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A Christian family in a “provisional culture”

Contemporary culture can be described as provisional and temporary. A provisional culture is closely bound with such ideologies as secularism, individualism, relativism, practical materialism, hedonism and consumerism. These dominant cultural paradigms threaten the Christian understanding of family, hindering its comprehensive development and its ability to fulfil its basic objectives such as mutual welfare of the spouses or giving birth to and raising offspring. A provisional culture poses a threat and a great challenge for the family. Taking into account the fact that each culture is an expression of the human spirit and an environment for building identity and interpersonal relations, a Christian family must not ignore the problems of the contemporary world, but rather undertake a dialogue with a provisional culture aimed at presenting and promoting the Christian model of family, being the first school of faith, preaching and defending a culture of life.

Key words: Christian family, provisional culture, temporary culture, family's duties regarding contemporary culture.

Introduction to the subject

No one these days needs to be reminded that we live in the era of intensive and profound civilization changes. Contemporary culture has ceased to be a conveyor of faith and Christian values, and faith itself is no longer self-evident in people's everyday lives¹. One can even

¹ See Benedykt XVI, List apostolski *Porta fidei* [Apostolic letter *Porta fidei*] (11.10.2011), no. 2; P. Poupard, *Ten papież jest darem od Boga. Rozmowa z M.-J. Guillaume* [*Ce Pape est un don de Dieu; Entretiens avec Marie-Joëlle Guillaume*], Katowice 2002, p. 90.

perceive a removal of religious content from the tissue of culture, an omission of references to God and the supernatural, which results in obscuring the holistic image of man in favour of incomplete, fragmentary, makeshift, and therefore false conceptions. There is a certain dissonance in many places in the world between Gospel and culture². Benedict XVI warns against this in his address inaugurating the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, in which he states:

This was precisely the great error of the dominant tendencies of the last century (...) Anyone who excludes God from his horizons falsifies the notion of “reality” and, in consequence, can only end up in blind alleys or with recipes for destruction. The first basic point to affirm, then, is the following: only those who recognize God know reality and are able to respond to it adequately and in a truly human manner³.

The inspiration to undertake the subject matter outlined in the title *A Christian family in a “provisional culture”* is the author’s belief that a family’s welfare has a fundamental significance for the future of the world and the Church. Due to the fact that culture has a decisive influence on human life, its shape and preferred values, it is important to have a closer look at its contemporary determinants in order to show its impact on the family. The introductory part of this study presents the general idea of culture and family from a Christian perspective. What follows is a characterisation of a provisional culture and a family’s tasks regarding this contemporary phenomenon.

The presented scientific reflection is based on the statements of the magisterium of the Church, especially the last three popes, and selected literature on the subject. It is not a comprehensive presentation of the subject of a Christian family in the contemporary provisional (temporary) culture, but a sketch and a basis for further, more in-depth research.

The author of the following study fully shares the teachings of John Paul II, who stated that culture

² See Paul VI, Adhortacja apostolska *Evangelii nuntiandi* [The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*](8.12.1975), no. 20.

³ Benedict XVI, *Przemówienie podczas Sesji Inauguracyjnej V Ogólnej Konferencji Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów* [Address Of His Holiness Benedict XVI at The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean] (Aparecida, 13.05.2007), in: Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 297-298.

is a characteristic of human life as such. Man lives a really human life thanks to culture. Human life is culture in this sense too that, through it, man is distinguished and differentiated from everything that exists elsewhere in the visible world: man cannot do without culture. Culture is specific way of man’s “existing” and “being”. Man always lives according to a culture which is specifically his, and which, in its turn, creates among men a tie which is also specifically theirs, determining the inter-human and social character of human existence⁴.

Examining the phenomenon of culture one can easily see that culture is bound to the world of man, the world of values. On the one hand, it is apparent that man is its only creator, and on the other that in its specific way it “creates” man, who is its only purpose and meaning. Culture is a characteristic trait of every community, especially a natural one such as a family⁵.

Due to large discrepancies in the meaning of the term “family” in contemporary family science literature, in order to avoid ambiguity and misunderstandings, this article uses Leon Dyczewski’s definition of a family:

A family is a union of persons and a social institution based on love and free choice of a woman and a man joined by marriage, who answer for each other, give birth and raise the next generation in such a way that it also gives birth and raises a new generation⁶.

This description corresponds with the Holy See’s definition of the family included in the Charter of the Rights of the Family⁷.

John Paul II explains that both the marriage and the family are intended by God in the act of creation and internally directed towards realising itself in Christ. They need His mercy to fully learn and fulfil God’s plan⁸. A family is a communion of persons: a whole collection of interpersonal references: affection, fatherhood-motherhood, sonship, brotherhood, through which each person enters the “family of man”

⁴ John Paul II, Przemówienie wygłoszone w siedzibie UNESCO (Paryż, 2.06.1980) [Address to UNESCO (Paris, 2.06.1980)], no. 6.

⁵ See S. Kowalczyk, *Filozofia kultury. Próba personalistycznego ujęcia problematyki*, Lublin 1996, p. 89-99.

⁶ L. Dyczewski, *Rodzina. Społeczeństwo. Państwo*, Lublin 1994, p. 27.

⁷ *Karta Praw Rodziny [Charter of the Rights of the Family]*. Issued by Komisja Duszpasterstwa Rodzin. Pelplin [b. d. w.]. see John Paul II, Adhortacja apostolska *Familiaris consortio* [Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*] (22.11.1981), no. 46.

⁸ John Paul II, Adhortacja apostolska *Familiaris consortio* [Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*] (22.11.1981), nr 3.

and “God’s family”, that is the Church. For in the family, not only is a person born and gradually, through upbringing, introduced into the human community, but also, through baptism and being raised in faith, introduced into God’s family, that is the Church. The family of man, torn apart by sin, was reunited by the redemptive power of the death and resurrection of Christ. By participating in the redemptive outcome of this mystery, the Christian marriage constitutes a natural environment in which a person is admitted into the great family of Church. Thus, the commandment to grow and multiply, originally addressed to the man and the woman, finds complete fulfilment. It is therefore in the family born out of a sacrament that the Church finds its cradle and the place where it enters generations of men and where they enter the Church⁹.

We need to emphasise the importance of family to the world in the present as well as the past and the future. Following Benedict XVI one can repeat that it is the “patrimony of humanity”,

the school of faith, the training-ground for human and civil values, the hearth in which human life is born and is generously and responsibly welcomed.

It is fundamental and irreplaceable for comprehensive, harmonious and secure personal development and the upbringing of children¹⁰. Pope Francis adds that God in his act of creation entrusted the familial-conjugal union with the task of saving the world from the negative tendencies of contemporary culture:

At the beginning there was the family, at the root of this world culture that saves us... saves us from many, many attacks, from so much destruction, from so many “colonizations”, like that of money or of the ideologies that threaten so much of the world. The family is the basis of our defence!¹¹

⁹ Ibidem no. 15.

¹⁰ Benedict XVI, *Przemówienie podczas Sesji Inauguracyjnej V Ogólną Konferencję Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów* [Address Of His Holiness Benedict XVI at The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean] (Aparecida, 13.05.2007), in: Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 305-306.

¹¹ Francis, *Katecheza 28. Rodzina uratuje świat* (Watykan, 16.09.2015) [Catechesis 28: *The family spirit* (Vatican, 16.09.2015)], in: Franciszek, *Rodzina uratuje świat*, Gliwice 2016, p. 137-138.

The family plays the greatest role in the process of conveying culture. It is responsible for the continuation of the accepted values, as well as the development of new ones taking into consideration the present situation. In this way, it safeguards the social and national identity whose main components are: language, common ancestry, religion, model of society and family, history, tradition, behaviour patterns, attitudes, symbols and art.

The family plays a key educational role since a person comes into the world in a particular family and that is where he or she meets other people, their world of values, viewpoints, religious beliefs, ways of life, objects and devices¹².

It can be said that from the very beginning one encounters the particular culture of his or her family and is mainly influenced by it. Therefore it is not immaterial what values the parents follow in the educational process, what elements of contemporary culture they implement in their community and which of them they deem significant.

What is a “provisional culture”?

One should agree with Pope Francis, who has often stated that transience is a common denominator of many negative phenomena in contemporary culture. It hinders a comprehensive development of a human being and poses a great threat to family. This is why the pontiff describes the prevalent contemporary culture as a “provisional culture”. Its most conspicuous feature is the difficulty of making serious and ultimate commitments.

We live – states Francis – immersed in the so-called culture of fragmentation, of the provisional, which leads us to live in an “à la carte” way, and to be slaves to what is fashionable. This culture fosters the need to always have “side doors” open to other possibilities; it feeds consumerism and forgets the beauty of the simple and austere life, very often causing a great existential emptiness¹³.

¹² See *Wychowanie w rodzinie chrześcijańskiej*, ed. F. Adamski, Kraków 1984; J. Michalski, *Edukacja religijna a epoka ponowoczesna*, „Pedagogia Christiana” no. 1 (21), 2008, p. 229-240.

¹³ Francis, *Przemówienie do uczestników sesji plenarnej Kongregacji ds. Instytutów Życia Konsekrowanego i Stowarzyszeń Życia Apostolskiego* (Watykan, 28.01.2017) [Address Of His Holiness Pope Francis To Participants In The Plenary Assembly Of The Congregation For Institutes Of Consecrated Life And Societies Of Apostolic Life (Vatican, 28.01.2017)], „L'Osservatore Romano”, Polish ed., 2 (390)/2017, p. 14-...

The aforementioned culture means life day by day with no long-term plans, with no responsibility for one's deeds, with no lasting personal, familial and social ties. It is a world devoid of lifelong emotional and spiritual relations, deprived of responsible commitments¹⁴. The factors influencing the spreading of a provisional culture are among others the pace of contemporary life, stress, organization of social life and work¹⁵.

What is closely connected with a "provisional culture" is deep individualism and strong practical relativism as well as materialism and consumerism. They place a human being in the centre of the surrounding world, making him or her the ultimate criterion and point of reference – measure of all reality. The aforementioned ideas weaken social relations, marginalize the care for common good, focus one's attention on the immediate fulfilment of his or her needs and wishes with no consideration for the consequences of their actions¹⁶.

Cardinal Avery Dulles, evoking the teachings of John Paul II (*Centesimus annus* encyclical no. 41) states that the presently dominant consumer culture gives rise to subjectivism and encourages hedonism. Referring to the situation in the United States he states:

If one surveys the films, TV programs, the statistics on marriage, divorce, abortions, births out of wedlock, and the like, it appears that the vast majority of Americans are driven by the search for wealth, comforts, pleasures rather than by loyalty to Christian doctrinal and

¹⁴ See Francis, *Posynodalna adhortacja apostolska Amoris laetitia* [The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*] (19.03.2016), no. 39-50; Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, no. 46-47, Gubin 2014, p. 38-39.

¹⁵ See Francis, *Posynodalna adhortacja apostolska Amoris laetitia* [The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*] (19.03.2016), no. 32-33. An interesting description of civilization changes as the background of a provisional culture see C. McCarthy, M. D. Giardina, S. J. Harewood, J. K. Park, *Contesting Culture: Identity and Curriculum Dilemmas in the Age of Globalization, Postcolonialism, and Multiplicity*, "Harvard Educational Review" no. 73, 2003, p. 449-465; Melosik Z., *Modernizm i postmodernizm we współczesnym dyskursie humanistycznym: konfrontacje i kontrowersje*, in: *Pedagogika jako formacja intelektualna refleksji we współczesnym dyskursie humanistycznym*, ed. J. Gnitecki, Poznań 2005, p. 21-50.

¹⁶ Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, no. 44, Gubin 2014, p. 38.

moral principles. In view of original sin, this problem is constant and perennial, but it seems to have become more acute in recent years¹⁷.

While fully agreeing with the cardinal’s statement, one regrets to add that his diagnosis applies not only on a local scale, but to a great extent on a global one.

Consumerism, which is so characteristic for the culture of the provisional, is actually aimed at satisfying human selfishness. There is no place here for references to transcendence or the other “I”. Its horizons are limited to the present day and moment. The purpose of human activity is fleeting whims, aroused desires for people and objects. A human is treated as a subject experiencing different and still more intensive pleasures, wealth, power, entertainment, luxury, corporeality¹⁸.

In a society immersed in the aforementioned culture there is no place for values and moral principles put forward by the Gospel. They give way to the laws of economics and the principles of efficient, profit-driven economy. The virtue of efficiency takes precedence.

A strong practical relativism – warns Francis – has also spread, according to which everything is judged in relation to a self-realization that is often extraneous to the values of the Gospel. We live in a society in which economic rules substitute moral ones, dictate the laws and impose their own systems of reference at the expense of the values of life; a society where the tyranny of money and profit promotes a vision of existence in which those who do not produce are discarded¹⁹.

A provisional culture is not a culture of life, but death²⁰, it is anti-life mentality²¹ above all due to the fact that it creates laws and imposes

¹⁷ A. Dulles, *Wkład chrześcijaństwa w kulturę: Perspektywa amerykańska* [The Contribution of Christianity to Culture: An American Perspective], in: *Chrześcijaństwo jutra. Materiały II Międzynarodowego Kongresu Teologii Fundamentalnej*, Lublin, 18-21.09.2001, ed. M. Rusecki et al, Lublin 2001, p.167.

¹⁸ See M. Dziura, *Kultura konsumpcji*, „Roczniki Wydziału Nauk Prawnych i Ekonomicznych KUL”, t. V-VI, z. 2, 2009-2010, p. 273-277.

¹⁹ Francis, *Przemówienie do uczestników sesji plenarnej Kongregacji ds. Instytutów Życia Konsekrowanego i Stowarzyszeń Życia Apostolskiego* (Watykan, 28.01.2017) [Address Of His Holiness Pope Francis To Participants In The Plenary Assembly Of The Congregation For Institutes Of Consecrated Life And Societies Of Apostolic Life (Vatican, 28.01.2017)], „L'Osservatore Romano”, Polish ed., 2 (390)/2017, p. 14-...

²⁰ See John Paul II, Encyklika *Evangelium vitae* [Encyclical *Evangelium vitae*] (25.03.1995), no. 11-17.

²¹ John Paul II, Adhortacja apostolska *Familiaris consortio* [Apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio*] (22.11.1981), no. 30: “The teaching of the Church in our

systems in contradiction with the Christian vision of protecting life from conception until natural death and preservation of human dignity. It promotes “the search for success at any price, for easy money and easy pleasure”²². Its characteristic individualism encapsulates a human being in the world of egotistical needs and often manifests itself in the aversion to the institutions of marriage and parenthood. The traditional roles of men and women in the society have been modified, which leads to the search for new attitudes and lifestyles, destroying the in-born identity of a person²³. Furthermore, indifference towards one’s fellow man is widespread.

The outlined cultural context places family in a difficult situation. The aforementioned secular trends, moral relativism, anti-marriage legislation as well as poverty and social insecurity²⁴ in many places all over the world disadvantage the family by depriving it of the possibility to fulfil its basic tasks: complete personal development of its members

day is placed in a social and cultural context which renders it more difficult to understand and yet more urgent and irreplaceable for promoting the true good of men and women. Scientific and technical progress, which contemporary man is continually expanding in his dominion over nature, not only offers the hope of creating a new and better humanity, but also causes ever greater anxiety regarding the future. Some ask themselves if it is a good thing to be alive or if it would be better never to have been born; they doubt therefore if it is right to bring others into life when perhaps they will curse their existence in a cruel world with unforeseeable terrors. Others consider themselves to be the only ones for whom the advantages of technology are intended and they exclude others by imposing on them contraceptives or even worse means. Still others, imprisoned in a consumer mentality and whose sole concern is to bring about a continual growth of material goods, finish by ceasing to understand, and thus by refusing, the spiritual riches of a new human life. The ultimate reason for these mentalities is the absence in people’s hearts of God, whose love alone is stronger than all the world’s fears and can conquer them. Thus an anti-life mentality is born, as can be seen in many current issues: one thinks, for example, of a certain panic deriving from the studies of ecologists and futurologists on population growth, which sometimes exaggerate the danger of demographic increase to the quality of life”.

²² Francis, *Przemówienie do uczestników sesji plenarnej Kongregacji ds. Instytutów Życia Konsekrowanego i Stowarzyszeń Życia Apostolskiego* (Watykan, 28.01.2017) [Address Of His Holiness Pope Francis To Participants In The Plenary Assembly Of The Congregation For Institutes Of Consecrated Life And Societies Of Apostolic Life (Vatican, 28.01.2017)], „*L’Osservatore Romano*”, Polish ed., 2 (390)/2017, p. 14-...

²³ Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 39.

²⁴ See G. L. Müller, *Ubóstwo*, Lublin 2014.

and giving life and upbringing to children²⁵. A provisional culture has a negative effect on the youth and new generations as well as their personal aspirations and life goals. Growing up in a society immersed in pragmatism and narcissistic individualism and consumerism, in a world of political and economic exclusions, they live in the present moment, often in an imaginary space of made-up freedom and equality which is somewhat unreal since it does not have any links to reality, including primarily the world of values or religious connotations. A provisional culture emerges in this way, based on what is “here and now”, seeking happiness in welfare and hedonistic fulfilment, in a new, characteristic lifestyle, different from the traditional way of thinking, feeling and creating relations²⁶.

Symptomatic and meaningful are the words of pope Francis’s warning which relate the characteristic traits of a provisional culture to the Christian understanding of family:

When these factors affect our understanding of the family, it can come to be seen as a way station, helpful when convenient, or a setting in which rights can be asserted while relationships are left to the changing winds of personal desire and circumstances. Ultimately, it is easy nowadays to confuse genuine freedom with the idea that each individual can act arbitrarily, as if there were no truths, values and principles to provide guidance, and everything were possible and permissible. The ideal of marriage, marked by a commitment to exclusivity and stability, is swept aside whenever it proves inconvenient or tiresome. The fear of loneliness and the desire for stability and fidelity exist side by side with a growing fear of entrapment in a relationship that could hamper the achievement of one’s personal goals²⁷.

²⁵ Benedict XVI, *Przemówienie podczas Sesji Inauguracyjnej V Ogólnej Konferencji Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów* [Address Of His Holiness Benedict XVI at The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean] (Aparecida, 13.05.2007), in: Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 305-306.

²⁶ Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 40.

²⁷ Francis, Posynodalna adhortacja apostołska *Amoris laetitia* [The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*] (19.03.2016), no. 34.

The objectives of the Christian family in a provisional culture

Christians may not remain indifferent to the dangers of a provisional culture. One may not abandon the evangelical teachings on marriage and family following the escalating secular ideas, contemporary fashion, sensitivity of the moment or being driven by the society's weak moral condition. The dangers outlined above require concrete actions. It is not at all the case of locking oneself in a "fortress under siege", making accusations towards the reality we witness or enforcing one's own moral norms, but a respectful dialogue, above all with the communities which do not share the Christian vision of the world and presenting the contemporary human with positive Christian guidance on marriage and family in such a way as to motivate him or her to respond to God's call to be a father or mother and undertake a married life as a dynamic process of development and a realization of happiness, joy, safety and love²⁸.

We need to find the right language, arguments and forms of witness that can help us reach the hearts of young people, – calls Francis – appealing to their capacity for generosity, commitment, love and even heroism, and in this way inviting them to take up the challenge of marriage with enthusiasm and courage²⁹.

Present and promote the Catholic model of family

In provisional culture, bordering on ephemerality, one of the most important tasks of the Christian family is presenting and promoting the Christian model of family. Its foundations lie in the sacramental marriage between a man and a woman – the sign God's love for man, Christ and his Church. The union of marriage leads to responsible fatherhood and motherhood. Children are a gift and sign of God's love. The most beautiful justification of marital union and love can be found in the mystery of communion and the love of God³⁰. From this perspective, a Christian family appears like a school of love, a community where it can fully develop. Taking into account the fact that

²⁸ See *ibidem*, no 35-37.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 40.

³⁰ Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 208-210.

the fundamental destiny of a human being is love, the family can easily be deemed the most predisposed to raise to love³¹.

The Christian model of family is presently under threat from, among others, the promotion of the ideology of *gender*, which strikes directly at God’s creation. Following Benedict XVI, pope Francis calls the contemporary attempts to relativise gender a sin against the Creator and an ideological “colonisation of culture” imposed upon children and the youth by educational institutions and the lawmakers³². The post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris laetitia* states that the ideology of gender

Pastoral
theology

denies the difference and reciprocity in nature of a man and a woman and envisages a society without sexual differences, thereby eliminating the anthropological basis of the family. This ideology leads to educational programmes and legislative enactments that promote a personal identity and emotional intimacy radically separated from the biological difference between male and female. Consequently, human identity becomes the choice of the individual, one which can also change over time³³.

Differentiating between *sex* and *gender* destroys the basis of family life, leads to a disconnection between sexual intercourse and love and manipulating the act of conception. It strikes at the dignity of human life and parenthood. Man is trying to somewhat correct the Maker by changing the natural order of creation.

b) Be the first school of faith

As it has already been mentioned, the family constitutes the “patrimony of humanity”. It has been and still is, especially in the contemporary cultural situation, the place and school of community, that is communion in both horizontal (communion of persons) and vertical (communion with God) meaning. Furthermore, the family is a conveyor of values and an environment open to the gift of life. It is in the family that life begins and is welcomed with joy and responsibility.

³¹ Malcher G., *Wychowanie do miłości – rodzina szkołą miłości*, in: *Wychowanie w rodzinie chrześcijańskiej*, ed. F. Adamski, Kraków 1984, p. 306-323.

³² Francis, *Odpowiedzi na zadane pytania podczas spotkania z Konferencją Episkopatu Polski*, Katedra na Wawelu, 27.07.2016 [*Meeting With The Polish Bishops*, Cathedral Of Kraków], in: Franciszek, *Między kanapą a odwagą*, Kraków 2016, p. 64. see also Peeters M. A., *The globalization of the western cultural revolution. Key concepts, operational mechanisms*, Brussels 2007.

³³ Francis, *Posynodalna adhortacja apostolska Amoris laetitia* [The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*] (19.03.2016), no. 56.

As a natural place for raising children it has a very important task of being the first school of faith. The family shows children the aim and meaning of life, it accompanies them in reaching mature faith and discovering the path of vocation. The family has therefore an exceptional educational objective: be the first place for the Christian initiation of children³⁴.

Francis emphasises the fact that conveying faith in a Christian family takes place at all stages of its members' lives, from childhood to old age. By taking care to practise faith together in the family, the parents accompany the development of the children's faith, present the young with new life horizons, whose source is meeting Christ, and help to discover the vocation to love. All family members, while drawing from faithfulness and love of God, learn trustful faith and living by it in a still more sustainable and benevolent way. Thus, they become light for the others. No one and nothing can replace the family as a faith-creating community, where the parents become their children's first teachers of faith³⁵.

Preach and defend a culture of life

Immersed in the contemporary provisional culture, the Christian family has the task of preaching and defending a culture of life. In the centre of this obligation is the apologia of man, his dignity stemming from the act of creation, and his life which needs to be protected from conception until natural death. We must not forget that we were created as a man and a woman in the image of God. Human life is the most precious gift but also a duty³⁶.

³⁴ *Benedict XVI, Posynodalna adhortacja apostolska Sacramentum caritatis* [Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*] (22.02.2007), no. 19; Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 151-152.

³⁵ *Francis, Encyklika Lumen fidei* [Encyclical Letter *Lumen fidei*] (29.06.2013), no. 52-53; Francis, Posynodalna adhortacja apostolska *Amoris laetitia* [The Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*] (19.03.2016), no. 16-17. see also H. Wistuba, *Wychowanie religijne małego dziecka w rodzinie*, in: *Wychowanie w rodzinie chrześcijańskiej*, p. 200-217; J. Palyga, *Rodzice wobec kryzysu wiary swoich dzieci*, in: *Wychowanie w rodzinie chrześcijańskiej*, p. 218-250.

³⁶ Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, Gubin 2014, p. 224-225.

Building a culture of life requires a person to exist in accordance with the general human and evangelical values. While siding with the Christian model of family and with life, one must always pay attention to promote a dialogue between faith and science, for example with the use of an interdisciplinary study such as bioethics. Such activities will give strength to a decisive stance against abortion, euthanasia, genetic and stem cell manipulations. One must emphasise that the fight for human dignity and life always begins at home³⁷.

The apology of a culture of life will require authorities to conduct an appropriate social policy for the benefit of the family, which is the first and most basic social unit. Their activities should involve supporting the weakest and poorest families so that the life conceived in them is always received and protected³⁸. The aforementioned apology of a culture of life will also require the family to engage in the creation of legislation which would protect and promote the Christian image of family, in a dialogue with the authorities aimed at producing rules and regulations in favour of marriage, family and life. Furthermore, it is necessary to take action in order to organise family priesthood, taking active part in movements and associations fighting for the good of the family as well as providing real help for families in need, particularly the under-age, single mothers, widows and widowers, the elderly, the homeless and people suffering from any form of physical or moral poverty³⁹. In order to help and accompany sisters and brothers in need, the Christian family must “go into the byways” and become the “student – missionary”.

Conclusions

A Christian family is an elementary building block of any society, a community which by passing on life and raising future generations, participate in an exceptional way in God’s act of creation. This is why the welfare of the family, its development, stability and security are

³⁷ Ibidem, no. 466-469, p. 225-226.

³⁸ See Francis, *Przemówienie w czasie spotkania z władzami państwowymi i korpusem dyplomatycznym*, Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, 27.07.2016 [*Meeting With The Authorities, The Civil Society And The Diplomatic Corps, Address Of His Holiness Pope Francis*, Kraków, Courtyard Of Wawel Castle], in: Franciszek, *Między kanapą a odwagą*, Kraków 2016, p. 36-37.

³⁹ Aparecida, V Ogólna Konferencja Episkopatów Ameryki Łacińskiej i Karaibów [The Fifth General Conference Of The Bishops Of Latin America And The Caribbean], *Dokument Końcowy, Jesteśmy uczniami i misjonarzami Jezusa Chrystusa, aby nasze narody miały w Nim życie*, no. 469, Gubin 2014, p. 226-227.

of a great importance for the future of the world and the Church. The family serves a very important culture-creating role, but one must not forget that it is also greatly influenced by the surrounding culture.

Contemporary culture can be described as provisional and temporary. It manifests itself in everyday life as an inability to make serious and ultimate commitments and long-lasting decisions. A provisional culture is closely bound with such ideologies as secularism, individualism, relativism, practical materialism, hedonism and consumerism. In a provisional culture there is no place for evangelical values. They give way to market mechanisms, the rules of efficiency and everything which brings profit and pleasure. These dominant cultural paradigms threaten the Christian understanding of family, hindering its comprehensive development and its ability to fulfil its basic objectives such as mutual welfare of the spouses or giving birth to and raising offspring. A provisional culture poses a threat and a great challenge for the family.

Taking into account the fact that each culture is an expression of the human spirit and an environment for building identity and interpersonal relations, a Christian family must not ignore the problems of the contemporary world, but rather undertake a dialogue with a provisional culture aimed at presenting and promoting the Christian model of family, being the first school of faith, preaching and defending a culture of life. What it first and foremost involves is communicating a positive Christian message on marriage and family and showing the beauty of a relationship between the two people who have responded to God's call to build a family. Through teaching and giving example, family life needs to be presented as a dynamic process of personal development and achieving happiness through the spouse's, the parent's and the children's love.

RODZINA CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKA W „KULTURZE PROWIZORYCZNOŚCI”

Współczesną kulturę można określić mianem prowizorycznej lub tymczasowej. Kultura prowizoryczności ściśle łączy się z prądami ideowymi: sekularyzmem, indywidualizmem, relatywizmem, materializmem praktycznym, hedonizmem i konsumpcjonizmem. Zarysowane dominanty kulturowe godzą w chrześcijańskie rozumienie rodziny, uniemożliwiając jej wszechstronny rozwój i realizację podstawowych celów, jakimi są wzajemne dobro małżonków oraz zrodzenie i wychowanie potomstwa. Kultura prowizoryczności zagraża rodzinie i stanowi dla niej wielkie wyzwanie. W związku z tym, że każda kultura

jest wyrazem ludzkiego ducha i środowiskiem budowania tożsamości i relacji międzyludzkich, rodzina chrześcijańska nie może zamknąć się na problemy współczesności, lecz powinna podjąć z kulturą prowizoryczności pewną formę dialogu, którego wyznacznikami są następujące zadania: ukazywać i promować chrześcijański model rodziny, być pierwszą szkołą wiary, głosić i bronić kultury życia.

Słowa kluczowe: rodzina chrześcijańska, kultura prowizoryczności (tymczasowości), zadania rodziny wobec współczesnej kultury.

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