

Anna Klim-Klimaszewska

RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING IN THE PEDAGOGY OF JOHN PAUL II

Wychowanie religijne w pedagogice Jana Pawła II

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7418-9983> E-mail: anna.klim-klimaszewska@uph.edu.pl

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62266/PK.1898-3685.2024.34.03>

Introduction

Given the ongoing social, political and economic transitions and related threats and challenges, the need to prepare young generations for proper interpretation of the reality is indisputable. These expectations are met by the educational thought of Pope John Paul II, which comprises Christian tradition viewed as the totality of orison, learning, and life guided by faith. The content of Christian traditions, passed by Pope John Paul II, infiltrate national cultures, having an impact on the development of attitudes towards all areas of human existence. The content is crucial, above all, to religious education of children and teenagers.

1. The notion of religious education

According to Pope John Paul II, education is a process wherein mutual communion of people manifests itself in a special way. The educator is a person who “gives birth” in a spiritual sense. Education in this context may be perceived as true apostleship at the same time. It is a joint participation in truth and love but, most of all, bestowing of a gift of humanity. Parents bestow their mature humanity upon a new-born man, who in turn bestows upon them the newness and freshness of humanity, which he brings into the world¹.

Religious education aims not only at a complete development of a human being, but also, and more importantly, at the baptised who, gradually introduced to the secret of salvation, daily grow more and more aware of the gift of faith they have received. They should learn to praise God the Father spiritually and truthfully, especially through liturgical worship. They should be trained to lead their own lives pursuant to a new man in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Thereby, they will become perfect men, meeting the standards of the age of the fullness of Christ and contribute to the growth of the Mystical Body. What is more, aware of their calling, they should grow accustomed to witness hope, and promote the Christian transformation of the world”².

Religious education requires brave adoption of a new lifestyle expressed by making decisions based on personal, family, social and international planes, on an appropriate scale of values: where “being” dominates the “having”, and where the individual takes precedence over the thing. Such a renewed lifestyle demands a change in one’s attitude, from indifference to interest in another man, from rejection to acceptance: other people are not competitors one needs to protect oneself against, but one’s brothers and sisters, who deserve solidarity and love; who enrich us with their sole presence³.

Religious education is a catechism comprising, above all, the teaching of the Christian doctrine, typically communicated systematically and holistically, to introduce the believers into the plenitude of Christian life. This education captures many elements of the pastoral mission of the Church. The said elements are: 1. first preaching the gospel, i.e. mission of

¹ Jan Paweł II, *Gratissimam Sane*, TUM, Wrocław 1994.

² Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Familiaris Consortio di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato al clero ed ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa Cattolica circa i compiti della famiglia Cristiana nel mondo di oggi*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1981.

³ Jan Paweł II, *Gratissimam Sane*, TUM, Wrocław 1994.

prognosticating through kerygma to find faith, 2. apologetic activity, i.e. seeking argument to persuade one to believe, 3. practicing the Christian life, 4. performing sacraments, 5. full participation in the church community, 6. testament of apostolic and missionary life.

Religious education focuses on moral requirements concerning everyone and pursuant to the Gospel, as well as Christian attitudes to life and the world: both heroic and regular, referred to as Christian or evangelical virtues. These are the grounds for care about and endeavour to, when educating in faith, clearly present the issues such as human activity for integral liberation, seek societies of increased solidarity and brotherhood, fight for justice and build peace. Religious education is about preparing Catholic children to live in contact with non-Catholics, while preserving their own Catholic identity, and at the same time, showing respect for the faith of other people. It is a full introduction into Christianity which refers to all elements of life as a Christian.

Religious education requires a variety of methods adapted to mental type and age, ecclesiastical and spiritual maturity, and individual preconditions of the catechised.

The period worth of attention is when a small child receives the first constituents of catechesis from the parents and the family environment, which show in simple words the good and caring Father in Heaven, to whom the child learns to raise its heart. Very short prayers which a child can barely pronounce initiate a love-filled dialogue with invisible God, whose words it will later listen to. It is never enough to remind parents about this early catechistic introduction because in a Christian family one should do everything to include children in live contact with God. It is a crucial act which requires great love and deep respect for the child, who has the right to be presented to Christian faith in a simple and true manner.

Later on, in school, in church, in parish, or guided by tutors in a catholic or state school, when the child comes across a broader social circle, when it participates in catechesis which introduces one into the life of the Church in an orderly and regulated manner, the child will be directly prepared to perform the holy sacraments. What is involved here is didactic religious instruction, directed at giving witness to faith, introductory but holistic catechesis, which is to reveal all principal mysteries of faith and their impact on child's moral and religious life. Catechesis deepens the understanding of sacraments, but at the same time, the sacraments which one performs give children joy and vital forces, for the child can witness Christ in its own environment⁴.

In didactic work, one must not avoid reflexion over suffering and death. Actually, every human being experiences them both and it would be a mistake to leave them unsaid or erase them from one's field of attention. One should rather help everyone see their deep secret, hidden in a concrete and difficult reality. Also pain and suffering have value and sense, for they are experienced in close relation with love, which is both taken and given⁵.

Pope John Paul II emphasised that education is correlated with self-education. Without a doubt, family educates, while school formally teaches and educates. However, the simultaneous effect of the family and the school will remain incomplete if the man fails to attend to one's self-education. Family and school education may provide constituents for self-education. This stems from the fact that the young have a natural "truth instinct". The truth, in turn, is to serve freedom, and the young have a spontaneous desire of freedom. To be free means to know how to use freedom in the truth, i.e. to be "truly" free. To be truly free does not, however, mean to do everything one wants to do, everything one feels like. Freedom comprises the discipline of truth. Without it, it is not real freedom but rather freedom hypocrisy. To be truly free is to use one's freedom for what is real good, to be the man of the right

⁴ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Catechesi Tradendae di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato, al clero e ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa cattolica circa la catechesi nel nostro tempo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1979.

⁵ Jan Paweł II, *Gratissimam Sane*, TUM, Wrocław 1994.

conscience, to be responsible, to be the man “for others”. All of the above is the internal core of what is referred to as self-education. Such an internal structure, where “the truth makes us free”, may not be built only “from the outside”. Everyone must construct it “from within”, must make an effort to do so with perseverance and patience. And this is what is called self-education. As noted by John Paul II, the young are exposed to risks in the process of self-education which may take its toll throughout their lives. Here, we should mention the temptation to be overcritical, to discuss everything, to see everything anew, or the temptation to be sceptical about traditional values, which can easily transform into some sort of cynicism about problems at work, with one’s carrier or even in marriage. It is also about the temptation evoked by the popular entertainment trade, which draws one away from serious engagement in life and favours attitudes full of passivity, egoism and isolation. Another threat is the negative impact of advertising, which fuel the natural propensity to avoid effort, promising rapid satisfaction of all needs, whereas related consumerism dictates the man to fulfil oneself mostly with the use of material goods. Many young people, charmed by tempting mirages, fall into the hands of uncontrolled instincts and look for happiness on the paths that promise a lot, but which in reality are void of authentic human perspectives. Many feel strong temptation to flee responsibility, to escape to fool’s paradise, a delusive world of alcohol and narcotics, short-live relationships which do not lead to marriage or family, to indifference, cynicism, or even outrage⁶.

2. Types of Education according to John Paul II

In his pedagogical message, Pope John Paul II distinguished the following types of education:

1. Teaching about essential values of human life

Despite the frequently very serious difficulties in the work of educating, parents should confidently and courageously shape the essential values of human life in their children. Children should grow up in proper freedom from material possessions, adopting a simple and austere lifestyle in the profound conviction that a person is worth more because of what he/she is rather than because of what he/she has. In a society shaken and shattered by tensions and conflicts, resulting from the violent clash of different individualisms and egoisms, children should acquire not only a sense of true justice, which leads to respect for the personal dignity of each person, but also a sense of true love, as an attitude of sincere concern and selfless service towards others, especially the poorest and the needy ones.

2. Teaching about socialisation

The first and basic socialising school is family. It is there that making a gift of oneself is the law, giving the direction and conditioning the growth. The gift of yourself becomes the model and the principle of what should happen in the mutual relations of brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. Participation in moments of joy and in difficulties, experienced daily at home, is the most specific and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful involvement of children in a wider social life.

3. Sexual education

Sexual education is the right and basic duty of parents. This should always be done under their careful guidance, both at home and in the educational facilities they choose and control. In this sense, the Church affirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is obliged to respect when cooperating in the area of sexual education.

4. Teaching about love

Teaching about love, understood as a gift of yourself, is an indispensable condition for parents called upon to provide their children with clear and subtle sexual education. In the

⁶ Jan Paweł II, *Parati Semper*, KSMAL, Lublin 1985.

face of a culture that generally trivialises human sexuality, interpreting and experiencing it in a limited and impoverished way, relating it only to the body and selfish pleasure, the educational ministry of parents must definitely focus on the culture of sexual life in order to make it truly and fully personal: sexuality is, in fact, the richness of the whole person - the body, feelings and soul - revealing its profound significance in leading the person to making a gift of oneself in love.

5. Teaching about chastity

In the context of sexual education, it is absolutely essential to teach children about chastity as a virtue that leads a person to true maturity and empowers him or her to respect and develop the betrothed sense of the body. If Christian parents recognise the signs of a divine vocation in their children, they should exercise utmost care and effort to bring them up for virginity as the highest form of self-giving, which is the essential meaning of human sexuality.

6. Teaching about moral principles

Because of the links existing between the sexual dimension of a person and his or her ethical values, education is intended to lead to knowledge of moral principles and recognition of them as a necessary and valuable guarantee of responsible personal growth in the field of human sexuality. For this reason, the Church is firmly opposed to the popular form of information on sexual life, often disseminated in isolation from moral principles, which is nothing other than an introduction to the experience of pleasure and a stimulus that induces, already in the years of innocence, a loss of cheerfulness, opening the way to corruption⁷.

7. Teaching about peace

Teaching about peace means opening children's minds and hearts to embrace the values that are the pillars of a society living in peace. These are: truth, justice, love and freedom. This educational programme embraces the whole of life and continues throughout life. It makes a human being become responsible for himself/herself and for others, able to strive courageously and reasonably for the good of the whole human being and of all people. This pursuit of peace will prove all the more effective the more united are all those who, for various reasons, share responsibility for educational and social matters. The time spent on education is particularly valuable because it determines the future of a human being and, subsequently, the family and society as a whole. If the relationship with parents and the whole family is good and heartfelt, children directly experience and learn the values that build peace: the love of truth and justice, the sense of responsible freedom, the appreciation and respect for others. Teaching about peace obviously takes place at all stages of child's development and requires particular care during the difficult period of adolescence, when the transition from childhood to adulthood gives rise to certain risks for young people, who, right then, make the choices that determine their lives⁸.

8. Teaching about solidarity

The starting point of true education must be the truth about a human being, the recognition of his/her dignity and his/her transcendent vocation. Viewing people individually through such an anthropological prism means helping them to develop the best in themselves so that, using all their potential, they can realise what God has called them to do⁹. All human coexistence, in order to be well-organised and successful, must be based on the fundamental princi-

⁷ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Familiaris Consortio di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato al clero ed ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa Cattolica circa i compiti della famiglia Cristiana nel mondo di oggi*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1981.

⁸ Jan Paweł II, *Kobieta wychowawczynią do życia w pokoju. Orędzie na XXVIII Światowy Dzień Pokoju 1 stycznia 1995*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 1995, nr 16, p. 8-10

⁹ Jan Paweł II, *Wychowanie młodego pokolenia zadaniem wszystkich. Przemówienie do uczestników Europejskiego Sympozjum na temat Wyzwania edukacji, Rzym 3.07.2004*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2004, nr 11-12, Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/edukacja_03072004.html

ple that every human being is a person, that is, a creature endowed with reason and free will, as a result of which he/she has the rights and duties that result directly and simultaneously from his/her own nature. And, since they are universal and inviolable, they cannot be renounced in any way¹⁰. It is, therefore, advisable to educate the young generations in a spirit of solidarity, instilling in them a true culture of openness to universal values and respect for all people, regardless of race, culture or religion¹¹.

3. The environment of religious education

a/. Family

Pope John Paul II recognises that the family is not only the most important cell of the living church community, but also the most important cell of the society¹². It is called upon to fulfil its tasks throughout the lives of its members, from birth to death. It is a true sanctuary of life, a place where life can be properly welcomed and protected from numerous attacks to which it is exposed as well as develop according to the requirements of true human growth. Therefore, the family plays a decisive and irreplaceable role in shaping of the culture of life¹³.

In the family, a community of people, special care must be given to a child. It is necessary to develop a deep respect for his/her personal dignity and to serve his/her rights with reverence and generosity. This applies to every child, but it becomes particularly important with regard to a young child in need of total care, to a sick, suffering or handicapped one.

All members of the family, according to their individual gifts, have a responsible duty to build, day by day, a communion of people, making the family a school of richer humanity. This is done through grace and love towards children, towards the sick and the elderly, through the mutual daily ministry of all, through the sharing of goods, joys and sufferings. A fundamental factor in building of such communion is the educational exchange between parents and children, where everyone gives and receives. Children, through love, respect and obedience to their parents, make their special and irreplaceable contribution to building a family that is authentically human and Christian.

The family fulfils its mission first and foremost by raising children. The task of parenting flows from the spouses' most rudimentary vocation to participate in God's creative work: by giving birth, in love and for love, to a new person who is himself or herself called to grow and develop, parents, thus, undertake the task of enabling him or her to live a fully human life. Since parents have given life to their children, they have the highest responsibility for the education of their offspring and must, therefore, be recognised as their first and main educators. It is, therefore, parents' responsibility to create a family atmosphere filled with love and respect for God and people so that it is conducive to the entire personal and social education of their children. Thus, family is the first school of the social virtues needed by all communities.

The family's educational mission also requires that Christian parents show their children all that is necessary for the gradual maturation of their personality from a Christian and ecclesiastical point of view.

¹⁰ Jan Paweł II, *Kobieta wychowawczynią do życia w pokoju. Orędzie na XXVIII Światowy Dzień Pokoju 1 stycznia 1995*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 1995, nr 16, p. 8-10

¹¹ Jan Paweł II, *Wychowywać do solidarności. Przemówienie do uczestników VIII Zgromadzenia Ogólnego Papieskiej Akademii Nauk Społecznych. Watykan 11.04.2002*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2002, nr 6, Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/pap_ans_11042002

¹² Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Ecclesia in Africa del Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose e a tutti i fedeli laici circa la chiesa in africa e la sua missione evangelizzatrice verso l'anno 2000*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.

¹³ Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Lettera enciclica Evangelium Vitae del sommo pontefice Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose ai fedeli laici e a tutte le persone di buona volontà sul valore e l'inviolabilità della vita umana*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.

The right and obligation of parents to bring up children is something essential and, as such, is linked to the transmission of human life itself. It is primary and takes precedence over the educational tasks of others. By virtue of the uniqueness of the love relationship linking parents and children, it excludes substitution and is inalienable, and, therefore, cannot be completely transferred to others or appropriated by others.

In addition to these features, which characterise the educational task of parents, the most profound and defining element is paternal and maternal love, which finds the fulfilment of a perfect service to life in the work of educating: parental love becomes, from the beginning, the soul and, thus, the norm which inspires and gives direction to all the specific activity of educating, enriching it with such precious fruit of love as tenderness, constancy, goodness, attentiveness, unselfishness and a spirit of sacrifice¹⁴.

The religious education in the family manifests itself through daily personal and family prayer that praises God and thanks Him for the gift of life, asking for light and strength to face difficulties and sufferings, never losing hope. However, the mode of praise that gives meaning to all other forms of prayer and worship is that which is expressed in the daily life of the family, when its content is love and sacrifice¹⁵.

In the religious education, the family expands and enriches itself with all the fruit of moral, spiritual and supernatural life, which the father and mother, by virtue of their vocation, must give as a gift to their children and, through the children, to the Church and the world¹⁶.

Through religious education, by word and example, through daily contacts and decisions, through specific gestures and signs, parents teach their children authentic freedom, which is materialised through the unselfish gift of oneself, and develop in them respect for others, a sense of justice, an attitude of heartfelt acceptance of others, dialogue, generous service and solidarity as well as all the other values that help to accept life as a gift. The educational work of Christian parents should serve the development of their children's faith and help them to fulfil the vocation they have received from God. As part of their educational mission, parents must teach their children, by word and witness, the true meaning of suffering and death: they will be able to do this if they themselves recognise all the manifestations of suffering around them, if they know how to show warmth, care and compassion to the sick and the elderly in their own family¹⁷.

A Christian family is the natural and basic school of faith. In the sacrament of marriage, the father and mother receive the grace and task of Christian education of their children, to whom they bear witness and to whom they transmit both human and religious values. With their first words, children already learn to praise God and, with their first gestures of love, they also learn to open up to others and discover the meaning of human life in the gift of oneself. In the daily life of a truly Christian family, children gain an initial 'experience of the Church', which is then confirmed and deepened with their gradual, active and responsible integration into the life of the wider ecclesiastical and secular community¹⁸.

¹⁴ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Familiaris Consortio di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato al clero ed ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa Cattolica circa i compiti della famiglia Cristiana nel mondo di oggi*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1981.

¹⁵ Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Lettera enciclica Evangelium Vitae del sommo pontefice Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose ai fedeli laici e a tutte le persone di buona volontà sul valore e l'inviolabilità della vita umana*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.

¹⁶ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Familiaris Consortio di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato al clero ed ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa Cattolica circa i compiti della famiglia Cristiana nel mondo di oggi*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1981.

¹⁷ Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Lettera enciclica Evangelium Vitae del sommo pontefice Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose ai fedeli laici e a tutte le persone di buona volontà sul valore e l'inviolabilità della vita umana*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.

¹⁸ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Christifideles Laici di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II su vocazione e missione dei laici nella chiesa e nel mondo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1988

Parental education in faith, which should commence at the beginning of childhood, takes place when members of each individual family support each other to grow in faith through their often silent but persevering witness to a Christian life lived according to the Gospel in the midst of daily activities. This education is further consolidated if, with the arrival of family events such as the reception of the Sacraments, the celebration of liturgical festivals, the birth of a child or bereavement, care is taken to explain the Christian or religious meaning of these events. Christian parents must, therefore, continue to make an effort to prepare themselves to catechise their children and to carry out this task with tireless zeal¹⁹.

b/. School

According to John Paul II, an important place for religious education is also Catholic schools which are becoming increasingly widespread today.

Catholic schools are places of evangelisation, integral education, inculturation and preparation for dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds²⁰.

By virtue of its mission, a Catholic school shapes the mental powers with persevering care, develops the capacity to make correct judgements, introduces the heritage of the culture created by past generations, trains the sense of values, prepares for professional life, fosters dispositions for mutual understanding, creating friendly coexistence among pupils of different character and origin. Moreover, it constitutes a certain centre in whose efforts and achievements families, teachers, organisations of various kinds that develop cultural, civic, religious, state life and the whole human community should participate simultaneously²¹.

Catholic schools respect freedom of conscience, i.e. they renounce external exertion of physical or moral pressure on their pupils, especially with regard to the religious practices of children and young people. However, they have a serious duty of giving religious formation, adapted to the conditions of their pupils, which are frequently very different²².

By providing quality teaching, a Catholic school presents a Christian vision of man and the world that enables young people to engage in a fruitful dialogue between faith and reason. Its duty is also to transmit the values they are to acquire and the truths they are to discover, with an awareness that all human values find their full accomplishment and, consequently, their unity in Christ.

In addition, Pope John Paul II noted that rapid cultural change, the globalisation of contacts, the relativisation of moral values and the worrying breakdown of family ties give rise to a real sense of insecurity in many young people, which inevitably affects their lifestyles, their learning process and the vision of their own future. This situation is a call for Catholic schools to present an authentic educational programme that will enable young people not only to achieve mental, moral and spiritual maturity, but also to become actively involved in the work of rebuilding the society and to work zealously. They will be able then to build the civilisation of love, brotherhood, solidarity and peace.

¹⁹ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Catechesi Tradendae di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato, al clero e ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa cattolica circa la catechesi nel nostro tempo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1979.

²⁰ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Ecclesia in Africa del Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose e a tutti i fedeli laici circa la chiesa in africa e la sua missione evangelizzatrice verso l'anno 2000*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.

²¹ Jan Paweł II, *Zadania szkoły katolickiej dzisiaj. Przemówienie do uczestników Międzynarodowego Kongresu Katolickich Szkół Europy*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2001, nr 6. Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/szk_katolickie_28042001.html

²² Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Catechesi Tradendae di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato, al clero e ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa cattolica circa la catechesi nel nostro tempo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1979.

A Catholic school strives for cultural objectives and for the truly human formation of young people. Its characteristic features include creating of the atmosphere imbued with the evangelical spirit of freedom and love in the school community, helping young people to develop their own personalities and, simultaneously, to grow according to the new creation they have become through baptism as well as finally ordering the whole of human culture in accordance with the message of salvation, so that the knowledge they gradually acquire about the world, life and man is illuminated by faith. In this way, a Catholic school teaches its pupils to multiply the good of the earthly community effectively and prepares them for serving in the extension of the Kingdom of God, so that they may become, through an exemplary and apostolic life, the saving leaven of the human community²³.

Catholic schools also take up the challenge of a constructive dialogue in the multicultural society of our time, thus making a special contribution to building a more solidary and peaceful world, to fostering an integral humanism open to the ethical and religious dimensions, which is capable of perceiving the importance of knowing and respecting the cultures and spiritual values of different civilisations²⁴. Such an attitude of openness not only allows young people to acquire knowledge in a common educational environment, but also creates a social bond, facilitates mutual recognition through a friendly dialogue and allows them to look into the future together²⁵.

The education system of a Catholic school requires teachers to foster hope in the young and to have the ambition to propose to them the acquisition of the widest and deepest possible knowledge, while at the same time placing high expectations upon them, to bring them up consistently to true human freedom and to lead children and young people to the highest ideal that exists: to Jesus Christ and the message of his Gospel²⁶.

Pope John Paul II pointed out that, in Catholic schools, teachers give true witness to the Gospel through the example of their own lives, competence and professional integrity as well as teaching inspired by the Christian spirit, while preserving the autonomy of science and its various disciplines²⁷. They are prepared with special care, have knowledge, both secular and religious, confirmed by relevant academic titles, and have mastered the art of education corresponding to the achievements of the current era. They bear witness with their lives as well as their teachings, work closely with parents, remember to take into account the gender difference and the purpose of each sex in the family and society in the entire educational process, stimulate the pupils to personal action and, after the school period, continue to support them with advice, friendship and the establishment of special associations imbued with the spirit of the Church. The ministry of these teachers is a true apostleship and at the same time a true service to society²⁸.

c/. University

²³ Jan Paweł II, *Zadania szkoły katolickiej dzisiaj. Przemówienie do uczestników Międzynarodowego Kongresu Katolickich Szkół Europy*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2001, nr 6. Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/szk_katolickie_28042001.html

²⁴ Jan Paweł II, *Dialog między kulturami drogą do cywilizacji miłości i pokoju. Orędzie na XXXIV Światowy Dzień Pokoju, 1 stycznia 2001 roku*, „Społeczeństwo” 2001, nr 1, s. 131-142

²⁵ Jan Paweł II, *Zadania szkoły katolickiej dzisiaj. Przemówienie do uczestników Międzynarodowego Kongresu Katolickich Szkół Europy*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2001, nr 6. Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/szk_katolickie_28042001.html

²⁶ Giovanni Paolo II, *Discorso di Giovanni Paolo II ai membri del consiglio dell'unione mondiale degli insegnanti cattolici, Lunedì, 18 aprile 1983*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1983.

²⁷ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Christifideles Laici di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II su vocazione e missione dei laici nella chiesa e nel mondo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1988

²⁸ Jan Paweł II, *Zadania szkoły katolickiej dzisiaj. Przemówienie do uczestników Międzynarodowego Kongresu Katolickich Szkół Europy*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2001, nr 6. Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/szk_katolickie_28042001.html

Pope John Paul II noted that, in addition to the school itself, the mindset of young people is also influenced by other life factors, such as entertainment, the social environment and the working environment. In particular, those who study are necessarily exposed to such influence: they enter the world of cultural and moral values in the specific atmosphere of their university and are influenced by numerous ideas. This situation calls for catechesis to take this secularisation broadly into account, to relate to the other fields of study and education, so that the Gospel can reach the minds of students right in the area of their studying and their whole culture can be harmonised in the radiance of the light of faith²⁹.

Catholic universities and higher education institutions are a sign of the Church growing as they embrace the truths and experiences of the faith and help to assimilate them through their search. These study centres serve the Church by providing well-prepared staff, by researching important theological and social issues, by developing theology, by assisting the work of inculturation, especially in the sphere of liturgy, by publishing books and spreading Catholic thought, by undertaking research commissioned by bishops, by contributing to the scientific study of cultures.

Catholic research centres provide a public forum for discussion through which Christian views on a human being, family, work, economy, society, politics, international relations or the environment can be widely disseminated through a creative dialogue. They, thus, become a place where the floor is given to others, showing them respect and tolerance³⁰.

d/. Religious formation

Pope John Paul II drew attention to the fact that religious groups, movements and associations are also important for religious education. Secular believers find them to be a particularly good opportunity to be an evangelic sourdough, especially in the areas such as management of the temporal matters according to God's will and fight in the defence of dignity, justice and peace³¹.

Each of the associations becomes a formation that is deeply rooted in apostolic life, at the same time becoming an occasion for integration, substantiation and closer specification of the formation received by its members from other people and communities.

A formation should avail of suitable methods which will assist everyone in full realization of human and Christian vocation. It must always account for the culture of a given area which contributes to the work of such a formation and helps one assess both the values included in a given cultural tradition and those proposed by contemporary culture. Furthermore, one should pay heed to the variety of cultures which may coexist within the same nation.

Such convictions are necessary, above all, in the work of education. It refers mostly to the belief that a true and effective formation may only be achieved when each one takes up and develops responsibility for one's own formation. This responsibility becomes self-education³².

What is crucial for Pope John Paul II was to create associations, movements and clubs of believers aimed at charity and help to the those in need and at Christian presence in the temporal matters. The formations may achieve their objectives to a fuller extent if, in their internal structure and the method of action, they will devote a lot of time to serious religious

²⁹ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Catechesi Tradendae di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato, al clero e ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa cattolica circa la catechesi nel nostro tempo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1979.

³⁰ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Ecclesia in Africa del Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose e a tutti i fedeli laici circa la chiesa in africa e la sua missione evangelizzatrice verso l'anno 2000*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.

³¹ *Ibidem*

³² Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Christifideles Laici di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II su vocazione e missione dei laici nella chiesa e nel mondo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1988.

formation of their members. Thereby, every association of believers in the Church ought to, by principle, be an educator in faith³³.

e/. The mass media

Pope John Paul II emphasised the importance of the mass media in religious education. Mass media is now more than a means of communication: it becomes a reality, which must be evangelised³⁴. They are becoming increasingly present in the society and exert more and more influence on it. Without a doubt, fast popularisation of the media has created better opportunities to learn and broaden one's knowledge.

The care of the world of the media over the children and teenagers is one of the basic indicators of civilization and progress, and, simultaneously, a great task which should be completed by everyone in accordance with their competencies and roles. The task is an element of social pedagogy, which allows one to form new generations, helping them to fully express the good in their hearts, protecting them before contamination and emaciation.

From this point view, the abilities of the new media, such as the Internet and multimedia technologies, ubiquitous and interactive, seem highly promising. One should court the contents to include the good, the truth, and the beauty, to communicate them in such a manner that they effectively serve the culture of life, to show elevated and noble examples of life and paid attention to positive, or even heroic, evidence of human love, to speak of the values of sex and love with respect, not emphasizing what uglifies or humiliates. When interpreting the reality, they ought to avoid focusing on what may arouse or fuel the feelings or attitudes of indifference and contempt towards life or induce one to reject life. By strictly following the rules of faithfulness to the truth, they are to unite freedom, information, respect for another, and deep sense of humanity.

Pope John Paul II highlighted that all Christians should try for the mass media to be the tools of evangelization. Parents, rulers, and mass media workers should attempt to make the media serve common good, above all, to care for the educational needs of children and teenagers. He appealed for realization of programmes for the minors, suited to the needs of children and teenagers³⁵.

Conclusions

The presented analysis of the views on religious education of Pope John Paul II shows that they fall within the tendency of Christian personalism. The teaching of John Paul II contains beliefs about the infinite value of the man, emphasise its personal individuality, draw attention to such organization of the temporal world so that an individual living in it may develop its personality. Such development is not only the goal of a human being, but also the target of the entire social life. For where personal values, such as freedom, dignity, justice, love and peace are valued, social structures may thrive. This is possible only in the case of unity with God. And this, in turn, may be guaranteed only by religious education.

Pope John Paul II paid close attention to the education of children and teenagers. Sadly, due to the editing limitations, His teachings could be presented in a succinct, abbreviated manner only.

³³ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Catechesi Tradendae di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato, al clero e ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa cattolica circa la catechesi nel nostro tempo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1979.

³⁴ Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Ecclesia in Africa del Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose e a tutti i fedeli laici circa la chiesa in africa e la sua missione evangelizzatrice verso l'anno 2000*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.

³⁵ Jan Paweł II, *Media i wychowanie. Przesłanie papieskie do Katolickiej Unii Prasy Włoskiej*. Watykan, 18.04.2002, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2002, nr 6. Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/katolicka_uniapw_18042002

Streszczenie:

Wychowanie religijne w pedagogii Jana Pawła II

Wobec aktualnych przemian społecznych, politycznych i gospodarczych oraz związanych z tym wyzwań i zagrożeń istnieje bezsporna potrzeba przygotowania młodego pokolenia do właściwej interpretacji istniejącej rzeczywistości. Oczekiwania te spełnia myśl pedagogiczna Papieża Jana Pawła II, niekwestionowanego autorytetu moralnego. W artykule przedstawiono koncepcję wychowania religijnego Papieża Jana Pawła II. Analiza tych poglądów została dokonana na podstawie wybranych papieskich encyklik, adhortacji, listów i przemówień. Dokonana analiza poglądów Papieża Jana Pawła II na wychowanie religijne pokazuje, iż mieszczą się one w nurcie personalizmu chrześcijańskiego. Nauki Papieża Jana Pawła II zawierają przekonanie o nieskończonej wartości człowieka, podkreślają osobistą indywidualność, zwracają uwagę na taką organizację świata doczesnego, aby jednostka w nim żyjąca mogła rozwijać swoją osobowość. Rozwój ten nie jest tylko celem osoby ludzkiej, ale celem całego życia społecznego. Bowiem tylko tam, gdzie uznawane są wartości osobowe, takie jak wolność, godność, sprawiedliwość, miłość i pokój, mogą tworzyć się struktury społeczne. Jest to możliwe tylko w przypadku jedności z Bogiem. A to zagwarantować może tylko wychowanie religijne.

Słowa kluczowe: Papież Jan Paweł II, wychowanie religijne, dzieci, młodzież

Summary:

Given the ongoing social, political and economic transitions and related threats and challenges, the need to prepare young generations for proper interpretation of the reality is indisputable. These expectations are met by the educational thought of Pope John Paul II – an unquestionable moral authority. The article presents the concept of religious education of Pope John Paul II. The analysis of his ideas was carried out based on selected papal encyclicals, exhortations, letters and speeches. The presented analysis of the views on religious education of Pope John Paul II shows that they fall within the tendency of Christian personalism. The teaching of John Paul II contain beliefs about the infinite value of the man, emphasise its personal individuality, draw attention to such organization of the temporal world so that an individual living in it may develop its personality. Such development is not only the goal of a human being, but also the target of the entire social life. For where personal values, such as freedom, dignity, justice, love and peace are valued, social structures may thrive. This is possible only in the case of unity with God. And this, in turn, may be guaranteed only by religious education.

Keywords: Pope John Paul II, religious education, children, teenagers

Bibliography

1. Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Catechesi Tradendae di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato, al clero e ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa cattolica circa la catechesi nel nostro tempo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1979.

2. Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica Familiaris Consortio di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II all'episcopato al clero ed ai fedeli di tutta la chiesa Cattolica circa i compiti della famiglia Cristiana nel mondo di oggi*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1981.

3. Giovanni Paolo II. *Discorso di Giovanni Paolo II ai membri del consiglio dell'unione mondiale degli insegnanti cattolici, Lunedì, 18 aprile 1983*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1983.

4. Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Christifideles Laici di sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II su vocazione e missione dei laici nella chiesa e nel mondo*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1988.

5. Giovanni Paolo II, *Esortazione apostolica post-sinodale Ecclesia in Africa del Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose e a tutti i fedeli laici circa la chiesa in africa e la sua missione evangelizzatrice verso l'anno 2000*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.
6. Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Lettera enciclica Evangelium Vitae del sommo pontefice Giovanni Paolo II ai vescovi ai presbiteri e ai diaconi ai religiosi e alle religiose ai fedeli laici e a tutte le persone di buona volontà sul valore e l'inviolabilità della vita umana*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vaticano 1995.
7. Jan Paweł II, *Parati Semper*, KSMAL, Lublin 1985.
8. Jan Paweł II. *Gratissimam Sane*, TUM. Wrocław 1994.
9. Jan Paweł II, *Kobieta wychowawczynią do życia w pokoju. Orędzie na XXVIII Światowy Dzień Pokoju 1 stycznia 1995*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 1995, nr 16, p. 8-10
10. Jan Paweł II, *Dialog między kulturami drogą do cywilizacji miłości i pokoju. Orędzie na XXXIV Światowy Dzień Pokoju, 1 stycznia 2001 roku*, „Społeczeństwo” 2001, nr 1, s. 131-142
11. Jan Paweł II, *Zadania szkoły katolickiej dzisiaj. Przemówienie do uczestników Międzynarodowego Kongresu Katolickich Szkół Europy*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2001, nr 6. Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/szk_katolickie_28042001.html
12. Jan Paweł II, *Media i wychowanie. Przesłanie papieskie do Katolickiej Unii Prasy Włoskiej. Watykan, 18.04.2002*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2002, nr 6, Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/katolicka_uniapw_18042002
13. Jan Paweł II, *Wychowywać do solidarności. Przemówienie do uczestników VIII Zgromadzenia Ogólnego Papieskiej Akademii Nauk Społecznych. Watykan 11.04.2002*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2002, nr 6, Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/pap_ans_11042002
14. Jan Paweł II, *Wychowanie młodego pokolenia zadaniem wszystkich. Przemówienie do uczestników Europejskiego Sympozjum na temat Wyzwania edukacji, Rzym 3.07.2004*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 2004, nr 11-12, Retrieved from: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/przemowienia/edukacja_03072004.html

Prof. uczelni dr hab. Anna Klim-Klimaszewska
Uniwersytet Przyrodniczo-Humanistyczny w Siedlcach
e-mail: anna.klim-klimaszewska@uph.edu.pl
Instytut Pedagogiki
ul. Żytnia 39
08-110 Siedlce