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THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON IN THE TEACHING OF BLESSED STEFAN CARDINAL WYSZYŃSKI

Godność osoby ludzkiej w nauczaniu bł. Stefana kardynała Wyszyńskiego

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Introduction.

An attempt to define 'personal dignity' in the Catholic social teaching.

Dignity is an internal, innate and natural mark of man, independent of the social and historical context. Society and history do not give it to man, but have a duty to respect and protect it¹. It applies in the same way to men and women, children, old and young people, healthy and disabled people, poor and rich. All people, having the same nature and origin, enjoy equal dignity (CCC 1934). Since all people are equal in dignity, the basis of any theory or practice that differentiates people on the basis of their dignity collapses.

Human dignity is the most general norm of the socio-economic order. It allows you to analyze and evaluate the existing reality, while social principles describe individual levels of socio-economic life, telling how to shape them in order to secure and affirm the human person².

Although Christianity primarily emphasizes the religious dimension of human dignity, the formulation of the Letter to the Galatians (Gal 3:28) reveals its social dimension – its universality, which did not have to and does not have to mean equality in every respect. The religious character of dignity contains dynamics, it is not only dignity resulting from elevation above other creatures and elevation to likeness to God, but it also flows from a call to glory, to eternal life, to participation in God's nature. These elements of the dignity of the human person were emphasized by theology and were expressed in Christian life until the nineteenth century, pushing its social dimensions to the background.

Only Leo XIII in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* defends the workers, as he believes that they are subject to social oppression and forced to live in conditions that make salvation difficult, and he devotes an entire paragraph to the discussion of the dignity of human labor³, stating: “the true dignity of man and superiority are based on manners, namely virtue, that virtue is the common property of mortals that can be possessed by both the great and the small, both rich and poor – that the reward of eternal happiness will be given only to virtue and merit, without no matter who owns it”⁴. The justification of human dignity for Leo XIII was the teaching that man is created in the image and likeness of God. Dignity is an inviolable and inalienable gift of God that no one can give up. And no one is allowed to violate human dignity with impunity⁵.

The aggravation of human dignity in social life and the violation of human rights by the

¹ J. W. Gałkowski., *Jan Paweł II o godności człowieka*, (in:) J. Czerkawski (red.), *Zagadnienie godności człowieka*, Lublin 1994, p. 108.

² F. Kampka., *Antropologiczne i społeczne podstawy ładu gospodarczego w świetle nauczania Kościoła*, Lublin 1995, p. 54.

³ P. de Laubier., *Mysł społeczna Kościoła katolickiego od Leona XIII do Jana Pawła II*, Warszawa '88, p. 22.

⁴ Leon XIII, *Rerum novarum*, No 20.

⁵ M. Sadowski., *Za studiów nad papieską koncepcją godności człowieka (1891-1991)*, (in:) M. Maciejewski., M. Marszałek (red.), *Doktryny polityczne i prawne u progu XXI wieku. Wybrane problemy badawcze*, Wrocław 2002, p. 418.

Nazi state were noticed and condemned by Pius XI in the encyclical *Mitbrennender Sorge*. “Man as a person has rights given to him by God, therefore they must be guarded against any attacks by society that would like to deny them, destroy them or disregard them”⁶. Thus, there was a confrontation between Christianity and the state subordinated to the materialistic doctrine on the dignity and rights of the human person. It was a confrontation of not only opposing concepts of man, but also contradictory concepts of civilization. The encyclical *Mitbrennender Sorge* and the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* directed against communism were published two years before the Second World War, and the anxiety expressed in them about the fate of man and Christian civilization turned out to be justified⁷.

Pius XI taught that human labor is not a common commodity and must recognize the human dignity of the worker. His successor – Pius XII, whose pontificate began during the Second World War and the humiliation of dignity unprecedented in history, fundamentally developed the personalistic teaching of the Church. Man was created in the image and likeness of God, redeemed by Christ and called to God's childhood. Pius XII derived the concept of human rights from the doctrine of dignity. It is in his dignity that man reads his rights⁸.

In the encyclical *Summi Pontificatus*, Pius XII warned against the fruits of state absolutism and what Pius XI called “statolatry”. Pius XII, in his numerous radio speeches, showed war from the perspective of the most elementary threat to man in his personal dignity. The Pope spoke first about human dignity and then about the dignity of work: “Let everyone who desires the star of peace to rise and pause over mankind, work together to restore to the human person the dignity that God gave him at the dawn of creation. Let it be based on treating people like the soulless matter”⁹. He also said: “Work, as a means necessary to take over the world, intended by God for His glory, has its inherent dignity, and at the same time a deep internal connection with the perfection of the human personality”¹⁰. These statements constitute the background for the considerations on the fundamental foundation of the social philosophy advocated by Stefan Wyszyński, as he also spoke at that time on the issue of work and human dignity related to it. Pius XII called for the rebuilding of Christian civilization on the basis of human dignity and human action¹¹, the Primate of the Millennium did the same. “But it is not enough just to turn from bad: you have to do good. Catholic perfection does not lie in defending ourselves from evil like a beggar to dogs. Escape from evil is only a modest part of the program of inner work. More important and momentous is the work of acquiring virtues and good habits, both in the natural and the supernatural order. The values of the national and Christian character are evidenced by the virtues we possess and with which we multiply goodness. Christ invites us to multiply good deeds: Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify the Father who is in heaven (Mt 5:16).

The whole greatness of the Catholic religion expresses itself in this, that it makes Catholics more and more demanding: to multiply the good. Let us not stop at the beginning of the road. Let us go towards the Light without looking back. The easier it will be for us because we have our national capital in the field of virtues. The world likes to praise Poles, especially in difficult periods of human history. The world knows that we have excessive individualism and we do not recognize dependence. We fight with all our strength for

⁶ Pius XI, *Mit brennender Sorge*, No 41.

⁷ P. de Laubier, *Myśl społeczna Kościoła katolickiego*, Warszawa 1998, p. 59.

⁸ F. J. Mazurek., *Prawa człowieka w nauczaniu społecznym Kościoła (od papieża Leona XIII do papieża Jana Pawła II)*, Lublin 1991, p. 44.

⁹ Pius XII, Przemówienie wigilijne, 24 XII 1942, No 27, in: DNSK, vol. I, p. 191.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, No 30, p. 193.

¹¹ M. Sadowski, Za studiów nad papieską koncepcją godności człowieka (1891-1991), in: M. Maciejewski., M. Marszałek (red.), *Doktryny polityczne i prawne u progu XXI wieku. Wybrane problemy badawcze*, Wrocław 2002, p. 420.

freedom, we want to be masters in our own home, we have a great love of freedom, for which we will sacrifice every material good. Polish high morals, culture, education and art radiated around and gained respect and followers without the need to reach for a sword. Poland was winning with its spirituality, which it took from the Gospel of Christ, whose word fell in us like a seed on a fine soil”¹².

John XXIII taught similarly, not in the context of war struggles and devastation, but in the context of post-war tensions and development disproportions, in particular disproportions between the development of science and technology, and such a decline in “people's sense of their own dignity that” the highest, though also the most disgusting achievement of this epoch is that, in the order of natural things, man has attained the size of a giant, and in the order of supernatural and eternal things, he has decreased to the size of a dwarf”¹³. Also in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, he repeatedly referred to the idea that understanding and respecting human dignity is a condition for peace, and therefore for the preservation and development of civilization. He considers this to be a condition for the effectiveness of all peace efforts undertaken by the United Nations¹⁴.

John XXIII wrote about the priority of man in society in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra*: “The necessary foundation, cause and goal of all social institutions are individual people, capable of social life by nature and elevated to the order of those values that transcend and overcome nature” (n. 219). And here is the reason why the popes in their encyclicals and the Church, in all their teaching, associate the renewal of social life, the improvement of the social order with the spiritual and moral renewal of people. Yes, there are various conditions and mechanisms in social life, but the most important matters are ultimately decided in the consciousness and heart of a person. If there is social sin, it is because people's personal sin comes first¹⁵.

A very important document of the Second Vatican Council, namely the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (hereafter PCC – translator's note), points out that the implications of the dignity of man created in God's image are reason and wisdom, on the one hand, and the gift of freedom and the ability to love his Creator on the other. The Council Fathers noted, however, that man in his “history abused his freedom by opposing God and desiring to achieve his goal outside of him” (PCC 13). Without taking this fact into account, the entire history of mankind and the development and shape of civilization cannot be understood. Finally, the Council recalls that man discovers and lives his dignity through the witness of conscience, which “is man's most secret center and sanctuary, where he is alone with God, whose voice resounds within him. Through conscience, this law becomes known in a strange way, which is filled with love for God and neighbor” (PCC 16).

Dignity is therefore given to man by God and through the development of the relationship between God and man it is in a way broadened and deepened, but it is also tasked upon man¹⁶. Man, through the work of his conscience, by gaining wisdom and realizing free existence, can develop in this dignity, perfect his personality to become more and more human, and thus grow in dignity through cooperation with God's grace. Therefore, it was Paul VI who repeatedly called and reminded that man, in his actions and aspirations, should give voice to the desire to “be” and not to “have”, to work for his own personal development, and not only for the multiplication of material good¹⁷. A similar owl was uttered by Cardinal Wyszyński: “The wrong path is sometimes chosen to free a person from torment and anguish,

¹² Stefan kard. Wyszyński., *Nauczanie społeczne 1946-1981*, Warszawa 1990, p. 83.

¹³ Jan XXIII, Encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, No 243.

¹⁴ Jan XXIII, Encyclical *Pacem in terris*, No 144-145.

¹⁵ P. de Laubier, *Myśl społeczna...*, p. 70.

¹⁶ M. Sadowski, *Za studiów nad papieską koncepcją...*, p. 430.

¹⁷ Paweł VI, *Przemówienie na posiedzeniu plenarnym AfOP*, 10 VI 1969, No 21, [w:] DNSK, vol. I, p. 425.

denying him the right to God's destinies. For what is Sunday for a man but an encounter with God! Isn't it better that a man works honestly for six days? Why should he work enthusiastically only on Sunday? Let him work all week long, and let him rest on Sunday. Why should he work well all over the world and not in his own country? Why should he forget that he is a child of God and turn into a working cry? Who reminded the human family of all this? Precisely Christ and his Gospel that the Church continues to proclaim. That is why the Church and her Gospel are needed by the world today more than ever. For they are reminiscent of who man is and what his calling is. They teach that the world cannot be saved solely by material achievement and production growth. The world is saved through the order of the heart, conscience and thoughts, by linking it with God in love in which man will learn to love his brother. This is a complete redemption, a redemption of the human body and soul, true liberation"¹⁸. This path leads to the defense of human dignity.

The teaching of the Church justifies human dignity in two types of arguments: natural and supernatural. Natural arguments refer primarily to the position of man in the world, showing him as a person, that is, a rational and free being in which the voice of conscience is heard. These features make man naturally surpass the entire created world of things¹⁹.

Man is superior to the world of things with his mind. Thanks to him, he made progress in the experimental sciences, in technical skills and in the liberal arts, achieving outstanding achievements in the study and subordination of the material world (PCC 15). Reason also enables man to search for truth and find it. The intellectual nature of the human person is crowned with wisdom which draws the human mind to seek and love what is true and good. Imbued with it, a person comes to know invisible things through visible things²⁰.

A man who learns freely, can search for the truth and turn towards good, when his freedom is guaranteed, that is, acting out of an inner agitation, and not under the influence of a blind inner drive or external compulsion. Freedom understood in this way is also a special sign of the image of God in man (PCC 17). True freedom is directed towards the real good, recognized by a righteous conscience, from which it draws its ethical content²¹.

The question of the dignity of the human person was also at the heart of John Paul II's teaching. In this teaching, man is not a man as such, but a concrete man, considered in the perspective of God's love and in all his historical and theological situation. Thus, he is a man not only created by God in his image and likeness, but also chosen by him, loved and called to glory. "Man and his supreme calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love"²². John Paul II's teaching on the dignity of man and his vocation to love finds a place in many documents, in almost every text one can find some contribution to highlight this idea leading in his papal teaching²³.

John Paul II states that man "is reaffirmed in the Mystery of Redemption, re-spoken anew in a way. Created anew!"²⁴. The source of dignity is ultimately the relationship of each person to the Person of Jesus Christ, because "He, the Son of God, has united himself in some way with every human being through his Incarnation"²⁵, and he has united himself in no other way than through the Father's love, revealed to us in Jesus Christ. This love has overcome sin in man through the Holy Spirit "who is revealed and at the same time made present as a Love

¹⁸ Stefan kard. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, p. 582.

¹⁹ B. Mielec., *Godność osoby ludzkiej*, (in:) P. Andryszczak (red.), *Chrześcijanin wobec zagadnień społecznych*, Kraków 2002, p. 17.

²⁰ A. Szafuński., *Nierówność w świecie w świetle podstawowych zasad społecznych*, Wrocław 1999, p. 104.

²¹ T. Ślipko., *Godność osoby ludzkiej*, in: „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, vol. 74 (1970), b. 2, p. 191.

²² Jan Paweł II, *Encyclical Dives in misericordia*, 30 XI 1980, Poznań 1980, p. 4.

²³ M. Sadowski, *Za studiów nad papieską koncepcją...*, p. 435.

²⁴ Jan Paweł II, Encyklika *Redemptor hominis*, No 10, in: DNSK, vol 2, p. 33.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, No 13, p. 37.

that works in the depths of the Paschal Mystery”²⁶. Human dignity is therefore born through suffering and love, and is expressed in no other way than through love and the resulting readiness to sacrifice.

In the life of the community, each person, thanks to his natural and supernatural dignity, becomes the subject of rights, known as the rights of the person, but also of responsibility for the society of which he is a co-creator and for all its members, in whom he sees his brothers in Christ. This means first that man as a person, thanks to his dignity, surpasses all social goals, which he chooses and defines himself, and in no order of these goals can he be treated as an object and only a means to achieve this goal. It also follows that man, as a member of society, cannot lose his subjectivity and right to initiative in any situation. It means, finally, that no healthy community can be built except by appealing to the dignity of every human being's conscience, who by the strange way through the voice of a righteous conscience becomes the known law of loving God and neighbor. This love manifests itself as “a strong and permanent will to commit to the common good, that is, the good of everyone and everyone, because we are all truly responsible for everyone”²⁷. John Paul II calls such commitment a virtue of solidarity.

If solidarity understood in this way is to be truly Christian, it must have a global dimension, that is, it must involve all people. For solidarity cannot be group, class or national selfishness. It does not agree with any imperialism, with any hegemony, with any form of exploitation or active hatred that we find at the root of almost all civilizations built to date. John Paul II calls for the creation of the foundations of a civilization based on understanding and respect for human dignity and the solidarity of all people on a global scale. It would be a civilization of love in which the highest temporal value would be man and his personal dignity, and the development of every human person would be the basic imperative. This development should be realized in the framework of solidarity and freedom²⁸.

1. Human dignity as a central category in Stefan Wyszyński's teaching.

Primate Wyszyński was a tireless advocate of the dignity of every human being. Human dignity is at the heart of His teaching. “In essence, man is equal to man, because he is a child of God, the work of the Heavenly Father. Every person – whether in a professor's gown or on an academic bench, in a judge's tribunal or in a prison cell, an architect or a craftsman, director or coal cutter, a mature husband or an infant – all have essentially the same value in the face of God. It is the basis of our respect for every human being”²⁹. In his social thought too, man has priority over economic and political factors. Only man is immortal. “Neither the family, nor the nation, nor the state have this property”³⁰.

Appreciating the importance of natural arguments, the Church supplements them with supernatural arguments. Only in their light does man appear in all his exaltation to the dignity of a child of God. The special dignity of the human person results directly from the fact that man was created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). He was made the lord of all earthly creatures by the Creator. Therefore, it is God who is the first cause and source of human dignity, who constantly strives for Him. The account of man's creation found in Genesis does not directly explain man's likeness to God. Therefore, the nature of the “image of God” can be defined indirectly and generally. This parable is contained first in the social nature of man: man and woman were created by God (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, without

²⁶ Jan Paweł II, Encyklikał *Dominum et vivificantem*, 18 V 1986, No 41, Watykan 1986, p. 71.

²⁷ Jan Paweł II, Encyklikał *Sollitudo rei socialis*, No 38, p.73.

²⁸ D. Sikorski., *Godność człowieka, jej podstawy i uprawnienia*, (in:) J. Kowalski, D. Sikorski, G. Ślęzak, *Poznać człowieka w Chrystusie. Jana Paweł II o godności ludzkiej*, Częstochowa 1983, p. 18.

²⁹ Stefan kard. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, p. 433.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 322.

contacts with other people, a person cannot live and develop his talents (PCC 12)³¹.

It should be emphasized that the most important message resulting from the life and teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński is the truth about the great unconditional dignity of a human being – a child of God. “It seems, Beloved children”, he said, “that we are at some great turning point in history, when we need to talk a lot about the high dignity of man, so that it is understood that man surpasses everything that can exist in the world except God”³².

Man is the highest value on earth – persistently taught Cardinal Wyszyński in a time when Poles seemed to have forgotten who they were during the so-called The “little stabilization” of the seventies. He also taught this when Poles began to claim their social rights, then the Primate proclaimed that these rights do not result from belonging to a society, state or nation, but result from its dignity and primacy. “Even if”, he said, “new philosophies and militaristic powers of the materialized world arise, wishing to crush man and all his humanity, it will always remain the truth of the human family that man is the most important on Earth. And nothing can destroy him! Even if he lay in a manger in the dung, showing himself in all his misery. If it has already existed, it is and will remain the greatest value and immortal power on Earth. Although we would lose our lives in the eyes of the world and the world would renounce us, condemning us to death, like thieves to be crucified – this is the assessment of the world. God cancels the world's sentence – “he is guilty of death” - and announces his divine sentence – “Today you will still be with me in Paradise”³³. According to Cardinal Wyszyński, the truth about the great value of a human being is the foundation of the social order in the world. His social philosophy touched not only Polish affairs, not only the time dimension of the post-war years, but also had a universal and timeless meaning.

He said: “There should be one most important condition in the first chapter of any peace treaty: believe in the greatness of man. Only when we believe in its depth, we do not need the Charter of Fundamental Human Rights, because in this depth everything will be found. It will be a holiness that criminal hands will not dare touch!”³⁴

Cardinal Wyszyński believed that the truth about the unconditional dignity of a person is very necessary in one's personal life in order to defend oneself against hopelessness and depression. As many young people repeat – “I'm going to be fine”, “life has no sense” or succumbs to the psychosis of violence, addictions, because there is nothing to lean on. The authority of Cardinal Wyszyński's inheritance appeals to this generation and is indispensable to it.

The Primate of the Millennium has always stood up for the threat to human dignity. A man may be different, he may be a saint, he may be a sinner, but he will always remain a man. “Dear stone, it does not cease to be itself even when it falls into the mud and gets dirty. A work of art, despite being damaged, does not lose its historical value. A man burdened with the inheritance of original sin did not lose in his eyes, thoughts, plan and intentions the value that God had placed in him. You have to keep this in front of your eyes to avoid devaluing the human person. Sometimes depression is considered to be a general human psychosis, overwhelming a person so that he is unable to make any effort, because it is not worth it (...)

The world is powerless against such a man, but God is still a Mighty One. The world has no more drugs to use, but God still has them”³⁵. Cardinal Wyszyński defended basic human rights, such as the right to life, the right to profess God, the right to truth, justice, freedom, love and peace. He understood that a person needs not only justice but also love. “If

³¹ T. Borutka, *Prawa osoby ludzkiej podstawą życia społecznego w świetle nauczania Kościoła*, Kraków 2000, p. 37.

³² Stefan kard. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, p. 433 et seq.

³³ Stefan kard. Wyszyński, *Nauczanie społeczne...*, p. 444.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 531.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 366.

we cry out: Give us a new man, show us a man! - at the same time, we make a wish what this man would be like. We shyly say: We want a man who would ... love. We are waiting for a man who could ... love.

We will believe them! We will follow this one! He will get us! We are so terrified by the works of hatred and the announcement of its new fruits that flow from programmed hatred that we only wish that man could love! That he might overcome through love! If a great man wins us, it will only be one who will have great love. When, instead of love, he has a hatred as great as he, perhaps we will be silent before him, as the world used to be silent before Alexander of Macedon, before August, before Attila, before Napoleon, before Hitler, but we will not follow him! Why is the world silent? Because the world believes that man will pass and humanity will stay. And maybe another man will come who will know how to love. We will wait for one! We have time, because although we are humanity made up of the dying, humanity does not die, only people die. Humanity will wait"³⁶. He understood the need to convert, the need to change mentality, because hence comes the strength and the ability to change a civilization from a materialistic and dehumanized one to a spiritual and human one.

He said: "If a man does not change, the most prosperous system, the richest country will not stand, it will be stolen and perish. For what if – I may say trivially – that a circulating bottle of spirit will pass from the hands of some drunkards to the hands of other drunkards! I will say even more drastically: that the key to the state treasury will pass from the hands of some thieves to the hands of other thieves?! The point is not that all thieves should have access to the cash register and all drinkers to vodka, but that the conscience of everyone should wake up so that we understand our responsibility for the Nation that God resurrects. Let us remember that people with old addictions will not restore the Motherland. Christ demanded this when He said: "You don't put new wine into old wine-skins. Otherwise, the wine-skins will break, the wine will run out, and the wine-skins will deteriorate" (Mt 9:17). If new wine is made in Poland now, it must be remembered that it should be poured into new souls, into new hearts, into new thoughts, into healthy social will. Only then will the Motherland manage to lift itself up, overcome this misery, the end of which is yet to be seen"³⁷. These words sound very actual. They also justify the need for forming, shaping the personality, that is, the need for upbringing.

2. Human personal dignity and the man as the image of God in Stefan Wyszyński's teaching.

Man's personal dignity resembles him to God, because he was created in his image, but he was also elevated above all created things and received power over them. It is the source and foundation of human dignity in the personal dimension, the source that begins with God's revelation. To understand human dignity, elevation to God is more important than authority over creatures, and this is why the idea of a covenant, a kind of partnership between God and man, runs throughout the history of salvation. On the basis of the premises of this covenant, a completely new image of human relations is born, the foundations of a new civilization are being created, which will be called the civilization of love.

The full picture of the dignity of the human person is clarified more and more as we approach the "fullness of the times" and later as the work of evangelization begins to embrace all of humanity. The fulfillment of the messianic promises, the fact of the Incarnation of the Son of God and the universal character of salvation fully reveal the Christian idea of "imago Dei" and the fact that every human person relates to the Person of Jesus Christ as the Savior of all people of all times"³⁸.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 438.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 511.

³⁸ T. Borutka, J. Mazur, A. Zwoliński, *Katolicka nauka społeczna...*, p. 45.

Human dignity is therefore the basis of the social teaching of the Church. It provides two basic criteria of moral evaluation that should be universally applicable, as Cardinal Wyszyński emphasized. The first is the recognition and respect of human dignity by all communities. It is by no means a matter of refraining from acting contrary to the demands of human dignity. It is necessary to create conditions for human dignity to be properly affirmed³⁹.

The second criterion of moral evaluation is the fact that man himself cannot renounce his own nature marked by dignity, because he does not create it himself, but has received it from the Creator. Therefore, the obligation to operate within the ethical limits defined by dignity rests with the person himself. Neither he nor any human community can violate these boundaries⁴⁰.

Applying these indications to the economic level, it can be said that human dignity requires an institutional economic order whose goal is man. In economic life, the dignity of the human person, his full vocation and the good of the whole society should be respected and enhanced (PCC 63). This is the responsibility of private and public institutions. They should serve to raise human dignity, at the same time combating social slavery and protecting the fundamental rights of people (PCC 29).

Respect for human dignity also requires, in the economic field, the virtue of moderation in order to control attachment to the goods of this world, the virtue of justice in order to effectively safeguard the rights of other people and give them what is rightfully theirs, and the virtues of solidarity in order to follow Christ, who “being rich became poor for our sake, that we might be enriched by his poverty” (2 Cor 8: 9) (CCC 2407).

3. Final thoughts

Cardinal Wyszyński repeated many times that conscience is a specific feature of human dignity. It is conscience that calls man to love and do good and avoid evil. It is the most secret center and sanctuary of man, where he stays alone with God. By conscience, man recognizes the law written by God in his heart, to which obedience constitutes his dignity and according to which he will be judged. Fidelity to the voice of conscience helps to solve moral problems, both individual and social. However, when a person cares little about the search for truth and goodness, the conscience of the habit of sin is almost blind (PCC 16). Human rights derive from faithfulness to one's conscience and a sense of dignity, which enable the construction of a humanistic hierarchy of values, necessary not only to defend human dignity, but also necessary for his personal development.

Summary:

Primate Wyszyński was a tireless advocate of the dignity of every human being. Human dignity is at the heart of His teaching. Human dignity is the basis of the social teaching of the Church. It provides two basic criteria of moral evaluation that should be universally applicable, as Cardinal Wyszyński emphasized. The first is the recognition and respect of human dignity by all communities. It is by no means a matter of refraining from acting contrary to the demands of human dignity. It is necessary to create conditions for human dignity to be properly affirmed. The second criterion of moral evaluation is the fact that man himself cannot renounce his own nature marked by dignity, because he does not create it himself, but has received it from the Creator. Therefore, the obligation to operate within the ethical limits defined by dignity rests with the person himself. Neither he nor any human community can violate these boundaries.

Keywords: Theology, Philosophy, ethics, general ethics, specific ethics, dignity,

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 46.

⁴⁰ J. Mazur, *Od kerygmatu do Ewangelii ...*, pp. 260-261.

Streszczenie:

Godność osoby ludzkiej w nauczaniu bł. Stefana Kardynała Wyszyńskiego

Prymas Wyszyński był niestrudzonym orędownikiem godności każdego człowieka. Godność człowieka jest sercem Jego nauczania. Godność człowieka jest podstawą społecznej nauki Kościoła. Podaje dwa podstawowe kryteria oceny moralnej, które powinny być powszechnie stosowane, co podkreślił kard. Wyszyński. Pierwszym jest uznanie i poszanowanie godności ludzkiej przez wszystkie wspólnoty. Nie chodzi bynajmniej o powstrzymanie się od działania sprzecznego z wymogami godności ludzkiej. Niezbędne jest stworzenie warunków do właściwej afirmacji godności ludzkiej. Drugim kryterium oceny moralnej jest fakt, że człowiek sam nie może wyrzec się własnej natury nacechowanej godnością, ponieważ sam jej nie stworzył, ale otrzymał ją od Stwórcy. Dlatego obowiązek działania w granicach etycznych określonych przez godność spoczywa na samej osobie. Ani on, ani żadna ludzka społeczność nie może naruszać tych granic.

Słowa kluczowe: teologia, filozofia, etyka, etyka ogólna, etyka specyficzna, godność, człowiek, kard. Stefan Wyszyński, nauka społeczna Kościoła rzymskokatolickiego

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