechesis carried out within associations and movements should develop a whole wealth of content. It must, however, include “a serious study of Christian doctrine”, (see GDC 279) and it must constitute a serious religious formation “open to all the... factors of the Christian life”. It is not an obstacle in it, that the own purpose of associations or movements could express the catechesis of the Church (see GDC 261–263). The Church’s reflection on the catechesis of adults will help shape their catechesis and the activity of a wide range of seniors or in other words aged.

### **Catechesis as a factor shaping the activity of seniors or aged**

Catechetical activity addressed to seniors should be inscribed in the concept of pastoral ministry of seniors. The community influence of the local Church makes catechetical activity a part of this pastoral activity. It reinforces the strength of catechetical and educational influence among seniors. Catechesis should be part of the apostolic formation of people in the seniors’ age. All the baptized, including seniors, are called to participate in the apostolate. Christians in their old age should pursue their own apostolic tasks. The retirement age opens new opportunities for apostolic work for them. The first environment of their apostolate is the family. The

most important areas of their mission include the apostolate in the field of culture, education, the socio-charitable apostolate, the apostolate of suffering and prayer (Przygoda W., 2009, p. 174). The Church expects seniors to become subjects of evangelization of culture, catechists, and witnesses of Christian life. Apostolate in the family is done primarily through their testimony (Przygoda W., 2009, p. 175).

You need to prepare the seniors for the apostolate. Formation for the apostolate means preparing and joining the saving mission of Christ (AC 33). This formation, as observed by W. Przygoda, contains the human, doctrinal, practical and spiritual dimensions (Przygoda W., 2009, p. 178). This formation is about discovering the talents of seniors and encouraging them to use them to shape the temporal order according to the Gospel. Cultural formation means supporting truly human values and learning the art of brotherly coexistence. It is to allow a better understanding of what the Church believes in. It will be particularly close to seniors to bring them closer to the Church's social teaching. In the spiritual dimension of formation, one must focus on teaching prayer, and continuous deepening religious awareness (Przygoda W., 2009, pp. 178–179).

The subject of this formation is the entire People of God. The parish occupies a special role within the People of God. It is worth emphasizing the great role of priests and animators of religious movements in the parish. This formation of seniors is usually done by parish catechesis addressed to seniors. Its important goals should be to remind people of their respect and love for the elderly, to defend the value of human life and to remind them of their duty to honor and respect their parents, as required by the fourth commandment of the Decalogue (Przygoda W., 2009, p. 180–181). Catechesis of seniors cannot forget about the needs of seniors, which include the need to make sense of life, the need to understand the meaning of suffering (Skoczylas K., 2016, pp. 199–216).

The apostolic formation of seniors will help them to transfer its essential values to the areas of activity which they focus on. They can be universities of the third age, involvement in the Radio Maryja Family, involvement in the service of charity or religious tourism and participation in pilgrimages.

Participation in various forms of apostolic formation for seniors in the parish or in various Catholic associations and movements will result in various types of testimony of Christian life and Christian behaviour in everyday life. Christians bring such attitudes to the universities of the third age. Their testimony becomes visible to other participants of this type of a university. Common classes are an opportunity to share your experience. This, in turn, may inspire the interest of a certain part of the audience in

religious themes. Lectures are usually an attempt to meet the needs of their participants. In such circumstances, representatives of various fields of theology and priests can use their knowledge to deepen the understanding of Christianity and to inspire behaviour coming from the apostolic attitude. A priest Piotr Krakowiak writes about positive experience in this field. A special form of such involvement is the hospice volunteer service, which is gradually developing among seniors in Poland. Since 2009/10, a social campaign has been launched in Poland promoting volunteering or service of charity among seniors, through cooperation with organizations for seniors and especially universities of the third age. This 60+ volunteering corresponds to the needs of retiring people. It gives them the feeling of being needed. Volunteering or service of charity often manifests itself in improving the health of seniors. By joining in it, they have the chance to share their wisdom and experience. They can engage in non-medical activities in hospices, which is reflected in the help in organizing charity campaigns, in administrative work for the hospice and many others. In addition, they support hospice teams in taking care of patients and after a proper training, of the daily care of hospice residents. They accompany the patients by spending time with them and talking about important topics for people in serious health condition, including topics about the purpose and meaning of life or death. The practice confirms, as Krakowiak notices, that most of the seniors derive a lot of satisfaction from volunteering or service of charity in other words. And when the participation in hospice volunteering raises any problems that the volunteer cannot solve, then the presence of a volunteer coordinator in the hospice usually helps to find the solution (Krakowiak P., 2016, pp. 27–47). To motivate seniors to participate in this volunteering and to carry it out with an increasingly higher and higher level of professionalism, a permanent spiritual formation is necessary and the catechization of seniors can provide it.

The apostolic formation takes place intensely in the Family of Radio Maryja. The Radio Maryja Family richly enjoys catechetical content transmitted both on Trwam Television as well as Radio Maryja, as well as from publications and press published by the “Nasza Przyszłość”/“Our Future” foundation. You can find there both “Our Daily Paper”/“Nasz Dziennik” and “In our family”/“W Naszej Rodzinie”. Representatives of the circles of the Radio Maryja Family are usually involved in parish ministry. A special place in the catechism of this community is Radio Maryja, which systematically gives catechesis for adults. The website of Radio Maryja contains catechesis given on Radio Maryja from 2006 till today. It carries out the subject matter present both in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the experience of faith in the liturgy, which includes the sac-

raments as well as the religious dimension of historical experience (Radio Maryja, 2019). The listener interested in this subject can download an audio file from Radio Maryja website and also print its contents. Trwam Television has also a wide catechetical offer for those gathered in the family of Radio Maryja. Among the catechetical broadcasts, one can point primarily to the “TV Bible University”. The television Bible University was initiated by the Polish Biblical Association on January 25, 2014. Lectures are delivered by biblical scholars from the Association and their lectures take place twice a month. They present the subject matter contained in the Holy Scriptures. Their lectures allow you to understand more deeply the message that the texts of the Holy Scriptures contain. Trwam Television archive already contains extensive biblical issues (Telewizja Trwam, 2019). A member of the Radio Maryja Family can shape his spirituality, read dogmatic content or moral obligations. The “In our family” program, which appears on the air once a month, is used to exchange experience among members belonging to the Radio Maryja Family. It is an opportunity to witness the commitment of various members of the Radio Maryja Family. It creates opportunities to promote apostolic commitment (Telewizja Trwam, 2019). The constant apostolic formation thanks to various forms of activity contributes to the development of various forms of activity coming from the faith. However, it is particularly valuable that the systematic catechesis present in this medium has a chance to bring the faithful up to responsibility for the received faith (see GDC 201).

The systematic catechesis in Radio Maryja and Trwam Television has also the role of maintaining Catholic awareness and protection against various movements and communities, which convey completely different forms of religious experience or promote various visions of a man, a family, social and public issues. Catechesis in this radio and television broadens Catholic awareness and provides the necessary knowledge to exchange ideas with people with different views acquired in public life. Therefore, the General Directory for Catechesis emphasizes that evangelization commitment and integral and systematic catechesis should be developed to help the faithful learn the Scriptures in defense from the errors (see GDC 201). In addition, issues related to Catholic social science are often discussed in both media. It teaches how to assess social reality from the point of social teaching of the Church and also provides opportunities for social activity in many fields. Various cultural or ideological trends are present in the modern world. Many of them are against the Catholic faith. Therefore, this subject is discussed in many Trwam TV programs entitled “Unfinished Conversations” and it allows confronting various manifestations of socio-cultural pluralism with a Christian reference to this issue.

In addition, the form of catechesis in these media has another value. It takes place in the community. On the one hand, this is a parish community in which the representatives of the circles of Radio Maryja bring deeper and deeper awareness shaped by media catecheses there, and on the other hand it is a community gathering around both media experiencing its community during the annual pilgrimages of this Family to Jasna Góra. This is clearly stressed by the International Catechesis Council, saying that an adult Christian matures in his faith not so much through learning religious concepts as through full participation in the Christian community (Międzynarodowa Rada ds. Katechezy, 2001, pp. 28–29).

Pilgrimages and religious tourism also offer many opportunities for catechizing seniors. The catechization of seniors with regard to this activity may take place before taking this activity. It can be an element of doctrinal or spiritual formation. Such catechesis shapes the faith of seniors. It develops their sensitivity to the beauty they meet in the world created by God. It shapes the attitude of respect for the creation and admiration for the beauty manifesting itself in it. Catechesis can also take place during pilgrimages and religious tourism. Pilgrimages are often organized to places associated with the cult of God and his saints. These are the sanctuaries of God's mercy, Marian sanctuaries, places of worship of saints. During the pilgrimages, the mysteries of faith are experienced. Therefore, the content of these mysteries can be the subject of catechesis. Opportunities for this catechesis can often become homilies during the Mass celebrated there, or conferences for pilgrims, or visiting the sanctuary.

Every pilgrimage, both walking and coaching, is an opportunity for the participant to realize that we are on our way not only just for the purpose of the pilgrimage, which is usually a visit to the holy place, but also on the way to God. Pilgrimages allow you to break away from everyday life and enter the spiritual dimension. A pilgrimage can be described as evangelical experience that leads to a deeper intimacy with God. During the presence in the sanctuary, it should be emphasized that this place was chosen by God as a place of His special mercy, where He wants to show His goodness and to grant favors to man more than in other temples. During the pilgrimage of Christian he realizes that he is experiencing the way of life in the community, that at every stage of his life he is accompanied by the community in which he practices his faith. He better understands then that he is going on a pilgrimage in the temporal world to eternity and to God. Such a pilgrimage is the source of strong religious experience. It is being on the way on which a man meets the mystery of God and brings a reflection in a pilgrim on his life, and then becomes an inspiring factor for the conversion and transformation of life. It is often

manifested in the fact that after returning to his home, the pilgrim makes an effort to change his past life. The experience gathered during the pilgrimage is an opportunity for memories and meetings to share this experience. It can also be a starting point after returning to the parish to continue the catechization of seniors (Zajac M., 2012, pp.156–169).

Catechesis of seniors may be present in religious tourism. Researchers dealing with the analysis of tourism phenomena pointed out that between the pilgrimage and tourism can be distinguished an intermediate category, which is religious tourism. This is determined by the motives of participating in tourist migration. If the motive is to learn about religious places and experience religion, then you can talk about religious tourism (Buczowska K., 2012, pp. 55–58). Among the seniors, a significant group participates in trips to religious places from religious and cognitive motives Buczowska K., 2012, pp. 71–72). This category of tourism participants is open to catechesis, which is organized for them in pilgrimage places. Especially, intergenerational tourism has great catechetical value. It gives the possibility of contacts between seniors and the young generation, and it can be an opportunity to share their own experience and to share faith (Plit F., 2019). Not only journeys to pilgrimage sites create many opportunities, but also form of hiking, cycling or riding together, when there are opportunities to talk or share experiences or memories of religious experiences. Common spending of free time by generations of grandparents, parents and grandchildren is a source of shared experiences that can strengthen family ties and enable the transfer of behavior patterns to the younger generation (Zajadacz A., 2014, p. 65). So it will be a family catechesis taking the form of sharing the testimony of faith.

Senior catechesis should also be present when seniors do volunteering, both hospice and voluntary work in the Church, in the parish Caritas teams. A significant part of their activity is to help a person in need, a suffering person. Hence, it is especially important to preserve with it in the situation of experiencing someone else's suffering. Volunteer coordinators should be able to play this role. Catechesis organized in the local Church should support volunteers. Teaching addressed to this group should allow to feel the integration with the parish, give a sense of belonging to the Church and participate in its life, help to become involved in the apostolate and charity, teach to support the Church with their activity and suffering (Kalbarczyk A., 2015, p. 118).

## Conclusion

Seniors or in other words aged, both in the western world and in Poland, are an increasingly numerous group. The catechetical activity done by the Church among them may result in the development of the apostolate. The more it is possible to deepen among them the personal reference to Christ and to develop a deeper awareness of the experienced faith, the more the apostolic activity increases.

Seniors nowadays stay in relatively good health for much longer than in the past. As a result, they can be involved in various forms of activity not only on the family level, but also on the social level. Participation in the activities of universities of the third century, commitment to the Family of Radio Maryja, voluntary work and pilgrimage and tourism are popular forms of activity among Polish seniors.

Catechesis of seniors anticipating their activity or its accompanying can strengthen their faith, strengthen pro-social behavior, develop a sense of responsibility for faith, contribute to the creation and deepening of Christian culture, as well as transfer valuable traditions both in the family and in the public life.

The catechesis of this group may also deepen the experience of various forms of seniors' involvement by revealing the perspectives of Christian perception of the occurring phenomena and processes. This can make the wisdom and experiences accumulated during life enrich the Christian and public life by various forms of their involvement.

The carried out analyzes show that deepening the activity in this catechesis can be accomplished through catechization in the parish as well as by the support of Catholic media. The systematic catechetical effort made by the Church may result in an increasing degree of family catechesis. Seniors may become active in this form of catechesis.

As a result of the growing activity of seniors as part of different forms of their involvement, the scope of the realized goodness can be extended both in the family and in church and in public life. Models of Christian and social commitment and disinterested service can be increasingly promoted. Catechesis can strongly motivate you to get involved for the good. In many situations, this social involvement of seniors can be a real support for suffering people and those experiencing loneliness. Catechesis can support the motivation of such activity.

## KATECHEZA DOROSŁYCH W KONTEKŚCIE ICH AKTYWNOŚCI

### (STRESZCZENIE)

Współcześni seniorzy, których wielu cieszy się często dziś stosunkowo dobrym stanem zdrowia, po zakończeniu aktywności zawodowej podejmują różnorodne nowe formy aktywności. Niektórzy z nich włączają się w działalność uniwersytetów trzeciego wieku, przynależą do Rodziny Radia Maryja, są wolontariuszami albo korzystają z różnych form turystyki religijnej i pielgrzymek. Wiele przejawów ich aktywności wynika z pobudek religijnych. Rozwijająca się religijność seniorów wymaga prowadzenia systematycznej katechezy, która pomaga im w rozwoju. Kościół podkreśla, że ta katecheza powinna być dostosowana do sytuacji seniora. Pozwala ona odczytać religijny sens tego etapu życia oraz wzmacniać motywację do chrześcijańskiej obecności w rodzinie i środowisku. Powinna też rozbudzać zainteresowania religijne wiarą, kształtować i podtrzymać motywację chrześcijańskiej aktywności w Kościele i świecie. Znajduje to wyraz w chrześcijańskim zaangażowaniu w wychowanie rodzinne, obecności we wspólnocie kościelnej, kształtowaniu dobra społecznego, a także pozwala atrakcyjnie spędzać czas wolny.

## CATECHESIS OF SENIORS IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR ACTIVITY

### (SUMMARY)

Modern seniors who are characterized by good health at the end of their professional activity engage in new forms of activity. Some of them are involved in the activities of universities of the third age, belong to the Family of Radio Maryja, are volunteers or use various forms of religious tourism and pilgrimages. Many manifestations of their activity come from the religiosity of seniors. The growing religiosity of seniors requires a systematic catechesis that helps them in its development. The church emphasizes that this catechesis should be adapted to the situation of a senior. Catechesis helps to read the religious meaning of this stage of life and to strengthen the motivation for Christian presence in the family and environment. Therefore, this catechesis should strengthen religious interest in faith, shape and sustain the motivation of Christian activity, in the Church and in the world. This is reflected in the Christian involvement in family upbringing, in the ecclesial community, for the social good and also in an attractive way of spending free time.

## ABBREVIATIONS

Gdc – Congregation for the clergy, *General directory for catechesis*, Roma 1997.



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