

Dariusz Kowalczyk

Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Italy

kowalczyk@unigre.it

ORCID: 0000-0002-6469-2443

Importance of Ecclesiastical Universities for the Church and the World of Science

Znaczenie kościelnych uczelni wyższych dla Kościoła i świata nauki

ABSTRACT: The assessment of the importance of ecclesiastical universities depends on the attitude to the Church and its mission, as well as understanding the relationship between it and the world. The word “world” is not unambiguous. The Bible sees the world as the place of God’s action, and, on the other hand, it calls “the world” everything that opposes God. Therefore, religious universities must discern when to cooperate or wrestle with the world. One of the planes is recognising the truth and the way leading to it. The problem appears to be urgent since today, in many academic circles, the so-called post-truth has been held in high esteem, or the concept of truth is reduced to arbitrarily indicated areas. Under these circumstances, ecclesiastical universities should promote interdisciplinary reflection open to reality in all its dimensions of reason, experience, and faith. Their models depend on ecclesiology models. A certain pluralism is possible and necessary here. However, it is essential that the Church, through its universities, is not afraid to speak with its own voice, sometimes going against the current, but it is ready for dialogue with unlike-minded ones. In every model of the university, quality is crucial, which is also a dimension of ecclesiology. It is precisely the quality of Church high schools that decides whether they will be able to play a significant role in the world of science. The article presents the importance of this goal, the paths that the Church can take towards it and the difficulties that can be encountered.

KEYWORDS: ecclesiastical universities, the world, truth, ecclesial models, quality of ecclesiastical universities

ABSTRAKT: Ocena znaczenia uczelni kościelnych zależy od stosunku do Kościoła i jego misji, a także od pojmowania relacji pomiędzy Kościołem a światem. Słowo „świat” nie jest jednoznaczne. Biblia z jednej strony widzi świat jako miejsce i przedmiot zbawczego działania Boga, a z drugiej nazywa „światem” wszystko to, co Bogu się sprzeciwia. Uczelnie kościelne muszą zatem rozeznawać, kiedy ze światem przyjaźnie współpracować, a kiedy należy się z nim wadzić. Jedną z płaszczyzn owego dialogu

lub sporu jest rozumienie prawdy oraz dróg do niej prowadzących. Jest to szczególnie palący problem, gdyż dziś w wielu środowiskach akademickich hołduje się temu, co nazwano postprawdą, albo redukuje się pojęcie prawdy do arbitralnie wskazanych dziedzin. W tej sytuacji uczelnie kościelne powinny propagować interdyscyplinarną refleksję otwartą na rzeczywistość we wszystkich jej wymiarach rozumu, doświadczenia i wiary. Modele uczelni kościelnych zależą od modeli eklezjologii. Możliwy i potrzebny jest tu pewien pluralizm. Ważne jest jednak, by Kościół poprzez swe uczelnie nie bał się mówić własnym głosem, idąc niekiedy pod prąd, a jednocześnie był gotowy do dialogu z inaczej myślącymi. Ponadto w każdym modelu uczelni istotna jest jakość, która stanowi także wymiar eklezjalności. Od jakości uczelni kościelnych zależy, czy będą one w stanie odegrać znaczącą rolę w świecie nauki. W artykule przedstawiona zostaje nie tylko doniosłość tego celu, ale także drogi, jakimi Kościół może ku niemu podążać oraz możliwe do napotkania trudności.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: uczelnie kościelne, świat, prawda, modele eklezjalne, jakość uczelni kościelnych

The perception of the Church-world relationship is one of the points on which the Catholics are dissimilar. Numerous possible attitudes exist between the extremes, that is, on the one hand, the vision of the Church as a fortress to fight the world and, on the other hand, the Church that wants to be recognised by the world and consequently blurs in it. These differences stem from various concepts of the Church, but perhaps even more so from different perceptions of the world. This is hardly surprising since we already see an ambiguous understanding of ‘the world’ in Saint John’s work. On one side, Jesus tells his disciples: “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, the world hates you” (J 15,19). The “world” appears as everything that opposes God, that is covetousness, the pride of this life (cf. 1 Jn 2,16). On the other side, we proclaim that “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (...). For God [the Father] did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him” (J 3,16-17). This twofold perspective is also present in thinking of the ecclesiastical universities, which are the meeting place of the Church and the world, science and faith. The role of religious schools is, in fact, defined and put into practice depending on how we understand the relationship between the Church and the world, in which dialogue, witness, and confrontation interweave.

Looting Egypt's wealth

The first Jesuits at first did not think about setting up schools, universities. They wanted to be a kind of “light cavalry” without too much institutional burden. Nevertheless, as early as 1548, eight years after the approval of the Society of Jesus, the first Jesuit high school in the world was established in Messina. Then other secondary and higher schools appeared. In 1640, the Jesuits ran 521 universities in Europe alone. Why did they consider education as one of their primary missions? I think that the principle of the “more universal good,” formulated by Ignatius and written in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, played the critical role here. The idea was to choose the works and places where a universal good can be expected.

For this reason, the first place must be given – as the Jesuit Constitutions read – to work among large nations, such as India, or the leading ones, and in the universities where many people usually stay; for if help is provided to them, they themselves will become workers and help others.¹

We see, therefore, that the founder of the Jesuits saw universities as places through which souls can be effectively helped for the greater glory of God. Although today the situation is different than in the 16th/17th century, the above idea of Ignatius is still valid. The other question is whether it is alive in the universities run by different ecclesiastical entities.

One of Ignatius of Loyola's letters contains another appealing thought:

As for us – writes the founder of the Jesuits – theology could do without so much Cicero and Demosthenes. However, just as St Paul *omnia omnibus factus est, ut omnes lucrifaceret*, our Society in its desire to help souls loot these riches of Egypt to turn them into the greater glory of God.²

The metaphor of the “plundering Egypt” can already be found in St Augustine, who in his “Christian Doctrine,” commenting on the Jews' departure from Egypt, states:

¹ Konstytucje Towarzystwa Jezusowego, Krakow–Warsaw 2001, no. 622, p. 219. Unless otherwise noted, all English translations are by the WTR.

² Ignatius of Loyola, Epist. Ign. VIII, 618, the letter from 30 of may 1550, [in:] *Monumenta Ignatiana, ex autographis vel ex antiquioribus exemplis collecta. Series prima: Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Iesu fudantoris epistole et instructiones*, vol. 1, G. Lopez del Horno (ed.), Matrini 1903.

The Egyptians had not only the idols and the great burdens that the people of Israel cursed and wanted to escape from, but also gold and silver dishes and ornaments, and clothing. The Jewish people coming out of Egypt decided to appropriate all these things and make a sort of better use of them. The same applies to all the teachings of the Gentiles that contain not only false superstitious thinking (...). They also contain liberated teachings which are more appropriate for the use of truth (...) and some very useful moral commandments, and some truths concerning the worship of the only God can be found in them. Hence, it is as if the pagan gold and silver, not just invented by the Gentiles themselves, but only as if it was extracted from the mines of omnipresent God's Providence (...) – the Christian when separating himself in spirit from their miserable community should take it away from them and turn it to the righteous use of preaching the Gospel.³

Origen referred to similarly the texts mentioned above from the Book of Exodus even before Augustine. He emphasised that it was necessary to take over those sections from Greek philosophy and Roman law that gave general education and, at the same time, constitute preparation for Christianity. After all – as Origen states – God ordered the Israelites to plunder the Egyptians so that they could make objects of worship of God.⁴ Old Testament Judith is a metaphor analogous to the looting of Egypt, since, as Jesuit Antonio Possentino wrote, she adorned herself with various pagan objects, not for the sake of vanity, but to defeat Holofernes.⁵

³ St Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* II, 40, 60, PL 34, 63. Cited after: J. Domański, *Patrystyczne postawy wobec dziedzictwa antycznego*, [in:] idem, *Philosophica. Paraphilosophica. Metaphilosophica. Studia i szkice z dziejów myśli dawnej*, Krakow 2008, p. 183, trans. by WTR.

⁴ See: Orygenes, *Filokalia*, transl. K. Augustyniak, Warsaw 1979, pp. 63–64; J. Domański, *Patrystyczne postawy...*, op. cit., pp. 181–182.

⁵ “Indeed, as for the gifts which naturally or supernaturally have been granted by God, it depends on His immeasurable goodness to make them more productive and make them grow, since the Religious who have abandoned all things and are no longer serving their likes and dislikes, but the glory of God and the salvation of those for whose eyes and souls they gain use and beauty. For like Judith [Jt 8:10], the righteous woman who, to conquer the enemy Holofernes, considered it appropriate to use not only prayers, penance, and fasting, as she had done before, but also to decorate herself with earrings, sandals, and rings on her fingers and, finally, with all the feminine decorations. God bestowed upon her grace and grandeur, for all her adornment was intended not for lust, but for virtue, so the pronouncement and knowledge of the Religious are like servants brought by them to the fortress as if they were puppeteers for the recompense of enemies who

Objectives of the ecclesiastical universities

Even if the metaphor of “the looting of Egypt” concerning pagan science sounds too aggressive today, it does contain some clues to return to. It is about opening to anything that can be put to good use. It is also about awareness of one’s own Catholic identity and a clear goal, which is “the benefit of preaching the Gospel.” This approach is in line with the principles we find in the *Spiritual Exercises* by St Ignatius: seeking and finding God in all things and the *tantum quantum* principle that he preaches: “Man should use them [created things] to the extent that they assist him in the pursuit of his purpose [i.e. praising, worshipping and serving God], and should dispose of them to the degree that they interfere with his purpose.”⁶

Two questions arise here: How do we formulate the goals of church universities today? How do these high schools want to confront a world that is sometimes friendly, but sometimes indifferent or even hostile to the Church? The most precise illustration of the latter possibility, namely hostility, remains the protests of some professors and students against the visit to the Roman university of La Sapienza paid by Benedict XVI, one of the greatest intellectuals of our time. In the various documents and statements of the popes of recent decades, including the most recent Constitution on universities and ecclesiastical faculties *Veritatis gaudium*, we find three interrelated fundamental objectives of ecclesiastical universities:

1. Systematic reflection on issues directly or indirectly related to Christian Revelation in the context of old and new challenges.
2. Shaping people ready to take on different responsibilities in the Church and in society.
3. Assisting the universal Church and the local churches in the work of evangelization.

These three objectives could be summarised: truth, formation, evangelization. It seems, therefore, that little has changed since the time of Saint Ignatius Loyola: it is still a matter of combining reason and faith to fulfil the missionary mandate of Christ: “Go and make disciples of all nations (...). Make disciples observe all I have delivered to you” (Mt 28,19).

would storm the Church of God.” A. Possevino, *De cultura ingeniorum*, Paris 1605, XLI, pp. 115–116.

⁶ I. Loyola, *Ćwiczenia duchowne*, transl. M. Bednarz, Krakow 2002, no. 23, English translation by WTR.

Nevertheless, the situation is different. Mainly because of a change in the understanding of concepts such as “truth” and “science.” In many academic environments, there is a prevalence of ideas that belief in Revelation is incompatible with scientific inquiry into the truth. Ignatius of Loyola had no complexes about “pagan wisdom” and truly appreciated them. He was convinced that by putting Jesus Christ, who is the truth, at the centre, nothing is taken for granted. Today, on the other hand, Catholic circles sometimes seem too shy, withdrawn, as if they did not believe that they had something important to say from within their identity or were afraid that they would not be able to repel the accusation of a lack of science. Meanwhile, such accusations are often made by those who are not afraid to be guided in their search by world-view beliefs, including the so-called political correctness, as we see in the world success of the so-called gender studies. Therefore, the role of ecclesiastical universities depends to no small extent on understanding what their careful and dignified investigation into the truth is. In this regard, the Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, whose 20th anniversary we are celebrating this year, is still the fundamental – moreover, more topical than ever – Church document.

Reason and faith in the service of the truth

In an interview with André Frossard, the Polish Pope was asked which sentence from the Gospel he would have chosen if he had to convey only one. The response was quick and decisive: “The truth will set you free” (J 8,32).⁷ Let us note that even Faustina Kowalska, Apostle of Mercy, confesses in her diary: “I have the greatest joy in my soul when I learn the truth.”⁸ Indeed, truth gives inherent meaning to all words and sentences.

On the other hand, there is no lack of currents that are more or less close to Pilate’s sceptical statement: “What is the truth?” (J 18,38). Even if the truth exists, how to get to it?

The undoubted problem is that in seeking the truth, we come to different, sometimes contradictory conclusions. An even more significant problem seems to be the replacement of the very concept of “truth” with what is useful in achieving individual goals. Hence, in the public debate, there is less pointing to documented facts and more referring to fashions, circulating opinions, and beliefs. In this sense, there is talk of post-truth. However, perhaps the most

⁷ See: A. Frossard, *Portret Jana Pawła II*, transl. M. Tarnowska, Krakow 1990, p. 72.

⁸ F. Kowalska, *Dzienniczek*, Krakow 2016, no. 410, p. 245.

severe problem in contemporary academic life is arbitrary restrictions on the scope of the inquiry into the truth and the methods that serve it. The victim of such arbitrary, ideological choices is most often the question of God and the meaning of human life. That is why John Paul II, in his Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, convinces in various ways that one should not limit oneself to partial, empirically verifiable truths. After all, man by his nature

is heading for a more profound truth that can show him the meaning of life; this search can, therefore, only achieve the goal in the absolute. The inborn enables man to think, find, and recognise this truth (...) not only by reasoning but also by trusting others who can guarantee the certainty and authenticity of this truth.⁹

This is how faith and reason, trust and scientific criticism meet in search of the truth.

In his speech delivered on 30 June 2011 during the Ratzinger Prize award ceremony, Benedict XVI referred to St Bonaventure that, in the prologue to his *Commentary to the Sentence*, pointed out a twofold use of reason: one that is incompatible with faith and one that even belongs to the essence of faith.¹⁰ Following Bonaventure, Ratzinger states that there is a despotism of reason (*violentia rationis*), which is considered the ultimate judge of all reality, including God. When in Psalm 95(94),8-9 God speaks to his people: “In the desert (...) your ancestors tested and experienced me, even though they saw my work,” this is precisely the example of the reason that wants to put God to the test, to experiment. It is the reason that is incompatible with faith. However, there is also another reason, namely one that

refers to what is “personal,” to the great issues of human existence. (...) When this way of using reason is lacking, the great issues of humanity escape from the realm of what is rational and become the prey of irrationality. This is why authentic theology is so important.¹¹

In the latter sense, reason wants to meet other people, including God, but it knows that it cannot do this by appropriating them, locking them in some of

⁹ John Paul II, *Fides et ratio* 33.

¹⁰ See: Benedict XVI, *Rozum, który kieruje się wiarą, wypełnia swoje powołanie*, a speech at the Ratzinger Prize award ceremony, 30 June 2011, https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt_xvi/przemowienia/nagroda_30062011.html [access 21.07.2018].

¹¹ Ibidem.

its schemes. Thus, without giving up the rigor of rationality, it remains open to Revelation.

In the Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities *Ex corde Ecclesiae* published in 1990, John Paul II emphasised:

The Catholic University has the honour of dedicating itself entirely to working for the truth. (...) Without giving up on acquiring useful knowledge, the Catholic University is distinguished by the freedom to seek all truth about nature, man, and God. (...) In the spirit of a specific universal humanism, the Catholic University devotes itself to the complete study of all aspects of truth in their essential relationship with the Supreme Truth which is God (no. 4)¹².

Last year, the Catholic University of Lublin held an interesting debate entitled “God at the University – what for?” which referred to the Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. One of its participants, Prof. Krzysztof Góźdz, pointed to the tendency to throw God out of the public domain and close Him in the private sphere. In his opinion, the trend can be observed at universities, including Catholic ones. Prof. Stanislaw Janeczek regrets that today education is put on the pedestal in the meaning of *science* and rejects philosophical cognition, not to mention religious one. At the same time, he noted that paradoxically throwing away faith in God has shaken the position of reason, which gives way to various ideologies and superstitions.¹³

Let us note that the root of the problem does not lie in negating the existence of God and, consequently, the deeper, eternal meaning of human life. The problem is that the very question about God and the more profound sense of humanity are denied at the starting point or attempted to be entangled with morally evil intentions, thus showing religion as a source of violence or a tool of control. Furthermore, if one already accepts some religious themes, they are reduced, for example, to reflect on how different religions and faiths can harmoniously contribute to a pluralistic society. In this way, the discourse about faith and religion is brought down to an element of the search for social multi-cultural order.

As can be seen, the task – undertaken in *Fides et ratio* – of convincing people to open to various aspects of the truth and distinct ways of reaching it is still

¹² John Paul II, *Ex corde Ecclesiae*.

¹³ See: *Bóg na uniwersytecie – po co? Debata „Ex Corde Ecclesiae,”* “Gość Niedzielny,” <https://lublin.gosc.pl/doc/3999667.Bog-na-uniwersytecie-po-co-Debata-Ex-Corde-Ecclesiae> [access: 21.07.2018].

crucial. It must be shown that it is not the scientific approach to reduce science and its methods to natural studies and that there are different types of science and rationality. It can be successfully depicted that, for instance, theology is a formal science, more like mathematics than to empirical sciences.¹⁴ According to Canadian clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson, it might be Christianity that gives us the maximum of what we can expect from a man in terms of rationality.¹⁵ It seems essential in this context to distinguish (not to separate!) between natural cognition and sapiential cognition.¹⁶

When referring to the Church's social teaching in *Caritas in veritate*, Benedict XVI notes that it has an important interdisciplinary dimension, which "allows faith, theology, metaphysics and scientific disciplines to find their place in cooperation in the service of man."¹⁷ He then stresses that it is precisely in this regard that "the social teaching of the Church embodies its dimension of wisdom."¹⁸ At this point, Ratzinger refers to Paul VI, who in *Populorum progressio* pointed out that one of the causes of underdevelopment is a lack of wisdom which exceeds the useful but partial data of various sciences.¹⁹ The fragmentary nature of knowledge, the arbitrary rejection of theology as a partner in scientific dialogue is, according to Benedict XVI, harmful "since in such cases it is more difficult to see the whole good of man in the various dimensions that characterise them." It is, therefore, necessary to expand "the concept of reason and its use."²⁰ It is a task for ecclesiastical universities, not only in the sphere of social sciences but in all other matters that are the subject of academic research.

Pope Francis refers to *Caritas in veritate* in the Introduction to *Veritatis gaudium*. When addressing the issue of the wise dimension of cognition, he states emphatically:

It is where the mission entrusted to the system of ecclesiastical studies takes place. This precise and directing indication of the way not only explains the real,

¹⁴ See: Ł. Remisiewicz, *Teologia jako nauka formalna*, "Analiza i Egzystencja" 32 (2015), pp. 113–142.

¹⁵ See: K. & A. Zybortowiczowie, *Ciała i umysły*, "Sieci" 25 (2018), p. 98.

¹⁶ See: A. Lekka-Kowalik, *Kryteria racjonalności postępu naukowego: skuteczność czy mądrość*, [in:] *Společno-kulturowe konteksty racjonalności*, Z. Drozdowicz, S. Sztajer (eds.), Poznań 2012, pp. 13–25.

¹⁷ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate* 31.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ See: Paul VI, *Populorum progression* 40.

²⁰ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate* 31.

truthful meaning of the system of religious studies but also indicates, especially today, their real cultural and humanising meaning.²¹

In the above context, Francis points to the principle of interdisciplinarity understood not as mere multidisciplinary, but as a transdisciplinarity. In the Christian perspective, it appears as location and development of “all knowledge within the space of Light and Life offered by Wisdom that emanates from the Revelation of God.”²² Such openness to all dimensions of truth, a common search for it in all areas of knowledge, brings about the real *gaudium de veritate* of which Saint Augustine spoke. One could say that the importance of the ecclesiastical universities in the world of science lies in the constant pointing out of the joy of searching for the truth, not limited to some initial reduction assumptions.

Today, the attachment or the starting points for a joint search for the whole truth can be the Tertullian *anima naturaliter christiana* – the idea that the human soul is naturally Christian. Although it seems that the notion of nature has fallen into disgrace of the academics worldwide, it returns through ecology, i.e., the postulate of respecting nature and living in harmony with it. Church universities can take advantage of a kind of fashion for everything that is “ecological,” “natural,” but without being associated with ideological ecology. They ought to selectively treat matters of ethics and bioethics or those hostile to man and proclaim that a man is the most significant parasite on earth destroying the environment. Entering through someone else’s door, it may be possible, however, to leave through own door of integral ecology, which will put human nature linked to the rest of creation and yet irreducible to it as it is open to the supernatural Mystery, at the centre.

Models of the Church and the role of Catholic universities

As the name suggests, church universities grow out of the life of the Church and are to be closely connected with it. Thus, the assessment of their role and importance depends on the understanding of nature and mission of the Church. Let us, therefore, refer to Avery Dulles and his famous book *Models of*

²¹ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, no. 4c.

²² *Ibidem*.

the Church.²³ The American cardinal pointed to its five models: an institution, a mystical community, a sacrament, a hero (herald), and a servant. It is worth remembering that models are only models and rarely realise themselves in their pure form, and they undoubtedly simplify the reality they describe. However, they are useful as they allow us to perceive various aspects of reality better.

The model of the Church as an institution emphasises the visible structures of the Church, especially the ones of power and law. Ecclesiological institutionalism has developed as a reaction to the Reformation, which attacked the papacy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. For example, the first draft of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church prepared by the First Vatican Council, which states that the Church is a perfect community, stands above all other human societies and as such is not part of or a member of any of them, is vital for the “institutionalist” way of thinking. In the perspective of this model, religious high schools should be strong within themselves and, as far as possible, independent of external non-church structures institutions that explain, promote and defend Catholic teaching, while keeping a certain distance to the world and focusing on their own identity. It does not necessarily mean an incapacity for dialogue. Quite the contrary, since only strong beliefs allow establishing a real dialogue, to present one’s own and accept others’ arguments. Today, this becomes especially important in the context of proclaiming somewhat utopian omnipotence: you can be who you want to be. Such a view leads, in fact, to a loss of identity.

The second model indicated by Dulles is the Church as a mystical community. What unites the Church in the institutional model is the professing of the same doctrine, the importance of celebration of the sacraments, and obedience to the validly established shepherds, while in the community model it is above all the internal grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the first model, the Church is a benefactor to its members, with the mission to make those outside its institutional form members. In the community model, the concept of “member of the Church” is no longer clearly defined in juridical terms. The idea of “invisible membership” clearly emerges here. In this perspective, the role of an ecclesiastical university would be mainly to lead a diverse Catholic community, which would be part of an interfaith, interreligious, and intercultural community, towards the experience of a pluralistic community with God and other people. The transdisciplinarity, as above mentioned, seems to be in harmony with the mystical-community model. Let us also note that the

²³ See: A. Dulles, *Models of the Church*, New York 1978.

perspective of a “mystical community” is an invitation to cultivate a theology of spirituality as a response to spiritual hunger in lost societies.

One of the weaknesses of this model is the lack of clarity about the relationship between the spiritual and visible dimension of the Church, which in turn can lead to a weakened Catholic identity. Hence the efforts of the Second Vatican Council to integrate these two aspects. In *Lumen Gentium*, we read:

A community equipped with hierarchical organs and the Mystical Body of Christ, a visible congregation as well as a spiritual commonality, the earthly Church and the Church abundant in heavenly goods – cannot be understood as two separate things, but form one complex reality in which the human and divine elements grow together.²⁴

The institutional and community-mystical aspects are united to some extent in the sacramental Church model, which could be summarised as follows: Christ is the sacrament of God, the sign and at the same time the bearer and giver of God’s grace; in Him, the invisible grace takes on a visible form. However, as a sacrament, He wants to be visible to every human being in every generation, which is why he established the Church as a historically tangible sign of His salvific grace. Therefore, as a sacrament, the Church has two aspects: internal (grace) and external (institution). In this way, the sacramental model of the Church constitutes a bridge between the institutional and mystical-community model. It combines the need for the visible Church to exist with the action of invisible present grace, even beyond the visible boundaries of the Church as an institution. An ecclesiastical university, seen in the light of the above model, should combine the vision of an institution with a strong identity with the dimension of building a broad community of experience operating through and outside the institutions of grace. Furthermore, the religious school ought to continually purify itself and deepen itself to become a humble sign of the Wisdom that is revealed in the Word incarnate and that permeates the universe. One element of this being a sign is the quality of the university.

Another Dulles’ model describes the Church mainly as a hero (herald) and gives priority to the “word” over the “sacrament.” The Word of God constitutes the Church, and at the same time, its mission is to preach the Word. This kind of ecclesiology, which is especially close to the various currents of Protestantism, focuses on Jesus Christ and the Bible as the testimony of Christ. The promoter of this model, Karl Barth, stressed that the Church is not the owner of the

²⁴ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* 8.

Word, but something that is updated whenever the Word is proclaimed. Barth distinguishes between the theology of glory and the theology of the cross. The former takes place when the Church identifies itself with what is divine and points to itself as the owner of what it preaches. In Barth's view, this attitude is the primary sin of Catholicism. The Church should, according to the Protestant theologian, point beyond itself, at Christ and His Kingdom. The Second Vatican Council creatively took up some themes of the Protestant theology of the Word. In the Constitution *Dei verbum*, we read: "The Magisterium is not above the Word of God, but serves it by teaching what has been transmitted."²⁵ In the "Herold" model, the Church would be a sort of congregation. Every local part of it would be an entirely true Church if the Word of God occurs in it. It seems that in the light of this kind of ecclesiology, religious universities should not preach a strong concept of truth. For truth would be a point event, happening here and now, without the necessary continuity with other events. Moreover, a special place for it to appear would be the commitment to the poor.

The models of the Church presented so far, although they differ, they generally see its position as, in a sense privileged to the world. Here the Church is an active subject, whose object is a world in need of change. Nevertheless, since the Enlightenment, the world is becoming increasingly independent of the Church. In the face of the even greater secularisation, many people are emphasising that the Church is to get rid of exaggerated ambition for the world. It should not be above the world but should be its servant. Service is precisely the Church's mission.

The supporters of this model could refer to the Council Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, in which we read: "The Church is not guided by any earthly ambition, but pursues one goal (...) to continue the work of Christ, who came into the world to bear witness to the truth, to save, not to condemn; to serve, not to be served."²⁶ The Church should, therefore, watch the world and support the good, beautiful and just rather than criticize and condemn. In the model of servant, what unites the Church is not so much a common doctrine or sacraments shared but a sense of fraternity among those who undertake Christian service to the world (ecumenism of action). For the Church would be only one of the communities that contribute to building the Kingdom of God. In this perspective, ecclesiastical universities should follow what is happening in the world and support mainstream thinking and action, such as that proposed by the United Nations or the European Union.

²⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Dei verbum* 10.

²⁶ Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes* 3.

Five models of the Church by Avery Dulles are one of the possible proposals. Nonetheless, the question “what ecclesiastical universities?” implies the question “what ecclesiology?” The Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium* indicates, as already noted, that one of the tasks of the religious high schools is to “actively help – in conformity with its nature and in close connection with the hierarchy – both the particular churches and the universal Church in the whole work of evangelisation.” However, this task cannot be problematised without ecclesiological reflection. The problem, or perhaps the chance, is that today we have many different ecclesiologies.

In conclusion – quality

The need for quality has been mentioned above in the context of the Church and ecclesiastical universities understood as a sign of God’s grace and wisdom. Father Franco Imoda, a Jesuit, for many years the President of the Holy See’s Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of the Quality of Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (AVEPRO), has repeatedly addressed this issue. He entitled one of its conferences as “Quality as a Dimension of Ecclesiality.”²⁷

Father Imoda formulates the questions as follows: What is the relationship between quality and “being the Church” of ecclesiastical universities? How can the ecclesiastical dimension contribute to building quality? How can the process of evaluating and improving the quality of religious high schools be an expression of the very nature of the Church? In his search for an answer, the head of AVEPRO referred precisely to the models of the Church according to Dulles, and mainly to the sacramental model, that is, to the mutual correlation between the supernatural order and human (*res et sacramentum*). After all, one must avoid “monophysical” heresy and “Nestorian” heresy, namely, drowning in a purely spiritual perspective or blurring in the life of society.

Imoda notes that in *societas humana*, the elements related to quality include: achieving specific goals, using instruments, means, commitment, deeper motivation for work. In the case of a religious university, all this is important, but it cannot be reduced to function, technical utility, and effectiveness. It is about how – as an ecclesiastical university – to be the Church, i.e., a visible sign of invisible grace. In this perspective, following Father Imoda, the most relevant term for quality is “appropriateness in relation to purpose, mission.”

²⁷ F. Imoda, *La Qualità come dimensione della Ecclesialità*, “*Educatio Catholica*” 3 (2017), pp. 63–75.

The mission of the religious higher school is to be inscribed in the mission of the Church.

Imoda states that each university has such dimensions as the institution, service, community, system. The institution is organisation, means, and management. The service relates to authority, hierarchy, leadership. The community is belonging and motivation. The system refers to values, norms, law. A religious higher school is supposed to take care of the quality of these dimensions, thus referring them to similar dimensions of the Church. In this way, the quality will serve ecclesiality, and ecclesiality will build quality. The idea is that the authority of the university should be a service, not a domination, the means of the university not an end but indeed for more universal purposes, norms not only a rigid law but a spirit that expresses the most profound values, belonging not only to a community of individual interests but to an authentic, reciprocal sharing in community.

Quality understood in this way is one of the elements necessary for religious universities to be genuinely ecclesial and, as such, to effectively oppose the four harmful tendencies present in academic life as indicated by John Henry Newman: utilitarianism, fragmentation, secularism and rationalism.²⁸ Moreover, above all, to make them able to respond, as Pope Francis put it, “«to the great cultural, spiritual, and educational challenge, which means a long process of revival» also for universities and ecclesiastical faculties.”²⁹

References

- Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, Rome 2009.
- Benedict XVI, *Rozum, który kieruje się wiarą, wypełnia swoje powołanie*, a speech at the Ratzinger Prize award ceremony, 30 June 2011 https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt_xvi/przemowienia/nagroda_30062011.html [access: 21.07.2018].
- Bóg na uniwersytecie – po co? Debata „Ex Corde Ecclesiae,”* “Gość Niedzielny,” <https://lublin.gosc.pl/doc/3999667.Bog-na-uniwersytecie-po-co-Debata-Ex-Corde-Ecclesiae> [access: 21.07.2018].
- Domański J., *Patrystyczne postawy wobec dziedzictwa antycznego*, [in:] idem, *Philosophica. Paraphilosophica. Metaphilosophica. Studia i szkice z dziejów myśli dawnej*, Krakow 2008, pp. 174–203.
- Dulles A., *Models of the Church*, New York 1978.

²⁸ See: A. Dulles, *Newman’s Idea of a University: Still Relevant to Catholic Higher Education*, <https://newmansociety.org/newmans-idea-university-still-relevant-catholic-higher-education/> [access: 20.12.2019].

²⁹ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, introduction, 6.

- Dulles A., *Newman's Idea of a University: Still Relevant to Catholic Higher Education*, <https://newmansociety.org/newmans-idea-university-still-relevant-catholic-higher-education/> [access: 20.12.2019].
- Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, Vatican 2018.
- Frossard A., *Portret Jana Pawła II*, transl. M. Tarnowska, Krakow 1990.
- Imoda F., *La Qualità come dimensione della Ecclesialità*, "Educatio Catholica" 3 (2017), pp. 63–75.
- John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, Vatican 1998.
- John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Vatican 1990.
- Konstytucja Towarzystwa Jezusowego, Krakow–Warsaw 2001.
- Kowalska F., *Dzienniczek*, Krakow 2016.
- Lekka-Kowalik A., *Kryteria racjonalności postępu naukowego: skuteczność czy mądrość?*, [in:] *Společno-kulturowe konteksty racjonalności*, Z. Drozdowicz, S. Sztajer (eds.), Poznań 2012, pp. 13–25.
- Loyola I., Epist. Ign. VIII, 618, the letter of 30 May 1550, [in:] *Monumenta Ignatiana, ex autographis vel ex antiquioribus exemplis collecta. Series prima: Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Iesu fudantoris epistole et instructiones*, vol. 1, G. Lopez del Horno (ed.), Matriti 1903.
- Loyola I., *Ćwiczenia duchowne*, transl. M. Bednarz, Krakow 2002.
- Orygenes, *Filokalia*, transl. K. Augustyniak, Warsaw 1979.
- Paul VI, *Populorum progression*, Rome 1967.
- Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes*, Rome 1965.
- Possevino A., *De cultura ingeniorum*, Paris 1605.
- Remisiewicz Ł., *Teologia jako nauka formalna*, "Analiza i Egzystencja" 32 (2015), pp. 113–142.
- St Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* II, 40, 60, [in:] *Patrologia Latina* 34, 63.
- Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican 1964.
- Vatican Council II, *Dei verbum*, Vatican 1965.
- Zybertowiczowie A. & K., *Ciała i umysły*, "Sieci" 25 (2018), p. 98.

DARIUSZ KOWALCZYK (REV. PROF.) – born 1963 in Minsk Mazowiecki, Jesuit presbyter, in 2003–2009 Superior of the Warsaw Jesuit Province, Professor of dogmatic theology, since 2010 lecturer of theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, in 2013–2019 Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the same University. Permanent columnist of weekly magazines: "Idziemy" and "Gość Niedzielny." Recently he has published: *Czy Jezus mógł się przeziębic. Rozmowy o człowieczeństwie Boga* (Could Jesus Have Caught a Cold: Talks about the Humanity of God; 2015), *Między herezją a dogmatem* (Between Heresy and Dogma; 2015), *Kościół i fałszywi prorocy* (The Church and False Prophets; 2016).