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References to the Teaching of Benedict XVI in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis

Odniesienia do nauczania Benedykta XVI w adhortacji apostolskiej
Evangelii gaudium papieża Franciszka

ABSTRACT: This article analyses quotations from the teaching of Benedict XVI contained in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* of the Holy Father Francis (2013). The document includes 23 excerpts from Benedict XVI's teaching and one from Joseph Ratzinger's address; the most important ones were taken from the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (4 times). The aim of this article is to determine the contexts of these quotations in the Exhortation and to determine their meaning for the message of Pope Francis. It has been shown that the Exhortation contains references to Benedict XVI in all its main topics: the postulate of an authentic encounter with Christ in faith, the care for the poor people, the God made known to the man, Christ becoming poor for our enrichment, the principle of the being enlivened by the fire of the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God, the expansion of the Church "by attraction," "the service of charity," the courage to go out with the Gospel to the "peripheries," the poor people as the privileged recipients of the Gospel, the importance of the faith and the hope in Christian life, the docility to God's initiative, "the evangelizing power of popular piety," the importance of the "way of beauty" in the evangelization, the importance of the dialogue in the evangelization and the respect for religious freedom. The statements analysed in this article have shown that there is a consistency of the message between Benedict XVI and Francis concerning evangelization. The incumbent Pope not only quotes the teaching of Benedict XVI, but also creatively develops it, to match it to the needs of our times in which the Church fulfils the universal mission of the evangelization.

KEYWORDS: Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Deus Caritas Est*, Gospel, evangelization, joy

ABSTRAKT: W artykule przeanalizowano cytaty z nauczania papieża Benedykta XVI zawarte w adhortacji papieża Franciszka *Evangelii gaudium* (2013). Dokument zawiera

23 przytoczenia z nauczania Benedykta XVI oraz jedno z przemówienia Josepha Ratzingera. Najważniejsze z nich pochodzą z encykliki *Deus caritas est* (4 razy). Celem artykułu jest ustalenie kontekstów występowania w adhortacji cytatów z nauczania Benedykta XVI oraz określenie ich znaczenia dla treści zawartej w dokumencie papieża Franciszka. Ustalono, iż odniesienia do Benedykta XVI występują we wszystkich zasadniczych motywach adhortacji i dotyczą następujących tematów: postulat autentycznego spotkania z Chrystusem w wierze, troska o ubogich, Bóg dał się poznać człowiekowi, Chrystus stał się ubogim dla naszego ubogacenia, zasada ożywienia ogniem Ducha Świętego oraz Słowem Bożym, rozszerzanie się Kościoła „przez przyciąganie”, posługa miłości, odwaga wychodzenia z Ewangelią na peryferie, ubodzy uprzywilejowanymi adresatami Ewangelii, znaczenie wiary i nadziei w życiu chrześcijańskim, uległość inicjatywie Boga w dziele ewangelizacji, wartość pobożności ludowej, znaczenie „drogi piękna” w ewangelizacji, znaczenie dialogu w ewangelizacji oraz poszanowanie wolności religijnej. Badania doprowadziły do wniosku, że między Benedyktem XVI a Franciszkiem istnieje spójność przekazu w temacie ewangelizacji. Aktualny papież nie tylko cytuje nauczanie Benedykta XVI, lecz także twórczo je rozwija, zgodnie z duchem nowej epoki, w której Kościół wypełnia powszechną misję ewangelizacyjną.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: papież Benedict XVI, papież Franciszek, *Evangelii gaudium*, *Deus caritas est*, Ewangelia, ewangelizacja, radość

Introduction

The exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* was promulgated by Pope Francis on 24 November 2013.¹ It is the document that crowned the work of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelisation (Rome, 7–28 October 2012), which was convened by Benedict XVI. Earlier, Francis published the

¹ K. Panuś, *Zasada Pondus et ordo w adhortacji „Evangelii gaudium” i jej przesłanie dla kaznodziejstwa* [The Pondus et Ordo Principle in the Apostolic Exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium” and Its Message for Preaching], *Roczniki Teologiczne* 61/12 (2014), pp. 7–19; J. Wiemeyer, *Evangelii gaudium – das Programm eines Pontifikats*, *Die Neue Ordnung* 68/2 (2014), pp. 100–109; W. Śmigiel, *Priorytety pastoralne Kościoła w Polsce w świetle adhortacji apostolskiej „Evangelii gaudium”* [Pastoral Priorities of the Church in Poland in the Light of the Apostolic Exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium”], *Roczniki Teologiczne* 62/6 (2015), pp. 33–45; J. Bagrowicz, *Radość głoszenia Ewangelii: na marginesie katechetycznych wątków adhortacji „Evangelii gaudium” papieża Franciszka* [The Joy of Preaching the Gospel: On the Margins of the Catechetical Themes of Pope Francis’ Exhortation “Evangelii Gaudium”], *Studia Włocławskie* 17 (2015), pp. 237–250; K. Krämer, K. Vellguth (eds.), *„Evangelii gaudium”. Stimmen der Weltkirche*, Series: Theologie der einen Welt 7, Freiburg 2015; L. Szewczyk, *Głosiciel z Duchem. Rola Ducha Świętego w kaznodziejstwie według „Evangelii gaudium”* [Preacher with the Spirit. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Preaching according to “Evangelii Gaudium”], *Polonia Sacra* 23/3 (2019), pp. 57–70.

encyclical *Lumen Fidei* (29 June 2013), which was largely prepared by his predecessor.² Both documents contain various considerations of Benedict XVI, which were presented in a new form and implemented in the teaching of Pope Francis.³

This paper will focus on those statements from the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* that directly refer to the texts of Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger). Numerous other allusions and references to the thought of Pope Francis' predecessor can also be found in the document. An analysis of all these statements would be an extremely complex task, which a short article cannot cover. Therefore, given the broad context of Benedict XVI's considerations in *Evangelii Gaudium*, only direct quotations of Benedict XVI's texts will be included in this paper. Examining these statements may shed new light on a better understanding of Francis' message in this exhortation.

Evangelii Gaudium mostly contains references to the teaching of John Paul II; however, this exhortation includes quotations from the statements of John XXIII and Paul VI, as well as from numerous documents of the Church, statements by theologians and other authors. Pope Francis used those texts which he considered relevant to the teaching contained in the exhortation. At the same time, he has remained faithful to the demands made in the *Propositio*, which were of vital importance to the synodal fathers. The Pope also devotes much attention to the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean in Aparecida (13 May 2007), of which he was an active participant (as Archbishop of Buenos Aires).

The purpose of this article is to examine all the quotations from the teaching of Benedict XVI/Joseph Ratzinger contained in the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. These analyses will take into account the context of the quotations, the presentation of their content and the role they play in Pope Francis' message.

² "These considerations [...] are meant to supplement what Benedict XVI had written in his encyclical letters on charity and hope. He himself had almost completed a first draft of an encyclical on faith" (Francis, Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei*, 2013, no. 7, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html [access: 30.07.2023]).

³ Bernd Hagenkord refers to the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* as Pope Francis' program for Church reform, cf. B. Hagenkord, *Die Programmschrift zur Kirchenreform*, [in:] Papst Franziskus, *Die Freude des Evangeliums. Das Apostolische Scheiben "Evangelii gaudium" über die Verkündigung des Evangeliums in der Welt von heute*, Freiburg 2013, p. 11.

The article is divided into four sections. The initial three sections refer to the general content of the exhortation, and the last one summarises the analyses and presents the conclusions drawn from them.⁴

Mission of the Church

The motif of joy plays an important role in the Pope's teaching on the need to evangelise in the 21st century world.⁵ This can be seen not only in the title of the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (hereafter: EG), but also in its first sentences and in the wording of the introductory paragraph: "A joy ever new, a joy which is shared" (EG 2–8). Pope Francis, after pointing out the dangers lurking in the modern world (the spirit of consumerism giving rise to sadness), encourages the Christian "to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ" (EG 3). Here he refers to Paul VI's apostolic exhortation *Gaudete in Domino*: "No one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord." This conciliar pope made a distinction in his document between pleasure (derived from purely natural, even technological stimuli) and the joy that the Lord gives (no. 8).⁶ Francis also draws attention to this issue in his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

The call to joy and abiding in it is an essential experience in the Christian life and an essential disposition in the work of evangelisation. These are also fundamental values throughout Francis' ministry.

After quoting two fragments from Paul VI's exhortation, Pope Francis refers, at the end of the introductory paragraph, to the teaching of Benedict XVI, which inspired the formulation of the content of the exhortation. This is evidenced by Francis' personal confession: "I never tire of repeating those words of Benedict XVI which take us to the very heart of the Gospel: 'Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an

⁴ The exhortation is divided into five chapters, nevertheless the pope points to seven issues, which he sets out in more detail in the document (EG 17).

⁵ In calling for joy, the Pope refers to the very essence of the Gospel, which is the "joyful good news," cf. F.X. D'Sa, *Das Evangelium gaudii von Papst Franziskus*, [in:] „*Evangelii gaudium*“. *Stimmen der Weltkirche*, Series: Theologie der einen Welt 7, eds. K. Krämer, K. Vellguth, Freiburg 2015, p. 26.

⁶ Benedict XVI also recognised the need for the Church's teaching to adapt to a world living in constant economic development and technological innovation; see J. Kreiml, "Mitarbeiter der Wahrheit." *Theologische Grundüberzeugungen des Papstes Benedikt XVI.*, [in:] *Christliche Antworten auf die Fragen der Gegenwart. Grundlinien der Theologie Papst Benedikts XVI.*, ed. J. Kreiml, Regensburg 2015, pp. 12–34.

event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction” (EG 7).⁷ The Pope here introduces a quotation from the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.⁸ The theme of the encounter with the Person of Christ is taken up again by Francis when considering the reasons for the lack of joy among Christians, and which is due to the deficiencies of the human heart – weakened both in faith and in generosity and humility. Such a situation can arise when there is no authentic and direct encounter with Jesus Christ in the life of a Christian, that is, “which gives life a new horizon.”⁹ Referring to these words of Benedict XVI, Francis notes that such an encounter takes place in love and liberates people “from our narrowness and self-absorption” (EG 8), and at the same time enables man to reach the essence of his existence.¹⁰ Only such a transformation guarantees the fruitfulness of the commitment to the work of evangelisation (EG 8).

At the end of the introduction to the exhortation, Francis refers to the deliberations of the Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (2012) on the theme: “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” and presents the overall plan of the document (EG 14–18). Three principal settings of evangelisation recipients are mentioned here. Their identification is indicated based on the teaching of Benedict XVI:¹¹

1. The area of ordinary pastoral ministry, which is “animated by the fire of the Spirit, so as to inflame the hearts of the faithful who regularly take part in

⁷ The encounter with Christ is not only an encounter as with any other person, but above all it is a mystery encounter with the Son of God, which gives rise to joy and happiness, even though it also takes place on the way of the cross, cf. Benedict XVI, *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI at the Way of the Cross at the Colosseum (21 March 2008)*, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/march/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080321_via-crucis-colosseo.html [access: 30.07.2023].

⁸ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, 2005, no. 1, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html [access: 30.07.2023].

⁹ Benedict XVI instructed that the Christian, by receiving in faith the Body of the Lord, communicates in the most profound way with Jesus Christ, who grants man the fullness of life; for this see M.L. Haim, *Die Eucharistie als Lebensprinzip der Kirche*, Regensburg 2015, p. 54.

¹⁰ Kazimierz Panuś recalls an important principle: Christian doctrine is interpreted in relation to the person of Jesus Christ, cf. K. Panuś, *Zasada Pondus et ordo w adhortacji „Evangelii gaudium”...*, op. cit., p. 10.

¹¹ Benedict XVI, *Homily of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI at the Holy Mass for the Closing of the Synod of Bishops (28 October 2012)*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 104 (2012), p. 890, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20121028_conclusionone-sinodo.html [access: 31.07.2023].

community worship and gather on the Lord's day to be nourished by his word and by the bread of eternal life."¹²

2. The area of "the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism."¹³
3. The area of those "who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him."

No social group is outside the pastoral care of the Church. However, it is necessary to remember to respect the beliefs especially of those who are far from Christ. In line with the teaching of Benedict XVI, Pope Francis warns that proselytising should not be used, but that evangelisation should be extended "by attraction."¹⁴ While evangelisation includes all people, it takes into account the circumstances of the life of a particular person or social group.¹⁵

The Pope notes that the accomplishment of missionary work is a source of joy for the Church (cf. Luke 15:7), and postulates the need for a move "from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry" (EG 15).¹⁶

¹² The Eucharist also transforms people: "God, the living God, establishes a communion of peace with us, or to put it more strongly, he creates 'consanguinity' between himself and us. Through the incarnation of Jesus, through the outpouring of his blood, we have been drawn into an utterly real consanguinity with Jesus and thus with God himself," Benedict XVI, *Mass of the Lord's Supper. Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI (9 April 2009)*, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20090409_coena-domini.html [access: 31.07.2023].

¹³ In the relationship with the "others" (also in ecumenical dialogue), Benedict XVI encouraged "a way of enduring the thorn of being different," J. Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics. New Endeavors in Ecclesiology*, San Francisco, CA 1987, p. 137; cf. J. Szymik, *Theologia benedicta*, vol. 2, Katowice 2012, p. 309.

¹⁴ Benedict XVI, *Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI at the Holy Mass for the Inauguration of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, Aparecida, Brazil (13 May 2007)*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 99 (2007), p. 437, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070513_conference-brazil.html [access: 5.08.2023].

¹⁵ The principle of "attraction" is based on the enthusiastic faith of Christians, those who confess that "His Resurrection has formed a bridge between the world and eternal life over which every man and every woman can cross to reach the true goal of our earthly pilgrimage" (Benedict XVI, *Regina Caeli (13 April 2009)*, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/angelus/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_reg_20090413_easter-monday.html [access: 5.08.2023]).

¹⁶ The Pope indicates the necessity of a "pastoral conversion" not to be stuck only in a pastoral routine, but to be open to the new challenges of the world around us (EG 49), cf. W. Śmigiel, *Priorytety pastoralne Kościoła w Polsce...*, op. cit., p. 40.

With these observations in mind, Francis, in the first chapter of the exhortation, points to a process of “the Church’s missionary transformation” (EG 19–49). Analysing the tasks of the particular Church in this area, the Pope notes that:

It is the Church incarnate in a certain place, equipped with all the means of salvation bestowed by Christ, but with local features. Its joy in communicating Jesus Christ is expressed both by a concern to preach him to areas in greater need and in constantly going forth to the outskirts of its own territory or towards new sociocultural settings (EG 30).

Francis is referring here to Benedict XVI’s address to the participants of the international congress on the 40th anniversary of the decree *Ad Gentes*. The then Pope instructed that the Church, as a community of salvation, must follow the same path as Christ, that is, in poverty, obedience, service, sacrifice of self until death, which leads to victory.¹⁷ The life of a Christian must therefore be extremely expressive, this is a necessary condition for a missionary outreach to the periphery (outside the centres of Christian life) to be fruitful.¹⁸ Francis expresses his concern that there should be no lack of witnesses to “the light and life of the Risen Christ” anywhere in the world (EG 30).

In the final part of the first chapter, Francis compares the Church to a Mother with an open heart (EG 46–49). His reflection also refers to the addressees of missionary work, who are above all the poor (cf. Luke 14:14). Making the theme more specific, he cites the words of Pope Benedict XVI at a meeting with the Episcopate of Brazil: “the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel.”¹⁹ Considering the plight of the poor, learning about their lives and

¹⁷ Cf. Benedict XVI, *Address to the Participants in the International Congress on the 40th Anniversary of the Decree “Ad Gentes”* (11 March 2006), “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 98 (2006), p. 337, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/march/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060311_ad-gentes.html [access: 5.08.2023].

¹⁸ Instead, Benedict XVI points out that the enthusiasm of missionary commitment is drawn by Christians from the Pascha of Christ: “The sending of the disciples on mission is the beginning of the journey in the world of the people of the New Covenant, a people who believe in him and in his work of salvation, a people who witness to the truth of the Resurrection,” Benedict XVI, *Catechesis during the General Audience* (11 April 2012), https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20120411.html [access: 5.08.2023].

¹⁹ Benedict XVI, *Address to the Brazilian Bishops in the Cathedral of São Paulo, Brazil* (11 May 2007), “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 99 (2007), p. 428, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/may/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070511_bishops-brazil.html [access: 5.08.2023].

problems, the Church becomes a safe haven for every person and a privileged place for the encounter of man with God. Francis points to the situation of the local Churches in India and Argentina and stresses that, although battered and dirty at times, the Church is not “caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures” (EG 49). Poor people are not a problem for the Church, but a precious part of it.²⁰

Evangelisation in the contemporary world

In the second chapter of the exhortation (EG 50–109), Pope Francis considers the theme of the crisis of community commitment. He analyses this problem from the perspective of “evangelical discernment” and the need to be “nourished by the light and strength of the Holy Spirit” (EG 50). After analysing some of the “challenges of today’s world” (EG 52–75), Francis points out the temptations that can threaten pastoral activity (EG 76–109). In this chapter, the Pope does not refer to the teaching of Benedict XVI, but he recalls the words of Joseph Ratzinger delivered at a conference during the meeting of the Presidents of the Latin American Bishops’ Commission on the Doctrine of the Faith.

Pope Francis uses the quotation from Joseph Ratzinger’s in order to stigmatise the egoistic attitude of “pastoral acedia” (EG 81–83), that is, apathy and indifference in pastoral commitment. Acedia occurs especially when a person acts without being inwardly imbued with spiritual values and is filled with fears of failure, criticism and the cross. This phenomenon was just described by Joseph Ratzinger during the aforementioned conference: “the gray pragmatism of the daily life of the Church in which everything apparently continues normally but in reality the faith is being consumed and falling into meanness.”²¹ The opinion expressed by the Cardinal contains extremely blunt words that touch the very essence of Christianity, namely faith. Joseph Ratzinger has in mind here the faith that was described in the experience of the first Christians (New Testament). In contrast, a faith that exhausts itself ceases to be actually a Christian faith and

²⁰ Benedict XVI states: “the Church as a whole must never forget that she has to remain recognizably the community of God’s poor” (J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth. From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, New York 2007, p. 77).

²¹ J. Ratzinger, *The Current Situation of Faith and Theology. Meeting with the Doctrinal Commissions of Latin America (Guadalajara, Mexico, 7 May 1996)*, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/incontri/rc_con_cfaith_19960507_guadalajara-ratzinger_en.html [access: 26.09.2023].

falling into “meanness,” i.e. into something worthless.²² Pope Francis, referring to these observations, calls such an attitude very bluntly: “A tomb psychology thus develops and slowly transforms Christians into mummies in a museum” (EG 83).²³ With the loss of faith, hope also dies, resulting in a weakening of apostolic dynamism and the joy of evangelisation.²⁴

Pope Francis argues against an arid pessimism in the work of evangelisation (EG 84–86). He notes that in some places in the world there has been a “desertification” of spiritual life. Nevertheless, this “desert” can become a place for the radiation of faith (EG 86). In this context, the Pope recalls the teaching of Benedict XVI:

it is starting from the experience of this desert, from this void, that we can again discover the joy of believing, its vital importance for us men and women. In the desert we rediscover the value of what is essential for living; thus in today's world there are innumerable signs, often expressed implicitly or negatively, of the thirst for God, for the ultimate meaning of life. And in the desert people of faith are needed who, by the example of their own lives, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive.²⁵

Pope Francis, aware of the challenges facing the contemporary Church, appeals: “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigour!” (EG 109) and takes up the theme of preaching the Gospel in the third chapter (EG 110–175). This task is the responsibility of the whole people of God (EG 111–134). At the outset, Francis justifies the grounds for such a commitment. First of all,

²² Benedict XVI, aware of the changes taking place in the modern world, encouraged young people to be its witnesses in the digital world; for this, see J. Kreiml, *Denkanstöße Johannes Paulus II. und Benedikts XVI. Zum Welttag der sozialen Kommunikationsmittel*, [in:] *Konzil und Medien. Über den Glauben reden in einer veränderten Welt*, eds. V. Neumann, J. Kreim, Regensburg 2013, pp. 71–90.

²³ J. Ratzinger's diagnosis is applied by Francis above all to the situation of the Church communities living north of the Alps and especially in Germany, cf. K. Vellguth, “*Unerhörte und ungehörte Worte zu den Herausforderungen an Welt und Kirche*,” [in:] „*Evangelii gaudium*“. *Stimmen der Weltkirche*, Series: Theologie der einen Welt 7, eds. K. Krämer, K. Vellguth, Freiburg 2015, p. 125.

²⁴ In such an environment, there is no possibility for growth in faith and its ongoing deepening, cf. E. Fitzgerald, *Kritische Missionare suchen und teilen die Freude von Leben in Fülle*, [in:] „*Evangelii gaudium*“. *Stimmen der Weltkirche*, Series: Theologie der einen Welt 7, eds. K. Krämer, K. Vellguth, Freiburg 2015, p. 103.

²⁵ Benedict XVI, *Homily at Mass for the Opening of the Year of Faith (11 October 2012)*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 104 (2012), p. 881, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2012/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20121011_anno-fede.html [access: 30.07.2023].

it stems from the initiative of God Himself, who has revealed Himself in the Trinity and has granted salvation, which is a work of His mercy (EG 111–112).²⁶ The commitment to evangelisation is man's response to this gift. This truth is further illuminated by another quote from the teaching of Benedict XVI:

It is important always to know that the first word, the true initiative, the true activity comes from God and only by inserting ourselves into the divine initiative, only begging for this divine initiative, shall we too be able to become – with him and in him – evangelizers.²⁷

The theme of faith also shines through in this statement, which continually directs man towards God and His work. Faith empowers a personal and fruitful relationship with God, who is rich in grace. Pope Francis concludes these reflections by stating: “This principle of the primacy of grace must be a beacon which constantly illuminates our reflections on evangelization” (EG 112).

Pope Francis also understands the work of evangelisation as a process of inculturation (EG 122). It is therefore about respecting the cultural traditions of the different regions of the world. The people of God globally possess a great wealth of diverse expressions of Christian truths. Their value was already pointed out by Pope Paul VI in the exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. In this context of Francis' teaching, there is another reference in the exhortation to Benedict XVI: “Closer to our own time, Benedict XVI, speaking about Latin America, pointed out that popular piety is ‘a precious treasure of the Catholic Church,’ in which ‘we see the soul of the Latin American peoples.’”²⁸ It is significant that both the universal aspect (the Catholic Church) and the particular aspect (the peoples of Latin America) appear in Benedict XVI's statement. Regardless of where believers live, therefore, they are all part of the universal Church, and in the universal Church there is room for all world cultures. Pope

²⁶ Mercy is a leitmotif in the Pope's message on evangelisation and the Christian life, P. Suess, *Das Evangelium von Gottes Barmherzigkeit verkünden*, [in:] „*Evangelii gaudium*“. *Stimmen der Weltkirche*, Series: Theologie der einen Welt 7, eds. K. Krämer, K. Vellguth, Freiburg 2015, p. 166.

²⁷ Benedict XVI, *Meditation during the First General Congregation of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (8 October 2012)*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 104 (2012), p. 897, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121008_meditazione-sinodo.html [access: 30.07.2023].

²⁸ Benedict XVI, *Opening Address of the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops (13 May 2007)*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 99 (2007), pp. 446–447, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20070513_conference-brazil.html [access: 30.07.2023].

Francis also emphasises here the value that popular piety brings with it, which is an important force in the work of evangelisation.

In the next section of the exhortation, Francis points out the role played by evangelisation in the work of deepening the kerygma (which is always Trinitarian in character), that is, in the work of the fundamental preaching of the Church (EG 160–175). It is the kerygma that is the constant inspiration of all Christian formation. It must permeate the catechetical process – also in its initiatory, mystagogical aspect.²⁹ This essential process of growing in the life of faith is also the “way of beauty” (*via pulchritudinis*), according to the words of St Augustine: we love only what is beautiful (EG 167).³⁰ This has important consequences in the transmission of the faith, not least in the use of the new “language of parables.” This formulation was taken by Francis from Benedict XVI’s speech after the film project “‘Art and Faith’ – *Via Pulchritudinis*.”³¹ Pope Francis’ predecessor paid much attention to the importance of parables in the teaching of Jesus in the famous trilogy *Jesus of Nazareth*, in which he writes:

the parables are ultimately an expression of God’s hiddenness in this world and of the fact that knowledge of God always lays claim to the whole person – that such knowledge is one with life itself, and that it cannot exist without “repentance.” For in this world, marked by sin, the gravitational pull of our lives is weighted by the chains of the “I” and the “self.” These chains must be broken to free us for a new love that places us in another gravitational field where we can enter new life.³²

Benedict XVI sees an opportunity in evangelisation today precisely by using the “language of parables.”³³ This means using a language full of comparisons, metaphors and even resorting to re-enactments or screen adaptations. However,

²⁹ The mystagogical renewal is a return to early Christian sources and an avoidance of purely moralistic forms of preaching, cf. J. Bagrowicz, *Radość głoszenia Ewangelii...*, op. cit., p. 249.

³⁰ St Augustine, *De musica*, VI, XIII, 38 (PL 32, 1183–1184); St Augustine, *Confessiones*, IV, XIII, 20 (PL 32, 701).

³¹ Benedict XVI, *Address for the Screening of the Documentary “Art and Faith” – Via Pulchritudinis (25 October 2012)*, “L’Osservatore Romano” October 27 (2012), p. 7, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121025_arte-fede.html [access: 30.07.2023].

³² J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth...*, op. cit., pp. 193–194.

³³ In his teaching, Benedict XVI was able to combine the achievements of the work of exegetes and systematic theologians and creatively rework them, cf. W. Keller, *Dogmatische Postulate versus Exegese. Zum Umgang mit den Erkenntnissen historisch-kritischer Biblexegese in den Angelus-Ansprachen Benedikts XVI.*, [in:] *Altes und Neues hervorholen*

at the heart of these efforts must be the work of communicating gospel content. The *via pulchritudinis* is therefore an essential way of proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ. Francis is equally unequivocal on this subject: “We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word, and different forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings” (EG 167).

At the end of the third chapter, Francis emphasises the centrality of the Word of God in the evangelisation process (EG 174). Here he formulates the fundamental principle of the work of evangelisation: “we need to be constantly trained in hearing the word. The Church does not evangelize unless she constantly lets herself be evangelized” (EG 174). In this theme, there are particularly many references to the teaching of Benedict XVI, especially the apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* (hereafter: VD). The first quotation deals explicitly with the importance of the Word of God in the life of the Church:

In this way I wish to point out certain fundamental approaches to a rediscovery of God’s word in the life of the Church as a wellspring of constant renewal. At the same time I express my hope that the word will be ever more fully at the heart of every ecclesial activity. That our joy may be complete (VD 1).

Benedict XVI points to the intrinsic link that exists between the practice of preaching the Word of God and the joy that is its fruit (of preaching). It is this principle that underpinned the message of Pope Francis in his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. Listening to and celebrating the Word of God makes the believer capable of being an authentic witness to the Gospel in daily life (EG 174).

The study of Scripture should be practised in the life of all Christians. This has already been emphasised by the Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation *Dei Verbum* (nos. 86–87). Referring again to the text of *Verbum Domini*, Francis states: “Evangelization demands familiarity with God’s word, which calls for dioceses, parishes and Catholic associations to provide for a serious, ongoing study of the Bible, while encouraging its prayerful individual and communal reading” (EG 175). Benedict XVI emphasises the value of prayerful reading of Scripture and the use of the practice of *lectio divina*. He does, however, make a caveat in this regard:

(Mt 13,42). *Debatten zur Bibel in Theologie und Kirche*, eds. G. Häfner, F.R. Prostmeier, T. Schumacher, Stuttgart 2022, pp. 422–423.

In this regard, however, one must avoid the risk of an individualistic approach, and remember that God's word is given to us precisely to build communion, to unite us in the Truth along our path to God. While it is a word addressed to each of us personally, it is also a word which builds community, which builds the Church. Consequently, the sacred text must always be approached in the communion of the Church (VD 86).

Such an attitude guarantees an authentic contact of the believer with the design of God, and is therefore a life-giving feeding of personal truth.

Pope Francis concludes this chapter with a thought in the form of an exhortation: "Let us receive the sublime treasure of the revealed word" (EG 175). This treasure is available to all believers. Thanks to it, man does not experience a lack of knowledge of the essentials, which cannot be gained through purely rational and natural efforts. In this context, Francis once again refers to the teaching of Benedict XVI: "God has already spoken, and there is nothing further that we need to know, which has not been revealed to us."³⁴ This phrase is also developed in the exhortation *Verbum Domini*: "life itself was made manifest in Christ. Called to communion with God and among ourselves, we must proclaim this gift" (VD 2). Benedict XVI emphasises above all the fact of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which was definitive in the history of salvation (cf. 1 John 1:2–3).

Social impact

In the fourth chapter of the exhortation, Francis addresses the social dimension of evangelisation (EG 176–258). As the Pope rightly observes: "The kerygma has a clear social content" (EG 177). In the first point, Francis touches on the essence of the topic under consideration and points to the communal and societal repercussions of the kerygma (EG 178–185). The Pope starts from the premise that every human being is endowed with an infinite dignity because God loves all men and women with an infinite love.³⁵ This fact has both individual and

³⁴ Benedict XVI, *Address during the First General Congregation of the Synod of Bishops (8 October 2012)*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 104 (2012), p. 896, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121008_meditazione-sinodo.html [access: 30.07.2023].

³⁵ The motif of the promise of salvation runs through the entire narrative of the Old and New Testaments, cf. A.S. Jasiński, *Trwałość i ostateczne zbawienie Izraela w prorocत्वach Starego Testamentu* [The Permanence and Final Salvation of Israel in the Prophecies of

social significance (healing of human relationships). In Christian practice, the desire for the good of others is “a primary and fundamental response” (EG 178).

After presenting the Scripture-based argumentation of the above principles, the Pope cites an important thought of Benedict XVI: “the service of charity is also a constituent element of the Church’s mission and an indispensable expression of her very being.”³⁶ This is an excerpt from an apostolic letter with Benedict XVI’s fundamental statement taken from the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*: “The Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God (*kerygma-martyria*), celebrating the sacraments (*leitourgia*), and exercising the ministry of charity (*diakonia*). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable” (no. 25). There is thus a reference to the three responsibilities of the Church, which are significantly complemented by “the service of charity” to which every baptised person is called. It is thus about the mission (of charity), which is also of vital importance in the work of evangelisation.³⁷

Francis draws practical conclusions from the Church’s teaching on social questions (EG 182–184). A man of faith cannot hide his convictions and lock them up in “the inner sanctum of personal life” (EG 183). Christians (like St Francis or St Teresa of Calcutta) wanted to change the world and committed themselves to this work. Referring in turn to the universal dimensions, Francis emphasises that the earth is a common good, so Christians must be concerned with building a better world, without, however, replacing politicians in this task. In this context, Francis recalls the teaching of Benedict XVI in the form of two quotations from the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*. The first concerns a fundamental principle concerning the duties of lay authority: “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics” (EG 28). By failing to fulfil this duty, the state becomes a “gang of thieves.” In addition, it is the task of the state to guarantee religious freedom for all inhabitants. The second quotation from the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* already relates directly to the message of Francis’ exhortation: the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice” (EG 183). Although the Church does not take the place of state authority, she does have at her disposal an important

the Old Testament], [in:] *Izrael i Biblia hebrajska w Nowym Testamencie* [Israel and the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament], ed. K. Ziąja, Opole 2003, p. 19.

³⁶ Benedict XVI, *Motu Proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura* (11 November 2012), “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 104 (2012), p. 996, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20121111_caritas.html [access: 30.07.2023].

³⁷ The attitude of love and mercy reveals the truth that constitutes the foundation of Christianity is revealed, cf. J. Ratzinger, *Glaube, Wahrheit, Toleranz. Das Christentum und die Weltreligionen*, Freiburg 2003, pp. 175–184.

weapon in the work of the struggle for justice, and this is, as Benedict XVI instructs, reasoned argumentation and the stimulation of spiritual forces, i.e. the creation of attitudes that will guarantee the just conduct of members of society.³⁸

In the second point, Francis calls for the inclusion of the poor in society (EG 186–216). The Pope reminds us that all believers are called to be God's instrument in the work of liberation and promotion of the poor in order to integrate them fully into society. Christians should be guided by the principle of social solidarity (EG 187). Expanding on this theme, Francis recalls the privileged place of the poor in God's people (EG 197–201). The Pope quotes Scripture on this theme (EG 197) and recalls the "option for the poor," which belongs primarily to a theological category, as Benedict XVI, quoted in this context, instructed: "[This option] is implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty."³⁹ We already read this Christological truth in the text of 2 Cor 8:9. Benedict XVI instructs on it in the context of the question of the meaning of faith in the God who has shown his love in Christ. This divine love has given humanity a family of universal dimensions (the Church), thus liberating it from egoism. In God we meet in every human being. This gives rise to solidarity and responsibility for another. The option for the poor is thus inscribed "in our Christian faith." Pope Francis concludes this theme with the statement, often repeated by himself: "This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor" (EG 198).

Addressing issues of "the economy and the distribution of income" (EG 202–208), Francis emphasises that this is also the great task of politicians who, despite the bad aura (surrounding them), are called to "a lofty vocation": concern for the common good. Such concern is a manifestation of the highest forms of charity. The Pope notes that the problem of poverty can be addressed effectively by making a structural effort to remove the causes of the situation, that is, to cure the disease, rather than taking only short-term steps. In this argument, Francis refers to Benedict XVI's address to the diplomatic corps, which included an

³⁸ The papal encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* was published at the beginning of the new millennium and reminds believers and all people of good will that God is and will be present with us (in the world) in the gift of love, cf. C. Binniger, "Deus caritas est". *Versuch einer Entfaltung und Ausdeutung der theologischen Grundaussagen der ersten Enzyklika von Benedikt XVI.*, [in:] *Christliche Antworten auf die Fragen der Gegenwart Grundlinien der Theologie Papst Benedikts XVI.*, ed. J. Kreiml, Regensburg 2010, p. 185.

³⁹ The poor and poverty are theological categories that significantly orient the Christian life towards the truth, cf. O.C. Vélez Caro, *Eine unabdingbare Weichenstellung*, [in:] „*Evangelii gaudium*“. *Stimmen der Weltkirche*, Series: Theologie der einen Welt 7, eds. K. Krämer, K. Vellguth, Freiburg 2015, p. 273.

appeal to “eliminate the structural causes of global economic dysfunction.”⁴⁰ This task stems from concern for all those who suffer life-threatening deprivations: lack of water and food. It is particularly tragic that these shortages also affect children, who thus have no opportunity for proper development.

Concluding with the thought of a structural approach to solving world poverty, Francis points out: “Inequality is the root of social ills” (EG 202).

In order to further illuminate the above points, the Pope cites the teaching of Benedict XVI: “[love] is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones)” (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 2). In the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI reminds us that love is the greatest gift of God given to humanity (cf. 1 John 4:8, 16).⁴¹ At the same time, he warns against misunderstanding love and excluding ethical content from it, thus removing it from the order of truth. With this teaching in mind, Francis completes his thoughts in the form of a prayer: “I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor!” (EG 205). The Pope values the role of politicians on the economic level. They are indispensable in this mission, but he encourages those responsible to submit to God’s inspiration.

In the last point of the fourth section, Francis emphasises the necessity of “social dialogue as a contribution to peace” (EG 238–258). Social dialogue (alongside dialogue with the State and in the ecumenical field) is one of the Church’s essential duties. It is only realised when “the Church speaks from the light which faith offers.” This principle was recalled by Benedict XVI in his address to the Roman Curia.⁴² He also reminds us that the Church also preserves the human memory, which contains a great variety of experiences due to the limitations (suffering) and, at the same time, the greatness of man. In dialogue, therefore, both fidelity to God and to man are preserved. Referring to these thoughts, Francis concludes:

⁴⁰ Benedict XVI, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps (8 January 2007)*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 99 (2007), p. 73, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070108_diplomatic-corps.html [access: 30.07.2023].

⁴¹ “Since God has first loved us (cf. 1 Jn 4:10), love is now no longer a mere ‘command’; it is the response to the gift of love with which God draws near to us” (Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 1).

⁴² Benedict XVI, *Address to the Roman Curia (21 December 2012)*, “Acta Apostolicae Sedis” 105 (2013), p. 51, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121221_auguri-curia.html [access: 30.07.2023].

[the Church] contribut[es] her two-thousand-year experience and keep[s] ever in mind the life and sufferings of human beings. This light transcends human reason, yet it can also prove meaningful and enriching to those who are not believers and it stimulates reason to broaden its perspectives (EG 238).

The Church proclaims first and foremost “the Gospel of peace” (Eph 6:15), and therefore any dialogue carried out at various levels must be in close connection with this task of the Church. Peace is a good in universal dimensions.

Francis considers different forms of dialogue of the Church:⁴³ 1. Dialogue between faith, reason and science. 2. Ecumenical dialogue. 3. Relations with Judaism. 4. Interreligious dialogue. 5. Social dialogue in the context of religious freedom.

Referring to interreligious dialogue, the Pope points out that it is not a matter of “a diplomatic openness” that agrees with everything for the sake of avoiding problems, hence he states: “[...] for this would be a way of deceiving others and denying them the good which we have been given to share generously with others. Evangelization and interreligious dialogue, far from being opposed, mutually support and nourish one another” (EG 251). These important issues were already addressed by Benedict XVI in his address to the Roman Curia. An important principle of dialogue was also mentioned here, which states the necessity of gradually arriving at the expected solutions. This is a long process because the Church does not have ready-made prescriptions for specific issues. The fruit of dialogue can be important findings that must be followed by concrete actions. Pope Francis also emphasises the importance of dialogue with the followers of Islam, especially with those who now live in traditionally Christian countries. Mutual understanding and tolerance make possible the social integration of expatriates into the local population.

Francis also addressed (in the context of the dialogue) the issue of religious freedom – as recommended by the Synod Fathers (EG 255–258). This issue touches on fundamental human rights. The Pope already refers at the outset to the teaching of Benedict XVI, who emphasises that these rights include “the freedom to choose the religion which one judges to be true and to manifest

⁴³ Benedict XVI instructs that interreligious dialogue should take place in a spirit of truth-seeking; for Christians, this is the path leading to Christ; M. Stickelbroeck, *Christus und die Religionen. Der Anspruch der christlichen Offenbarung in Hinblick auf die Religionen der Welt*, [in:] *Christliche Antworten auf die Fragen der Gegenwart. Grundlinien der Theologie Papst Benedikts XVI.*, ed. J. Kreiml, Regensburg 2015, pp. 102–103.

one's beliefs in public."⁴⁴ Faith plays a fundamental role in Christian life.⁴⁵ This is a teaching already present in the conciliar declaration on religious freedom *Dignitatis Humanae*. Benedict XVI repeatedly mentions it.⁴⁶ He also reminds us that "religious freedom is rooted in the very dignity of the human person" and is "the path to peace."⁴⁷ Pope Francis, on the other hand, instructs that religious pluralism "does not entail privatizing religions in an attempt [...] to relegate them to the enclosed precincts of churches, synagogues or mosques" without the possibility of influence in the public sphere (EG 255).

In the last chapter of the exhortation, Francis points out the need for all evangelisers to be Spirit-filled⁴⁸ (EG 259–288).⁴⁹ The Pope thus goes back in thought to the beginning of the Church's history, which was the granting of the "Power from above" to the Apostles at Pentecost. Analysing the inner dispositions of evangelisers, Francis points to the necessity of the "personal encounter with the saving love of Jesus" (EG 264–267) and then instructs on

⁴⁴ Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 26, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20120914_ecclesia-in-medio-oriente.html [access: 30.07.2023].

⁴⁵ The Christian faith is centred on the person of Jesus Christ and gives rise to the hope of eternal life. Its manifestation is of vital importance for the future of humanity; cf. R. Vorderholzer, "Spe salvi" – eine zu Unrecht fast vergessene Enzyklika, [in:] *Christliche Antworten auf die Fragen der Gegenwart. Grundlinien der Theologie Papst Benedikts XVI.*, ed. J. Kreiml, Regensburg 2015, p. 207.

⁴⁶ Benedict XVI, *Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace (8 December 2010)*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 103 (2011), pp. 46–58, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20101208_xliv-world-day-peace.html; Benedict XVI, *Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps (10 January 2011)*, "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 103 (2011), pp. 100–107, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110110_diplomatic-corps.html [access: 30.07.2023].

⁴⁷ "Religious freedom, the path to peace," with these words, Pope Benedict XVI begins his message for the World Day of Peace (2011).

⁴⁸ Leszek Szewczyk notes: "In the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* there is an encouragement to proclaim the truth about the Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son, who transforms human hearts and makes them capable of entering into the perfect communion of the Most Holy Trinity, where everything finds its unity. It is the Holy Spirit, being the harmony and bond of love between the Father and the Son, who creates the communion and harmony of the People of God. He is also the one who awakens in the Church the richness of the gifts and builds unity (EG 117)" (L. Szewczyk, *Głosiciel z Duchem...*, op. cit., p. 60).

⁴⁹ The fifth chapter of the exhortation summarises Francis' reflections to date and emphasises the need to revitalise the Christian life with the Holy Spirit, cf. B. Hagenkord, *Die Programmschrift zur Kirchenreform*, op. cit., p. 28.

the “spiritual savour of being a people” of God (EG 268–274). Abiding with Jesus (also with his cross) allows the believer to integrate fruitfully into society, sharing its joys and sorrows. One cannot distance oneself from “human misery” (EG 270). After quoting Scripture to support these principles (EG 271), Francis points out the essence of the Christian’s social life: “Loving others is a spiritual force drawing us to union with God; indeed, one who does not love others ‘walks in the darkness’ (1 Jn 2:11), ‘remains in death’ (1 Jn 3:14) and ‘does not know God’ (1 Jn 4:8)” (EG 272). John’s teaching on love is also the starting point of Benedict XVI’s encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (cf. 1 John 4:6). This document is also referred to by Francis, who continues his own teaching on this theme: “Benedict XVI has said that ‘closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God,’ and that love is, in the end, the only light which ‘can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working’” (EG 272).⁵⁰ The first quotation is from paragraph 16 of *Deus Caritas Est*. Here Benedict XVI considers the theme of God’s love for man. He concludes his analysis of John’s statement: “If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen (1 Jn 4:20).” Love of neighbour, then, is the way to encounter God.

The second quotation is from paragraph 39 of *Deus Caritas Est*, which is an excerpt from Benedict XVI’s reflections on the specific profile of the Church’s charitable activity. Christians should above all be animated by faith, hope and charity, which are inseparable. To conclude these reflections, Benedict XVI reminds us that charity is the light that illuminates the darkness of the world and gives courage to live and act. Every believer must have a part in this process, so the Pope concludes: “Love is possible, and we are able to practise it because we are created in the image of God. To experience love and in this way to cause the light of God to enter into the world – this is the invitation I would like to extend with the present Encyclical” (*Deus Caritas Est* 39).⁵¹ This sentence expresses Benedict XVI’s intention in writing this encyclical. His teaching is continued

⁵⁰ Christianity is an affirmation of life, and therefore faith is directed towards it, which indeed affirms life at all levels, including the social level, cf. J. Ratzinger, *Eschatologia. Śmierć i życie wieczne* [Eschatology. Death and Eternal Life], transl. M. Węclawski, Poznań 1984, p. 118.

⁵¹ Christian love presupposes purity and unselfishness and is the best witness to God who is love (1 John 4:8), cf. J. Tonkowicz, *Ideal życia chrześcijańskiego w encyklikach Benedykta XVI: „Deus caritas est” i „Spe salvi” oraz Franciszka „Lumen fidei” (aspekt biblijny)* [The Ideal of Christian Life in Benedict XVI’s Encyclicals: “Deus Caritas Est” and “Spe Salvi” and Francis’ “Lumen Fidei” (Biblical Aspect)], Opole [s.n.]: 2018, p. 140.

by Pope Francis, who takes a special interest in the defence of the weak, the poor, those in need, including refugees. Service to man is service to God.

After the previous two references to the teaching of Benedict XVI, Pope Francis reveals the depths of the Christian's social life:

When we live out a spirituality of drawing nearer to others and seeking their welfare, our hearts are opened wide to the Lord's greatest and most beautiful gifts. Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and knowledge of God (EG 272).⁵²

It is characteristic that this social dimension of Christian love has been strongly emphasised by both Popes in various documents. Undoubtedly, the intention is to draw the attention of the readers (addressees) to the most important aspect of Christian life, which is realised at all levels of social life. Benedict XVI instructs on Christian love in all its aspects, while Francis emphasises the role it plays in the work of proclaiming the Gospel in today's world.

Summary

In the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis directly refers twenty-three times to the teaching of Benedict XVI and once to a statement of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. The Pope makes the most frequent use of the encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* (four times). This is followed by quotations from: the opening address of the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (three times), the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* (twice), the homily given at Mass at the close of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (twice), the address to the Roman Curia (twice), encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (once), the address to the participants in the International Congress on the 40th anniversary of the decree *Ad Gentes* (once), the address on the occasion of the meeting with the Brazilian Bishops in the Cathedral of São Paulo, Brazil (once), the homily at Mass for the opening of the Year of Faith (once), meditation during the First General

⁵² The Spirit works in man not only in his immanence, but also in his encounter with others, B.J. Hilberath, *Perspektiven eines Charismatikers*, [in:] „*Evangelii gaudium*“. *Stimmen der Weltkirche*, Series: Theologie der einen Welt 7, eds. K. Krämer, K. Vellguth, Freiburg 2015, p. 299.

Congregation of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (once), reflections at the opening of the First General Congregation of the Synod of Bishops (once), the address for the screening of the documentary “Art and Faith’ – *Via Pulchritudinis*” (once), reflections at the opening of the First General Congregation of the Synod of Bishops (once) in the form of *motu proprio Intima Ecclesiae Natura* (once), the address to the diplomatic corps (once), the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente* (once). There is a reference to Joseph Ratzinger in one text: *The Current Situation of Faith and Theology*, a conference delivered at the meeting of the Presidents of the Latin American Bishops’ Commissions.

The references to Benedict XVI in the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* begin and end with quotations from the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, and are therefore the most important texts of Francis’ predecessor used in this document. In it, the Pope appears as the successor of St Peter – an apostle of joyful evangelisation. The process of renewal in this work began with the Second Vatican Council. It is no coincidence that quotes from two popes appear at the beginning of the exhortation: Paul VI and Benedict XVI, whose time in office largely forms the period of the entire post-conciliar renewal. This is the time of the new Pentecost of the Church.⁵³ The fruit of this original event was the great joy of the disciples (Acts 2:28, 46; 8:8, 39; 13:48; 14:17; 15:3; 20:12; 21:17). Without joy there can be no authentic Christianity and thus no effective evangelisation.

The beginning of the Christian journey and evangelisation is the fruit of an authentic encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. This is the principle proclaimed by Benedict XVI. It has become a point of reference throughout the argumentation contained in the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (no. 7).

Another quotation from the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* is used by Francis to emphasise the need for the Church to be involved in the work of implementing a just social order. Its absence is felt above all by the poor (EG 183). Social problems cannot be solved without recourse to love, which is the spiritual force and light in the world (EG 272). These thoughts are supplemented by a reference to the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (no. 205).

The quotations from the encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* address the essence of Francis’ message in the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. They justify the need to engage in the work of joyful evangelisation, which can only take place on the basis of an authentic encounter with the love of Jesus Christ.

⁵³ Acts of the Apostles repeatedly describes the sending of the Holy Spirit (2:1–13; 4:31; 8:15–18; 9:17; 10:44–48).

Other references to Benedict XVI's teaching deal with many more specific issues: God made Himself known to man (EG 175), Christ became poor for our enrichment (EG 198), the principle of revival by the fire of the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God (EG 16, 174–175, 272), the expansion of the Church “by attraction” (EG 14), the ministry of charity (EG 179), the courage to go out with the Gospel to the peripheries (EG 30), the poor as privileged addressees of the Gospel (EG 48), the importance of faith and hope in the Christian life (EG 86, 238), submission to God's initiative in the work of evangelisation (EG 112), the value of popular piety (EG 123), the importance of the “way of beauty” in evangelisation (EG 167), the importance of dialogue in evangelisation (EG 251) and respect for religious freedom (EG 255).

The Christian virtues of faith, hope and love, which are closely intertwined, are an essential dimension of Benedict XVI's theology. It is reflected in the quotations used by Pope Francis in the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. The thoughts of Francis' predecessor are recorded in all parts and themes of the document (except for the consideration of the homily). The references to Benedict XVI in the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* are significant in the argumentation contained in this document. They have been reinforced with allusions to the teaching of Benedict XVI, which are not included in the article.

Evangelisation is the primary mission of the Church (cf. Matt 28:16–20; Acts 1:8). The content of the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* testifies that Pope Francis is faithful to this mission. His indications are deeply rooted in the New Testament message and in the teaching of the Church, especially of the post-conciliar era. As the immediate successor of Benedict XVI, Francis was inspired by his predecessor's statements, especially on the theme of evangelisation. The statements analysed in this article show that there is a consistency of message between Benedict XVI and Francis. The incumbent Pope not only quotes Benedict XVI, but also creatively develops his thoughts, in line with the spirit of the new era in which the Church carries out its global mission of evangelisation.

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