

## MANAGEMENT OF THE WAY OF TRANSMITTING THE GOSPEL TRUTHS TO THE FAITHFUL IN THE LIGHT OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

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**Aim:** The primary aim of this paper is to present the results of research concerning the issues of faith faced by the contemporary generation of Catholics. In doing so, the authors sought to meet the social need for discourse on how to shape the personality of individuals doubting the Gospel message of the Roman Catholic Church, strengthen the faith of its members based on rational premises, and prevent numerous doubts caused by the lack of correlation between religion and science. The secondary aim is to attempt to answer the question of what the faithful expect from their pastors when they struggle with a problem, and which sources of information should be considered reliable.

The article concerns the management of contemporary science, hence the text contains a statement regarding management in the Roman Catholic Church as an institution. The multiplicity of research goals means that issues related to management have not been fully exposed.

The authors set themselves many goals, and the most important include an attempt to find answers to questions about:

- the ideological function of theology in the world of science,
- contemporary styles of pastoral work,
- collective thinking about the truths of faith.

In principle, the articulated goals concern in their entirety the way theological knowledge is managed in theory and its implementation in practice. First, questions are asked about its role in science, then ways of implementing it in pastoral work are sought, and then it is verified through research. Therefore, not only the updating of theological knowledge regarding the mental state of contemporary Catholics is the subject of these considerations, but also ways of deriving new solutions to the contemporary science of the Roman Catholic Church resulting from the conducted research.

**Methodology/approach:** The research method applied in this paper is based on a modified grounded theory, which "treats theory building as a process and is not the verification of pre-constructed hypotheses on the basis of subsequently collected data" (Konecki, 2005). The outcome of such modifications is a "thought process in which vague, inexact notions (concepts) are clarified and strictly defined" (Świątkiewicz, 2024). Grounded theory is considered "one of the best-developed strategies for qualitative research" (Konecki, 2000).

Conducting research according to its methodological principles gives the researcher significant freedom to choose the time, place, and situation for data collection, and makes it possible to solve problems that go beyond "what is objective and measurable, enabling the exploration of issues related to assessments, values, experiences, that is, the individual" (Plich, Bauman, 2001, p. 277). This unconventional approach to research is justified when identifying "a specific cause as an explanation of a phenomenon, which simply means its subsumption under a certain universal law or set of such laws" (Blaug, 1955). Grounded theory is not detached from the core issue, it does not rely solely on statistics, but generates new solutions during the research process, as "the methodology of grounded theory is an attempt to oppose traditional, academic methods (from behind a desk) of theory building" (Konecki, 2000). Due to its universal nature, it has been adapted to address issues in pastoral theology (Dworak, 2013). In this case, data analysis using previously made assumptions was abandoned, as this could result in self-confirmation of known concepts.

This paper uses the *Human Performance Improvement* method for the formulation of questions. This method, employed by the American Society for Training and Development, was developed in collaboration with individuals such as William E. Deming, Peter Drucker, Abraham Maslow, and particularly Donald Kirkpatrick and Jack Philips. It introduced a systemic approach to identifying barriers that hinder employees from performing their work effectively and satisfactorily, and proposed solutions to eliminate these barriers (Gilbert, 2013).

In terms of methodology, the article is based on grounded theory, which is why the method was appropriately selected to address the research problem, and the authors argue why they decided to base themselves on this particular method. The choice of grounded theory as a research tool was dictated by the fact that it is a methodology based mainly on empirical research directly related to a given problem. "This approach is therefore rooted in research on organizations and work processes". The research results are treated by her as derivatives of empirical analyses, and the concepts built on their basis are constantly modified and verified". The grounded theory methodology is an attempt to oppose traditional, academic methods (from behind a desk) of building theory.

**Limitations:** A significant limitation for the authors was: developing a research approach that took into account the personalities of the respondents; obtaining honest and reliable answers from those willing to share their thoughts with the authors of this text; presenting conclusions that also considered the context of the research and the conditions under which it was conducted, and consequently articulating conclusions derived from the free discussions that emerged after completing the questionnaire.

The authors base their research on their own research, but also on research conducted by other researchers. Therefore, it was assumed that for 75% of the respondents the most important event was the figure of Jesus Christ, who made his teachings credible by his death on the cross. This footnote was used to emphasize the importance of the question, what fascinates you in the Gospel? However - if it is obvious from the point of view of a believer, then this footnote can be removed.

**Implications:** The results of the research will, on one hand, provide useful information to those managing the process of shaping the personalities of the younger generation, and, on the other hand, may represent an important step in the development of pastoral theology, which aims to develop guidelines for the practical activities of the Church in the contemporary world.

In addition, other research methods, apart from focus groups, were used. Because according to the principles of grounded theory, focus studies are an essential next step between collecting data and preparing preliminary versions of scientific papers. They are the main method of grounded theory, because they encourage data analysis at an early stage of the research process. Following these recommendations, focus groups were conducted in the form of interviews: simple standardized (questionnaire with scaled answers); simple non-standardized (the person

conducting the research has a lot of freedom to ask questions and explain their meaning); in-depth standardized (indirect questions resulting from the context of the research conducted play a large role); in-depth non-standardized (a casual conversation on a given topic). It is obvious that there will always be methodological doubts. Therefore, it must be added that the functioning of any type of organization requires the construction of new concepts that keep up with the progress of civilization. The paradox of some situations is that the social processes taking place in their environment undergo radical changes, while decision-makers do not notice them and persist in presenting their principles - considering them unchangeable. This process should be interrupted by formulating hypotheses and their constant verification and modification of these as knowledge on a given topic is obtained. Grounded theory can be a good tool that will allow the creation of new concepts, hypotheses and theories, not based on previously accepted axioms and assumptions, but on empiricism referring to the observed reality. Generating theses during research involves:

- referring to the researcher's ideas and intuition,
- understanding, and not just searching for cause-effect relationships,
- carefully selecting places, conditions, people and situations for research,
- complete freedom, openness, communicativeness and naturalness.

Elements of grounded theory have been used, among others, in research on: organizational culture, production control system, causes of disasters, restructuring and recruitment processes in human resources consulting agencies. Due to these features, it was purposeful for us to take the effort to adapt its principles to create new research concepts, appropriate to the time and place of their conduct. The following premises supported this:

- it is related to a long-term research process,
- it is subject to rapid modification and verification,
- it is characterized by high flexibility and aims to comprehensively capture the subject of the research,
- it is not detached from the essence of the issue,
- it does not use only statistical data and generates new concepts already during the research.

Grounded theory is not a process of formulating hypotheses on the basis of previously collected information, but is an innovative approach to their construction and verification.

**Value:** The scientific value lies in the innovative way of conducting research based on the grounded theory method and the application of the Human Performance Improvement [HPI] method in acquiring knowledge about the implementation of pastoral tasks in the contemporary world (Filipowicz, 2008).

**Keywords:** Roman Catholic Church, management of science, methodology, conceptualisation and operationalisation of research results, grounded theory method.

## 1. Introduction

The Church can be defined not only as a fellowship of believers, but also as an institution managed by clergy. Such an understanding of the Church requires the identification of its main goal, which is salvation, realised through the fellowship of breaking bread and prayer (Acts 2:42). In this context, the clergy can be considered as simultaneously fulfilling three functions: mentors, managers and coordinators, who shape its organisational structure, are responsible for

conveying the principles contained in the Old and New Testaments to the faithful, and motivate them to behave in accordance with the Ten Commandments. The Church, as an institution operating in a precisely defined reality, should therefore make use, in defining its immediate objectives, of both theological studies and take into account knowledge from other scientific fields, through which information can be obtained about: the concerns and dilemmas of the faithful; ways of organising pastoral activities and methods of presenting the principles of the faith in various forums. This source of information will be particularly useful in the implementation of the ecclesial activity of the Church (Schoonenberg, 1970, pp. 383-390), as it relates to initiatives such as protecting the family, working with youth, and assisting marriages in moments of crisis.

Therefore, it is justified to conduct interdisciplinary research (Kretek, 2011), the results of which may make it possible to develop effective methods of evangelisation that meet the expectations of various Catholic communities in areas such as: the principles of promoting faith among the faithful; the causes of changes in human personality in the context of the Gospel message; or identifying motivators that enable sharing knowledge about religion with third parties.

The authors are aware that research into the sphere of the *sacred*, occurring during spiritual experiences that evoke a sense of communion with God (Tomalski, 2001) in juxtaposition with the *profane*, which focuses attention on the knowable, material, and measurable, may evoke various emotions.

The research methods adopted in this paper are based on grounded theory, since the organisational structure of the Church corresponds to the fundamental principles of management theory. The results of the research, on one hand, provide useful information in the process of shaping the personalities of the younger generation, and, on the other hand, may represent an important step in the development of pastoral theology, which aims to develop guidelines for the practical activities of the Roman Catholic Church (Kamiński, 1992). Grounded theory, adapted to the study of the *sacred*, takes into account the fact that clergy carry out their mission in increasingly challenging conditions, which necessitates the search for adequate ways of conveying evangelical principles of conduct to the faithful under conditions of a rapidly changing mentality and personality of individuals (Kamiński, 1983).

Researchers set many goals for themselves, and among the most important are attempts to seek answers to questions about:

- the worldview function of theology in the world of science,
- contemporary styles of pastoral work,
- collective thinking about the truths of faith.

Therefore, these considerations focus not only on updating the theoretical knowledge regarding the mental state of contemporary Catholics but also on methods of deriving new solutions for the contemporary teaching of the Church based on the actual experiences of researchers (Skórzyńska, 2024).

The proposed research model is based on concrete actions derived from grounded theory. These include:

## 2. Conceptualisation of the Research Process

Conceptualisation is a process involving the processing of accumulated knowledge and its formulation into: concepts, definitions, and terms, which are then used for identification and diagnostic purposes. Conceptualisation boils down to the precise expression of the research intentions that are to be realised when interacting with an organisation's stakeholders. Conceptualisation requires the articulation of clear and concise definitions regarding the essence of the research. It is also referred to as the process of transforming knowledge into concepts and definitions used within the organisation. The main questions that may prove useful during conceptualisation include:

- how to analyse the problem at hand?
- will the adopted problem-solving method provide a solution?
- How to apply research results in practice (Conceptualisation, 2024).

In this study, conceptualisation will be based on the elements of grounded theory, which include:

- Theoretical sampling is the process of collecting data to generate theory" (Konecki, 2000). In this paper, it will be conducted in various locations and times through questions, causing new ideas to emerge as information is gathered, which may influence the implementation of further research. "These assumptions and perspectives often differ among disciplines but nonetheless shape research topics and conceptual emphases" (Charmaz, 2009). The expansion of knowledge on the topics under study should continue until new insights begin to repeat. "For the researcher, a method is not a set of rules defining how to conduct the research beforehand. Rather, it is a philosophical mandate that enables the empirical presentation of the relationship between the observer and the observed event" (Konecki, 2000). The use of these assumptions will free the researcher from the subjectivism, which manifests in the confrontation of pre-existing knowledge and experience, in favour of objectivity derived from observed facts. In this case, theoretical sampling involves obtaining preliminary ideas that emerge after receiving answers to questions that "forced" respondents to provide sincere and reliable responses (Charmaz, 2009).
- Theoretical notes, which serve as "a crucial step between data collection and drafting preliminary versions of scientific papers. They encourage data analysis at an early stage of the research process" (Charmaz, 2009, p. 97). These are the "initial ideas that need to be addressed" (Charmaz, 2009, p. 27). They are most often practical references to the

discussed issues. They are not always logically connected to the theoretical aspects of the investigations conducted, but they serve as points of reference for deeper reflections resulting from "giving them a spontaneous, rather than mechanical, character" (Charmaz, 2009, p. 106). In general, theoretical notes express the subjective comments of the researcher, which makes it possible to grasp the endogenous and exogenous relationships of the problem under study.

### **3. Relationships Between Faith and Science Analysed from the Perspective of:**

- Pre-modernism, which assumes that human thought develops based on the achievements of our ancestors, and that maintaining the old order involves passing down knowledge from past years, with the next generation only needing to accept the prevailing social rules (Babbie, 2004, p. 33). This type of behaviour boils down to the historical justification of conclusions, which in many cases may prove inadequate for the scale of the problem being addressed. "How can one proclaim the truth. By ceasing to know it? It has passed with the time for which it was relevant. And times change. Views must change too. Including scientific ones" (Kołodko, 2008, p. 15). In solving problems related to the adaptation of the Church's teachings to the expectations of the "knowledge society," this perspective may lead to innovative concepts being ignored by conservative circles, for whom "theory becomes doctrine, doctrine becomes dogma, dogma becomes an inadequate theory, because the times have changed, and the substance is not the same as that for which the theory was created" (Kołodko, 2008, p. 315). After an in-depth analysis, it turned out that the pre-modernist approach is not feasible because it overlooks aspects of civilisational progress, which, in the face of various emerging crises, strengthens conservative attitudes that act as a brake preventing further research.
- Modernism, which ensures broadly understood tolerance (Babbie, 2004, p. 33), where no one influences anyone else's decisions, and everyone follows their own ideas about the Gospel message. Here, it is assumed that each member of the religious community can act according to their own ideas, and the results of the research should confirm these opinions. In this case, the acquisition of knowledge is treated as a search by researchers for arguments confirming previously articulated theses, which can be expressed with the phrase "knowledge is reproduction, and science is creation" (Kołodko, 2008, p. 14). On a larger scale, such conduct leads to the distortion of reality and hinders the dissemination of reliable research results to the public. This perspective of articulating theoretical notes was also rejected by the authors because the research

results could confirm a concept favouring the emergence of specific enclaves of people living alongside each other, such as: families – where parents and children have different views on faith; schools – where the child's guardians and teachers have diverse concepts of youth education; doctors – whose views on morality differ significantly from the values expressed by Catholics.

- Postmodernism, which increases the acceptance of research results, even when they force a radical restructuring of existing behaviours (Babbie, 2004, p. 35). The analyses conducted by the authors indicated that the community of the faithful is not the only place where the data-gathering process for problem-solving takes place. Therefore, research can be conducted in other areas of scientific or practical [empirical] activity. This perspective enabled them to search for solutions to the problem using unconventional tools, which in this case are specially prepared customised questionnaires that enable categorisation. This procedure aimed to "extract from the qualitative material (...) categories and their properties by showing indicators related to the formulated conceptualisations" (Babbie, 2004, p. 48). The next step that facilitated data analysis was sorting, which involved organising the theoretical notes according to a specific criterion.

#### **4. Triangulation**

Triangulation is a process that "enables a more complete and multifaceted understanding of the object under observation because it involves viewing it from different perspectives in various ways" (Mazurek-Łopacińska, Sobocińska, 2018). In this paper, triangulation has been realised by means of transforming the collected data into information that enables a multifaceted analysis of the acquired research material (Apanowicz, 2003, p. 71). On the basis of triangulation, conclusions have been drawn that go far beyond the accepted scope of a typical analysis of research results, as problem-solving here does not occur spontaneously but emerges in confrontation with the existing reality. It is also important to remember that triangulation forces the precise formulation of questions on such a delicate matter as faith, which requires understanding and re-evaluating the reasons for adapting the research results to practical application by analysing the processes occurring within the Church's environment (Kawalerski, 2024).

## 5. Operationalisation (Survey Research) of the Research Process

Operationalisation involves making decisions about where, when, and how the defined concepts will be measured. It is closely related to the process of selecting the research procedure, i.e., determining the degree of occurrence of a phenomenon in the studied reality (DeVaus, 2001, p. 24). The research presented in this article was conducted according to the principles of grounded theory between 2020 and 2023 in academic environments, at conference meetings, and among the authors' friends and families, where the age range of the participants was between 30 and 60 years old. In total, approximately 500 people who identified as believers were surveyed.

The first form of research consisted of focus groups, i.e. free discussions centred around the question *Do you have enough knowledge to argue your belonging to the Roman Catholic Church in conversations with non-believers?*

Approximately 80% of the participants responded, either directly or indirectly, that they did not possess such knowledge and were unable to defend their views on faith, especially when confronted with the theory of relativity presented by physicists along with its quantum interpretation. This group felt helpless against the content presented to them by the media, which concerned the promotion of secular customs and the interpretation of historical facts. Only about 20% of the respondents were able to have a debate with others on the basis of theological knowledge.

In this focus group research, attention was also given to examining the situations and conditions under which a person transforms from a believer to a non-believer, or vice versa – under the influence of various types of spiritual experiences. These experiences became the subject of further research, as they enabled researchers to determine whether the causes of this transformation were endogenous or exogenous for those undergoing conversion or making the (risky) decision to apostatise. The following questions were asked:

- *What made you a believer?* – To this question, 80% of respondents answered: I grew up in the Catholic tradition; 15% – I found the concept of salvation to be in line with my value system and, in addition, it makes it easier for me to solve problems related to raising children; 5% indicated transcendental experiences.
- *What fascinates you about the Gospel?* – For 75% of respondents, the most important event was the figure of Jesus Christ, who made his teachings credible through his crucifixion (Biela, 2006); for 20%, it was the resurrection, and for 5%, it was the fact that the religion has lasted over 2,000 years.
- *Which part of the Bible made the biggest impression on you?* – Here, nearly 50% of respondents answered The Last Supper; 30% pointed to the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard; 10% to the Parable of the Prodigal Son; and 10% highlighted the character of the Old Testament Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers to the Egyptians.



- *Propose your own concept for teaching religion in schools.* The survey results were as follows:
  - 60% proposed emphasising to young people that we are redeemed by Jesus Christ, and for that reason, our lives should be joyful;
  - 30% suggested that one of the forms should be enabling young people to organise initiatives such as spirituality festivals, evenings of religious poetry and music, discussions, and debates about family life;
  - 10% proposed conversations about the Eucharist as a form of union with God.
- *What actions did the teachings of St. John Paul II inspire you to take?* – Here, 70% of respondents said they were inspired to raise their children with a sense of responsibility for: their homeland, faith, and family; 10% began to place more importance on prayer; for 10%, the words "you must demand of yourselves, even if others would not demand of you" (John Paul II, 1983) were treated as an impulse for self-improvement, and for 10%, the statement "each of you also finds some sort of Westerland" (John Paul II, 1987) was understood as defending one's beliefs regardless of the consequences.
- *Does faith help you in achieving your planned goals, and if so, how?*
  - 10% of respondents answered that faith does not constitute an important factor in achieving their goals;
  - 90% answered that it does. Within this group, the following statements were the most common:
    - ✓ thanks to it, I do not pay attention to the adversities of life because it [faith] gives meaning to my life,
    - ✓ my goal is to raise my children to be decent people, and I believe that God will help me with this,
    - ✓ together with my spouse, through prayer, we want to create a relationship based on trust and mutual understanding of each other's expectations.
- *Describe the forces that can constructively support you in your religious practices* – 35% of people responded that these are Catholic television programmes; 25% acknowledged Holy Mass broadcasts, and 40% stated that these are the homilies of successive popes.
- *Describe the destructive forces that may discourage you from cultivating religious practices.* When confronted with this question, as many as 70% of the respondents stated that these are the opinions voiced by many scientists on the application of the concept of evolution in many fields of knowledge; 20% pointed to the increasing secularisation of society; 10% drew attention to the irresponsible behaviour of those endowed with public trust.

- *What dilemmas do you face as a believer?* The most common responses were:
  - modern physics, which presents a completely different world than theology – 50%;
  - medicine focuses on reducing suffering, while theology sees value in enduring it – 20%;
  - children receive conflicting information, for instance: during religion lessons that the world was created by God, while during physics lessons that it is a consequence of the Big Bang – 15%;
  - students struggle with issues of sexuality, viewed differently by clergy and sexologists – 10%;
  - there is a problem related to wealth accumulation in the face of growing poverty – 5%.
- *What should a homily be like to capture your interest?* The most common answer to this open-ended question was that it must:
  - address spiritual matters arising from the Gospel message;
  - express hope for a reward for living according to the Gospel principles;
  - show how religious conduct fosters positive relationships in marriage, work, and social life.

The next stage of the research focused on the completion of a survey questionnaire<sup>1</sup>, in which the research group was asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with the following statements:

1. *To gain knowledge on how to act during difficult times in life, I receive the necessary information from clergy.*

Based on the responses, it can be stated that 80% of people associated with the Church can rely on spiritual support from clergy, while 20% of respondents disagreed.

2. *I believe that I have knowledge about the social activities of the Church.*

40% of respondents declared that they do not have such knowledge. Meanwhile, 60% of participants stated that they do, and this is due to the fact that they read books and watch TV programmes on the subject on a regular basis.

3. *If I were to share my knowledge and experience about faith with others, I would do so because<sup>2</sup>:*

- it stems from the Gospel message "go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" – 50% of respondents indicated this answer;
- I believe that these are universal principles and should be followed by all citizens – 30% of respondents answered this way;

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<sup>1</sup> The survey was implemented in the form of standardised questions to respondents, whose answers were then assigned to a designated category in the process of coding and sorting the survey results.

<sup>2</sup> In order to preserve the meaning of the answers obtained, they were given a uniform form and assigned to one of four categories.

- I feel obliged to pass on knowledge about the moral principles shaping our society – 10% of respondents answered this way;
- I want my children and grandchildren to continue being raised in a country where Catholic principles are dominant – 10% of respondents indicated this answer.

4. *The factor that motivates me to share knowledge and experience about faith is:*

- trust in my interlocutors (60%);
- helping my closest family members overcome stress and a state known as occupational burnout (20%);
- supporting sick people during their recovery period (15%);
- creating religious communities (5%).

5. *In my opinion, sharing knowledge about faith and one's own experiences of it has a very significant impact on creating positive relationships within a specific group of people.*

Answers:

- Strongly agree – selected by 40% of respondents;
- Rather agree – selected and marked by 10% of respondents;
- I have no opinion on this topic – selected by 0% of respondents;
- Rather disagree – selected by 15% of respondents;
- Strongly disagree – selected by 35% of respondents.

6. *What limits your activity in sharing your knowledge and personal experience in the field of faith.*

Answers:

- Lack of arguments in conversations with people using terminology from the field of physics – indicated by 50% of respondents;
- Fear of ridicule in conversations with people promoting contemporary ideologies – indicated by 20% of respondents;
- Lack of confidence to express own views on faith – indicated by 20% of respondents;
- Lack of opportunity to express own views on the subject – indicated by 10% of respondents.

7. *What solutions would you propose in your community to encourage believers to share knowledge and experience about faith more readily?*

40% of respondents did not indicate any solutions, either answering that they had no ideas or stating that there was no need for such initiatives. The responses of the remaining respondents were largely similar and have been aggregated and presented in the following points:

- Cyclical meetings and discussions on topics such as faith, religion, and dogma;
- Building an atmosphere of trust among members of religious communities;
- Cultivation of shared values such as responsibility, freedom, understanding, sincerity, and loyalty;

- Non-material rewards: recognition, prestige, or general interest;
- Meetings with authorities from various fields of science;
- Socialising events.

The triangulation method used in the research (a method employed in social research to ensure higher quality of research conducted and to reduce measurement error (Denzin, 2017) made it possible to articulate the expectations of the research participants regarding the Church. These expectations are:

- identifying ways to reconcile scientific findings with theological concepts;
- focusing on organising events where believers can share their spiritual experiences with others;
- developing ways of framing the Gospel message in the context of ethical behaviour;
- providing real support from competent individuals, such as scientists, philosophers, and theologians, especially in the area of reducing the cognitive dissonance between faith and science.

The results of this research should be treated as a pilot study, which will allow for further conceptualisation of the problem and effective operationalisation of the research findings in the future.

## 6. Conclusions/Summary

On the basis of the research identified as theoretical sampling, the following conclusions were drawn:

- as a Catholic community, we are largely deprived of the ability to verify information coming from scientific research;
- in many cases, the average Polish person is unaware that their mind is being gradually imprinted with a "set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm, 2008);
- currently, the memory of youth is being shaped by fictional customs (such as participation in demonstrations promoting rainbow values and adorning the body with various patterns and objects) and by modelling themselves after fictional characters from novels, such as Harry Potter in Joanne Rowling's works (Rowling, 2005), Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment" (Dostoyevsky, 2015), or Jacob Frank in Olga Tokarczuk's "Books of Jacob" (Tokarczuk, 2014);

- in many cases, contemporary youth are unable to distinguish between timeless values that can be relied upon in difficult times and illusions created for the benefit of some organisation seeking greater profit. Unable to differentiate between the truths conveyed by religion and indoctrination and secular ceremonies, many people treat both identically, that is, as fake realities offered by the mass media;
- many scholars treat past religious events as "instruments used by historical memory to reconstruct an image of the past in line with novel ideas of consumerism" (Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 7). This usually only results in members of the public being able to associate themselves with the currently promoted values, while people whose life stories do not align with the rationale promoted by a certain group are deliberately forgotten. For example, historical figures like Karol Wojtyła [JPII], Stefan Wyszyński, Jerzy Popiełuszko, or the Ulma family may be overlooked;
- in extreme cases, people are forced to remember what they would rather forget, as exemplified by numerous publications and films showing the unimaginable contempt Nazis had for other nations. Yet, as early as 8 November 1965, the Primate of Poland, along with the entire episcopate, published a letter to the German bishops containing the words, "we forgive and ask for forgiveness" (Letter of the Bishops, 1965). This event initiated the ongoing Polish-German reconciliation process;
- secular ceremonies and repeated rituals often serve as substitutes for traditional values, devoid of a relationship with Providence. They fill the emerging void left by numerous and ill-considered apostasies, where the actions of certain individuals shape the perception of a religion that has existed for two thousand years and has been integral to the formation of states and nations;
- few Catholics recognise that, thanks to religion, tangible and intangible values have been, are and should continue to be passed on to future generations, which is of exceptional importance in determining the identity of a nation. This includes the Church's activities during the period of socialism in Poland, Maximilian Kolbe's act of saving a fellow prisoner's life in Auschwitz, and the election of Karol Wojtyła as Pope;
- average citizens: working, raising children and watching with interest TV programmes in which various scientific studies are presented, are unable to assess their reliability;
- information on scientific discoveries made by physicists is given in the form of mathematical calculations that no one is actually in a position to argue with;
- education focused on conveying knowledge across all types of schools is often presented in ready-made schemes that are only useful for solving scientific problems but do not inspire students to think independently;
- philosophy, as a fundamental, rational, and critical knowledge of everything that exists (Tatarkiewicz, 2001), which compelled not only questioning but also seeking answers based on existential experiences, has been eliminated from the curricula of many universities.

Theoretical notes, on the other hand, have been articulated on the basis of synthesising and analysing the knowledge coming to researchers from various sources and on the search for relations between the phenomena studied. This is because it has been noted that replacing religion with ethics in primary and secondary schools is simply a misunderstanding. Religion pertains to a system based on spiritual experiences and the recognition of transcendental phenomena, while ethics focuses on behaviours developed for the needs of a particular socio-political or economic system. Religion is based on revealed truths, while ethics is based on traditions invented (constructed) (Hobsbawm, 2008, p. 20) by numerous scholars. Religion assesses what is good and what is evil in an evangelical context, whereas ethics points out behaviours that favour economic development within a given socio-economic system. Religious does not mean ethical, and vice versa. For example, hedonism is accepted and even approved in ethics, while in religion, it is not. Ethical views suggest that people should strive for happiness, as it is considered "ethically good." Religion is also about forgiveness, sacrifice, and how humans should act in relation to variously understood holiness. Furthermore, religion is immersed in the doctrinal dimension and is realised in religious activities, organised in the sphere of community and experienced in the sphere of transcendence. Religion also emphasises human activity in experiencing a sense of holiness, which ensures closeness to the Sacred, union with It, in a posture of reverence, distance, and even fear (Eliade, 1999). Using a far-reaching analogy, one could say that replacing religion with ethics would be akin to replacing chemistry with physics or geography.

The problem, viewed from a different perspective by the authors of this reasoning (triangulation), was expressed by the following question – *Is there a Being that can be called a Rational Higher Intelligence, Providence, or God.* The search for rational explanations did not yield satisfactory results. Therefore, it was necessary to reverse the problem and propose a discussion on how the fate of our civilisation would have unfolded if Abraham had not established a relationship with God. As a result of the numerous discussions, the answers, devoid of any emotion, were presented in the form of the following sentences:

- civilisation probably would never have emerged because God was the first abstract concept, which later laid the foundation for the development of philosophy and other sciences;
- without God, there probably would be no society, as it would have been impossible to organise a system of governance, organisation, and hierarchy, where anointed individuals have subjects;
- no one would have told the individual members of society that something is good or something is bad, meaning they would not have been able to distinguish positive behaviours from negative ones;
- people, from the dawn of time, would not have had the chance to define the identity and mentality frameworks of tribal groups, states, and nations.

As can be seen, research conducted using grounded theory and the interpretation of its results, analysed in the context of postmodernism, have resulted in important guidelines for rational action in fulfilling the Gospel message in the contemporary world.

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