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Theological Preparation of Religion Teachers in the Light of Current Indications of the Church in Poland

In the course of His teaching activities, Jesus Christ often addressed His disciples separately in order to make their reality clearer and more complete, to instruct them and thus prepare them for future work (cf. Mk 4:34). All that became the content of the teaching of the multitudes, Jesus especially directed to His disciples so that they could live these truths and teach them to others. It was not only formation on the spiritual level, but also education on the intellectual level, when He explained the writings (cf. Lk 24:32) and allowed them to understand openly the mysteries of the kingdom, and to teach others by means of a parable (cf. Mt 13:11; Lk 8:10). This formation, which was so clearly and repeatedly demonstrated by the Evangelists, makes it possible to affirm how important and necessary it is to properly and solidly prepare contemporary preachers of the message of salvation. This is pointed out by John Paul II in one of his catechesis dedicated to evangelization and catechesis, where he stresses the responsibility for the formation of catechesis as an essential element of the common commitment to the development and vitality of the Church. It points to the need for the formation of all those who are responsible for teaching the truths of faith, that is, pastors, catechists, and all those who have expressed their willingness to help proclaim the Good News.² The Holy Father states that “doctrinal formation is

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² Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Wierzę w Boga Ojca Stworzyciela*, red. S. Dziwisz, J. Kowalczyk, T. Rakoczy, Citta del Vaticano 1987, p. 30.

a fundamental need, given that a catechist cannot limit himself to teaching a minimum of truths learned and repeated from memory”.³

This paper will analyse the level of intellectual formation in terms of theological preparation. This is only one of several components of intellectual formation, but it is extremely important as the lack of appropriate theological preparation among those who have undertaken the catechization may lead to impoverishment of the catechetical content, poor results and required fruits in the religiousness of the catechized. This is due to the fundamental principle of integrity of content, about which John Paul II wrote that

each of Jesus’ disciples has the right to receive the word of faith, full and complete in its sharpness and strength, it must not be mutilated, falsified or impoverished. Whoever at any point violates the integrity of the message, thereby dangerously sterilizes the catechesis itself and threatens its fruits. [...] No catechist is allowed to divide the heritage of faith into what he considers to be important and unimportant, so as to teach one and keep the other silent.⁴

Theological formation of religion teachers in Church documents

General Catechetical Directory from 1971 is the first element of formation to mention the study of theology and the assimilation of a healthy doctrinal heritage. Simultaneously, it adds that assimilation of knowledge is not the end of formation, although it is an important and fundamental space.⁵

The need for ongoing doctrinal formation based on the teaching of the Church’s Magisterium is also emphasized by the Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, in which the Pope encourages all members of the Church, including young alumni, members of religious families, as well as all those who are called to pastoral and catechetical service, to participate in “the catechesis of the School of the Church, the great catechist and at the same time the great Catechised”.⁶ The need to educate catechists in theology becomes the basis for their later work, where, as the Exhortation points out, theology will serve as a servant to the faith, and teachers of faith themselves will find a certain and irreplaceable source.⁷

³ Ibidem, p. 31.

⁴ Jan Paweł II, *Adhortacja Apostolska Catechesi tradendae* 30, Watykan 1979, (hereinafter CT).

⁵ Cf. Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, *Ogólna Instrukcja Katechetyczna* 111, 112, Watykan 1971, (hereinafter DCG).

⁶ CT 45.

⁷ Cf. CT 61.

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, we read about the value of the study and unity of intellectual education — theological with spiritual and anthropological formation.⁸ The importance of appropriate intellectual formation is also stressed in religious formation programs, stating that

solid intellectual formation, which corresponds to the objectives of the Institute's own vocation and mission, lies at the heart of a balanced and rich life of prayer and contemplation. Therefore, study and adapted renewal are recommended as factors for a healthy rebirth of religious life in the Church and for the society of our time. Let the studies not be undertaken in the sense of misunderstood self-fulfilment, i.e. for personal purposes, but to respond to the requirements of the apostolic plans of the religious family itself according to the needs of the Church.⁹

The same thought is developed by the *General Directory for Catechesis* from 1997, listing what a catechist should know to perform his task well. It is necessary, therefore, that the catechist knows in depth the message he is giving, the addressee and the social context in which he lives.¹⁰ In the following, he points out the essential contents of doctrinal formation to be found in the intellectual study, namely:

- three great stages in salvation history: the Old Testament, the life of Jesus Christ, and the history of the Church; [and]
- three great pillars of the Christian messages: symbol of faith, liturgy, moral life and prayer.¹¹

The whole biblical-theological formation should be synthetic the teacher of religion to mature in the faith and enabling him to justify the hope of the present mission.

According to further indications, the theological formation should be close to human experience, which is defined as combining the various aspects of the Christian message with the daily life of men and women. It introduces the principle of linking theory to practice, thus applying a specific catechetical style. It should also enable the catechist not only to transmit the gospel message correctly,

⁸ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Adhortacja Apostolska Pastores dabo vobis* 51, Watykan 1992, (hereinafter PDV).

⁹ Kongregacja ds. Zakonów i Instytutów Świeckich, *Wymiar kontemplacyjny życia zakonnego* 19 [in:] *Życie konsekrowane w dokumentach Kościoła od Vaticanum II do Vita consecrata*, red. B. Hylla, Kraków 1998, p. 201.

¹⁰ Cf. Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, *Dyrektorium ogólne o katechizacji* 238, Watykan 1997, (hereinafter DOK).

¹¹ DOK 240.

but to help prepare children to receive it actively and to be able to verify what is faithful in the spiritual path of the catechized persons.¹²

The Church's documents draw attention to the need for "an adequate knowledge of Catholic science and to reach the level of theology treated scientifically in higher catechetical institutes. As if the soul of all this formation is to be Scripture".¹³ Also in the documents on religious formation, the importance of the adequate biblical study and the time that consecrated persons devote "to studying the Word of God and lectio divina in its quadruple aspect: reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation are underlined with great seriousness".¹⁴ In the above instruction, we also find remarks concerning the inclusion in the formation programs of classes in "biblical, dogmatic, spiritual and pastoral theology, especially the study of the doctrine of consecrated life and the charism of the institute".¹⁵

Theological teaching currently pays particular attention to the need to learn about the Church. Acknowledging the mystery of the Church, its essence and its mission will allow catechetics to find themselves in this deep reality and to approach their ministry as a service to the Church properly.¹⁶ It also leads to a committed attitude and recognition of one's responsibility for the Church, which M. Majewski stresses when he draws attention to the need to follow the life of the Church, which will be manifested by getting to know "the current professional literature, getting to know its main problems, following the processes of developing human life".¹⁷ If we transfer these contents to the religious ground, the need for appropriate religious formation to be rooted in the community of the Church and the service of the Church becomes all the more apparent.

The outstanding ecclesial character of religious life urges us to carry out formation in every aspect of it in profound communion with the universal Church. However, this should be done in such a way that each Religious can live out his vocation

¹² Cf. DOK 241.

¹³ DCG 112; Cf. S. Łabendowicz, *Formacja katechetów w Dokumentach Kościoła i literaturze katechetyczno-dydaktycznej po Soborze Watykańskim II*, Lublin–Radom 1994, pp. 94–110; Cf. M. Majewski, *Teologia Katechezy*, Wrocław 1989, pp. 13–19; Cf. S. Kulpaczyński, *Nowe ukierunkowanie permanentnej formacji katechetów*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 6 (1983), pp. 170; Cf. DOK 240; Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucja o Objawieniu Bożym 21–26* [in:] Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucje, Dekrety, Deklaracje*, Poznań 1986.

¹⁴ Kongregacja ds. Instytutów Życia Konsekwowanego i Stowarzyszeń Życia Apostolskiego, *Instrukcja: Wskazania dotyczące formacji w instytutach zakonnych 76* [in:] *Życie konsekrowane w dokumentach...*, p. 334.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 61, p. 328.

¹⁶ Cf. S. Łabendowicz, *Formacja katechetów...*, pp. 110–123; Cf. S. Kulpaczyński, *Nowe ukierunkowanie permanentnej formacji...*, p. 171; Cf. J. Bagrowicz, *Formacja katechetów w świetle dokumentów Kościoła*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 123 (1994), p. 223.

¹⁷ M. Majewski, *Co z permanentną formacją katechetów*, "Katecheta" 2–3 (1978), p. 106.

concretely and effectively in this local Church and for the local Church to which he is sent according to the mission of his Institute.¹⁸

Both laymen and clergy, especially religious, by practising the spirit of communion and appropriate ecclesial formation on a daily basis, become witnesses and missionaries of the communion of the Church and the people in school reality.¹⁹ Nowadays, there is a reflection to include in the formation programs of diocesan and religious seminaries the theology of the community as a development of the doctrine of the Church.²⁰

Formation in the social doctrine of the Church helps the catechist to look properly at the surrounding reality of today's world. Thanks to the social teaching of the Church and all the knowledge of doctrine, the catechist will be able to meet the problems of today's man and the world with a proper understanding of what can be accepted and what must be rejected²¹. The Congregation for the Clergy states that

the social sciences provide an insight into the social and cultural context in which a person lives and which has a strong influence on this person. It is necessary, therefore, that the formation of a catechist should evaluate the sociological, cultural and economic conditions, and that the extent to which these facts of community life can influence the process of evangelization should be determined²².

One of the most important elements of intellectual preparation will be the proper entry into the liturgical practice of the Church. The study of the sacred liturgy, together with the study of Scripture and the teaching of the Church, will allow catechetics to unite even more closely with Jesus Christ the Master and will be useful in spiritual life and pastoral practice.²³ In this context, religious persons, as teachers of religion, for whom the liturgical practice plays a significant role in forming the first religious community itself and then the individual religious become guides for students in discovering the beauty of the liturgy. *The guidelines of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life* emphasize the need to study the liturgy, its history, variability of forms and

¹⁸ Kongregacja ds. Zakonów i Instytutów Świeckich, *Wymiar...*, 17, p. 200.

¹⁹ Cf. Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, *Osoby konsekrowane w ich misja w Kościele* 42, Poznań 2003.

²⁰ Cf. Z. Kacprzak, *Przygotowanie katechetów w świetle dokumentów Synodu Biskupów 1977*, "Collectanea Theologica" 48 (1978) 4, p. 148.

²¹ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Wierzę w Boga...*, p. 31; Cf. CT 56–57; Cf. PDV 51.

²² DOK 242.

²³ Cf. S. Kulpaczyński, *Nowe ukierunkowania permanentnej formacji*, pp. 170–171; Cf. S. Łabendowicz, *Formacja katechetów...*, pp. 124–132.

theological meaning, in which future religious should benefit as teachers of religion.²⁴ Also, the comments on the development of the religious formation program indicate the need to include classes in history, liturgy and canonical law.²⁵

The Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, which discusses in great detail the whole dimension of intellectual formation, at the same time emphasizes the proximity of the priestly and pastoral ministry in terms of catechesis. The document draws attention to the need and value of studying philosophy, which leads to a deeper understanding and interpretation of the person, his freedom, his relationship with the world and God.²⁶ The same issue with regard to religious people is raised by the Congregation's Instruction, stating that the religious must be provided with basic philosophical formation that allows them to know God and to form a Christian vision of the world.²⁷

In the following section, presenting in detail the whole study of theology, two directions in which theological reflection is aimed are presented. The first is the study of Scripture discussed above, and the second is "the study of dogmatic theology, moral theology, theology of spirituality, canon law and pastoral theology".²⁸ Among the many problems that exist today, the Holy Father draws attention to the need to evangelize cultures and enculturate the message of faith. It is a problem that can also be seen in other documents and literature of recent years.²⁹

The responsibility for formation, as emphasized in the Church's documents, lies with bishops and extends to pastors, parish priests, parents and all members of the Church, in the proper part of each one.³⁰ The Second Vatican Council places the responsibility for the spiritual and intellectual formation of the religious at the hands of their superiors, who are to cooperate with the relevant institutions of the Holy See and bishops.³¹ The subsequent instructions and documents of the Church's teaching enumerate in detail the tasks of the Superiors and indicate

²⁴ Kongregacja ds. Instytutów Życia Konsekwowanego i Stowarzyszeń Życia Apostolskiego, *Instrukcja...*, 77, p. 335.

²⁵ Cf. 61, p. 328.

²⁶ Cf. PDV 51–56.

²⁷ Kongregacja ds. Instytutów Życia Konsekwowanego i Stowarzyszeń Życia Apostolskiego, *Instrukcja...*, 61, p. 328.

²⁸ PDV 54.

²⁹ Cf. PDV 55; Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucja duszpasterska o Kościele w świecie współczesnym* 53 [in:] Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucje, Dekrety, Deklaracje*, Poznań 1986; Cf. CT 53; Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Adhortacja Apostolska Vita consecrata* 79–80, Watykan 1996, (hereinafter Vc); Cf. S. Łabendowicz, *Formacja katechetów...*, pp. 132–143.

³⁰ *Kodeks Prawa Kanonicznego*, Watykan 1983, Kanon 773–780, (hereinafter KPK); Cf. DCG 1; DOK 1–4.

³¹ Cf. Sobór Watykański II, *Dekret o przystosowanej odnowie życia zakonnego* 18 [in:] Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucje, Dekrety, Deklaracje*, Poznań 1986; Cf. Kongregacja ds. Zakonów i In-

their role in the formation process of the Religious. “The whole religious tradition shows that the success of the formation work depends decisively on the Formators.”³² The essential tasks of educators and formators are, above all, to evaluate, in the initial phase of formation, the authenticity of the religious vocation, to help them to conduct a personal dialogue with God and discover the path of God’s will, to accompany them on God’s paths through the dialogue, to provide spiritual guidance, to provide solid doctrine and practical advice, to monitor and evaluate successively in the light of the fruits of the Holy Spirit the formation journey they have made and the responsibility to undertake the tasks.³³

Such broadly understood intellectual formation is to lead to a deepening of the faith life of the person serving in catechesis. This is one of the basic objectives of theological-doctrinal preparation. According to the Holy Father, this intellectual preparation leading to a deepening of the faith should inspire a missionary spirit in all, as the fruit of an insightful and sincere study. This spirit should characterize all catechists, which will allow them to devote all their strength and talents and make them more aware of the importance of their work.³⁴

The doctrinal preparation that takes place within the framework of studies and later on in continuing formation should help the catechist to be able to serve. However, besides the theological knowledge itself, it is important that the catechist is able to develop his own catechetical style.³⁵

Current indications of the Church in Poland on the theological education of religion teachers

Theological education currently taking place at universities in Poland is regulated by the 1993 Concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Poland. In Article 15 we read that the Catholic church has “the right to freely establish and run academies, including universities, separate faculties, and higher seminars of clergy and research institutes”.³⁶ On the basis of an international concordat agreement, the Polish State recognizes degrees and academic titles awarded at church universities and regulates the legal status of faculties of Catholic theology at state

stytutów Świeckich, *Wymiar...*, 23, p. 203; Cf. Kongregacja ds. Zakonów i Instytutów Świeckich, *Zakonnicy i promocja ludzka 34–35* [in:] *Życie konsekrowane w dokumentach...*, p. 190.

³² Kongregacja ds. Instytutów Życia Konsekrowanego i Stowarzyszeń Życia Apostolskiego, *Instrukcja...*, 30, p. 315.

³³ Cf. ibidem; Cf. Vc 66.

³⁴ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Wierzę w Boga...*, p. 32.

³⁵ Cf. DOK 244.

³⁶ *Konkordat między Stolicą Apostolską i Rzeczpospolitą Polską z dnia 28 lipca 1993 r.*, Dziennik Ustaw RP 51 (1998) 318.

universities. It is worth mentioning at this point that within the framework of Catholic colleges, there are papal colleges and universities which educate within the framework of ecclesiastical teachings, such as: theology, Christian philosophy, Church history and canon law. On the basis of the law in force, the Church conducts theological education, both clerical and secular, in the form of uniform full-time master studies and uniform part-time studies.

In addition to the church universities, after 1989, theological faculties returned to the state universities. The tradition of creating such a university structure dates back to the development of science and academia, and the prestige of the university was determined by a good theological faculty.

In the return of theology to universities, secular scientific circles saw an opportunity for themselves, because thanks to the “queen of sciences” they were able to gain a deeper research perspective and develop clear ethical criteria in many still developing fields of modern science, such as genetic engineering. Today, church circles speak without fear of confronting the teaching of the Church with contemporary intellectual currents, which is inevitable at universities. In the past, however, the bishops treated the functioning of theological faculties within secular university structures not without fear of the distance between local teaching and Catholic doctrine, which was not uncommon in Western European universities.³⁷

According to the Act on Higher Education, supervision over the theological faculties operating at state universities is exercised by authorized church authorities. The Great Chancellor of a faculty or a separate university is always the bishop of the diocese where the institution is located. It is he who represents the faculty to the Holy See and the Holy See to the faculty, supervises the curriculum of Catholic theology, takes care of the conformity of the content with Catholic doctrine, and gives canonical mission to the academic staff.

The training of clergy, both diocesan and religious, takes place within the framework of clerical seminaries, which have so far operated on the basis of cooperation agreements concluded on the basis of the Apostolic Constitution of *Sapientia Christiana* with ecclesiastical colleges and state universities, where there are faculties of theology with the right to conduct master studies and to grant academic degrees. Currently, the legal basis is the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium* on universities and ecclesiastical faculties, signed by Pope Francis on 8 December 2017.³⁸

³⁷ Ł. Kasper, *Katolickie uczelnie i wydziały teologiczne*, eKAI, 4 grudnia 2018, <https://ekai.pl/katolickie-uczelnie-i-wydzialy-teologiczne/> [accessed 14.02.2020.].

³⁸ Franciszek, *Konstytucja Apostolska Veritatis gaudium o uniwersytetach i wydziałach kościelnych*, Rzym 2018.

According to Article 69 of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium*, “the task of the theological faculty is to deepen and systematically explain, according to its method, the Catholic doctrine — taken with the greatest care from God’s Revelation; moreover, it seeks reliable solutions to human problems in the light of that Revelation”.³⁹ The above task should be carried out by the theological faculties through an in-depth study of Sacred Scripture, which is to become the soul of theology

The individual disciplines of theology should be taught in such a way that the internal principles of the proper subject of each of them, and in conjunction with other disciplines, such as canon law and philosophy, as well as the anthropological sciences, clearly show the unity of all theological teaching, and all the disciplines should be directed to the deepest knowledge of the Mystery of Christ in order to proclaim it more effectively to the People of God and to all nations.⁴⁰

The scheme of theological studies proposed by Pope Francis includes a basic cycle, called uniform studies in Poland, which last a minimum of five years, i.e. ten semesters, during which the first two years include philosophical studies. An important task of theological studies is to show the organic unity of all Catholic science, and it is a special duty of the faculties of theology to take care of the theological formation, both clergy and laity, who are preparing to perform special functions in the Church, among which teachers of religion should be distinguished.⁴¹

Detailed regulations concerning the implementation of indications by higher education institutions of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium* were included by the Congregation for Catholic Education in a separate document called Executive Orders.⁴² With regard to the issue of theological education in question, the Congregation for Catholic Education, in its Executive Order, sets out the requirements necessary for implementation in order for the aforementioned unit to

³⁹ Ibidem, Article 69.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, Article 70.

⁴¹ Cf. ibidem, Article 74, 76.

⁴² Kongregacja Wychowania Katolickiego, *Zarządzenia wykonawcze Kongregacji ds. Edukacji Katolickiej dla wiernej realizacji Konstytucji Apostolskiej Veritatis gaudium*, Tarnów 2018, pp. 61–94. The executive document sets forth, among other things, issues concerning the unit assessing the quality of education to which ecclesiastical schools are subject, namely AVEPRO (Article 1 §2), the principles for approving the statutes and curriculum of studies (Article 7), the responsibility of the Conference of Local Church Bishops for the functioning and theological education of ecclesiastical higher education institutions and faculties of theology (Article 5), and the definition of the tasks of the authorities of higher education institutions, including the Great Chancellor, Rector, and Dean (Articles 9–17), the qualifications and requirements for lecturers taking up courses in theology (Articles 18–25), the rights and obligations of students (Articles 26–29).

approve the study programme. The curriculum of the theological studies must primarily specify:

- main and subsidiary disciplines as compulsory and voluntary,
- practical classes and seminars, during which students' own activity and work is also evaluated,
- criteria for assessing student performance.⁴³

In order to show the specificity of the education of future teachers of religion, it will be particularly important to implement the guidelines of the Congregation for Catholic Education, contained in Article 53, which states that through in-depth studies of the biblical, patristic, historical, liturgical and pastoral sciences, the students “were led to a deep assimilation of the matter and, together with the formation of personal synthesis and the acquisition of a method of scientific research, became thus capable of adequately presenting sacred doctrine”.⁴⁴ The fulfilment of the above mentioned task will be possible thanks to the application of the following scheme of obligatory disciplines in study programmes:

- philosophical required for theology, namely systematic philosophy and history of philosophy; metaphysics; (understood as philosophy of being and natural theology); philosophy of nature; philosophy of man; moral and political philosophy and logic of philosophy of cognition;
- theological, such as: Sacred Scripture (introduction and exegesis); fundamental theology with issues concerning ecumenism, non-Christian religions and atheism as well as other cultural currents; dogmatic theology; moral theology and theology of spirituality; pastoral theology; liturgy; Church history, pathology and archaeology; and canon law;
- auxiliary, especially human science; Latin and biblical languages.⁴⁵

In addition to the higher-ranking indications for theological education at ecclesiastical colleges and faculties, in 2016 the Holy See published the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, as the relevant norms for the formation of candidates for the priesthood.⁴⁶ In the above document, the Congregation for the Clergy stresses the integral nature of priestly formation, which is to be carried out in terms of human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral development. The intellectual dimension in the light of the authors of the *Ratio* should lead the candidates for the priesthood to acquire a solid philosophical and theological competence

⁴³ Cf. *ibidem*, Articles 30–34.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, Article 53.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, Article 55.

⁴⁶ Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, *Dar powołania do kapłaństwa Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, L'Osservatore Romano, Watykan, 8 grudnia 2016, <http://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/Ratio%20Fundamentalis/Dar%20powo%C5%82ania%20do%20kap%C5%82a%C5%84stwa.pdf> [accessed 11.02.2020.].

“so that they can proclaim the gospel message in a way that is credible and understandable to today’s man, enter into dialogue with the modern world and defend with the light of reason the truthfulness of faith, showing its beauty”.⁴⁷ The perspective of ministry outlined above clearly fits into the catechetical work and the tasks of proclaiming the gospel message, conducting dialogue with contemporary man and defending the faith by clergy as teachers of religion.

In detail, the Congregation for the Clergy, in the document under discussion, defines the organization of studies for future clergy, emphasizing that

all disciplines should be taught in such a way that their internal connection with each other is clearly emphasized, thus avoiding fragmentation. It is a harmonious and integral process in which all the objects are important “building blocks” for revealing the mystery of Christ and the Church, also serving to mature an authentic Christian vision of man and the world.⁴⁸

The clearly emphasized necessity of proper selection and quality of lectures is a guarantee of appropriate intellectual formation. This is also served by the recommendation to the Episcopates of each country to create in the local *Ratio* a list of subjects for priestly formation, at the stage of propedeutical, philosophical, theological and pastoral-practical studies.⁴⁹ For the first stage of the formation, the Holy See proposes, among other things, subjects that are an introduction to reading Sacred Scripture, the mysteries of Christ and the Church, the theology of priesthood and the liturgy, as well as subjects covering the study of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, liturgical books, documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Teacher’s Office of the Church, Christian spirituality, the history of the Church, the lives of the saints, as well as humanistic culture and psychological elements.⁵⁰ In relation to the study of philosophy, the authors of the document propose to include in the list of subjects, classes in systematic philosophy, metaphysics, history of philosophy, philosophical anthropology, logic, aesthetics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy and religion.⁵¹ In the group of theological subjects, *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* mentions, like the later Apostolic Consitution *Veritatis gaudium*, the study of Sacred Scripture, liturgy, fundamental theology and ecumenism, dogmatic with sacramentology, moral, pastoral, missiology, Church history and canon law, and Catholic social teaching. A certain new space proposed in the study is to address the issue of the

⁴⁷ Ibidem, No 116.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, No 153.

⁴⁹ Cf. ibidem, No 154.

⁵⁰ Cf. ibidem, No 157.

⁵¹ Cf. ibidem, No 159–162.

“ecological problem” to help future clergy to recognize the greatness and beauty of creation and the urgency of caring for all that is related to creation.⁵²

Based on new documents valid for the entire universal Church, the Commission of the Polish Episcopal Conference for the Clergy presented the application *Ratio institutionis sacerdotalis pro Polonia (The Way for Formation of Presbyters in Poland)*, for approval by the Holy See in September 2019. It regulates the formation of future priests and the system of their training. The most recent document consists of several parts, of which the first three chapters (1–3) describe the context and the foundations of priestly formation in Poland, the next four (chapters 4–7) present the paths of formation, while the eighth chapter contains the *Ratio Studiorum* as an integral part of the issues addressed. The last part is the guidance on permanent formation of priests.⁵³

Regarding the implemented provisions concerning the formation of future priests for catechetical work, the postulate that formation in the seminaries should lead to the formation of candidates for the priesthood as disciples-missionaries and friends of Jesus who conform themselves to Christ the Priest, Head, Servant, Shepherd and Spouse of the Church is worth noting. In this way, future priests will be ready for the gospel lifestyle as disciples of Jesus and will be prepared to undertake the mission of the apostles in the modern world. This objective is to be served by the character of unity, community, missionary and integrity of formation.⁵⁴

The authors of the Polish document defining the principles of formation of future priests, stress the need for integral formation on the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral level. Responsible and integral formation, including the propedeutical stage and the philosophical and theological intellectual formation stages, is to build the personal and Christian maturity of the evangeliser and catechist.

It is pointed out that “the uniform master studies of the alumna form an integral whole with its formation for the priesthood”. Intellectual formation is understood not only as a space of knowledge or a tool to acquire more information from particular disciplines. It is intended to help presbyters to listen carefully to the Word of God and to the voice of the ecclesial community, so that they learn to discern the signs of the times.⁵⁵

⁵² Cf. *ibidem*, No 166–174.

⁵³ M. Przeworski, *Episkopat przyjął nowe zasady formacji w seminariach duchownych*, eKAI, 8 października 2019, <https://ekai.pl/episkopat-przyjal-nowe-zasady-formacji-w-seminariach-duchownych/> [accessed 14.02.2020].

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

Preparation to teach religion at school at all levels of education, both clerical and lay teachers of religion, requires the adaptation of curricula and forms of education, in accordance with applicable laws on higher education and professional qualifications, which are in force in the educational law.

The professional qualification required for teachers of religion is specified in:

- the Act on the Education System of 27 September 1991, with subsequent amendments;
- the Regulation of the Minister of National Education on the conditions and method of organizing religion lessons in public kindergartens and schools of 14 April 1992 with subsequent amendments;
- the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12 March 2009 with subsequent amendments on the detailed qualifications required from teachers,

where we read in § 7, “qualifications for teaching religion are held by a person who meets the qualification requirements set out in the agreements between the minister in charge of education and upbringing and the Polish Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church and the competent authorities of churches or other religious associations”.⁵⁶ The latest legal regulations concerning professional qualifications required of teachers, including religion teachers, are also specified in the *Regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 25 July 2019 on the standard of education preparing for the teaching profession*.⁵⁷

In addition to the above mentioned form of theological education for teachers of religion, in the framework of uniform master’s degree courses in theology, whether full-time or part-time, since 2016 there has also been a possibility of gaining professional qualifications through post-graduate studies. This was done through the amendment of the Agreement between the Polish Bishops’ Conference and the Minister of National Education of 31 May 2016 on the professional qualifications required of teachers of religion and on the basis of the Resolution of the Polish Bishops’ Conference of 7 June 2016 on the minimum requirements for the education of teachers of religion.⁵⁸ At present, the minimum requirements in

⁵⁶ *Obwieszczenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 20 czerwca 2013 r. w sprawie ogłoszenia jednolitego tekstu rozporządzenia Ministra Edukacji Narodowej w sprawie szczególnych kwalifikacji wymaganych od nauczycieli oraz określenia szkół i wypadków, w których można zatrudnić nauczycieli niemających wyższego wykształcenia lub ukończonego zakładu kształcenia nauczycieli*, Dziennik Ustaw RP 1207 (2013).

⁵⁷ *Rozporządzenie Ministra Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego z dnia 25 lipca 2019 r. w sprawie standardu kształcenia przygotowującego do wykonywania zawodu nauczyciela*, Dziennik Ustaw RP 1450 (2019).

⁵⁸ *Uchwała Konferencji Episkopatu Polski z dnia 7 czerwca 2016 roku w sprawie minimalnych wymogów w kształceniu nauczycieli religii* [in:] J. Szpet, M. Gogolik, *Nauczanie religii w polskim przedszkolu i szkole, Katecheza, rodzina, parafia i szkoła*, t. 16, 2018, annex pp. 155–156.

the education of teachers of religion, specified in the above mentioned Resolution of the Polish Bishops' Conference, were placed in the latest, binding Agreement between the Polish Bishops' Conference and the Minister of National Education of 3 April 2019 on professional qualifications required of teachers of religion.⁵⁹

In the discussed issue of theological education, the current indications of the Polish Bishops specify that "the theological and catechetical post-graduate studies [...] include the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the field of theological subjects (biblicism, dogmatic theology, moral theology, liturgy, theology of spirituality, Catholic social science, Church history) for no less than 480 hours".⁶⁰ In accordance with the current Agreement on Professional Qualifications of Teachers of Religion, graduates of higher education studies in the field of Theology, having successfully completed pedagogical training with a master's degree in theology, are qualified to occupy the position of teachers of religion at all stages of education, except in special schools. The same qualifications are held by the graduates of post-graduate theological and catechetical studies who, in accordance with the educational law in force, should acquire knowledge and skills in the field of theological subjects during their training.⁶¹

In addition to post-graduate theological and catechetical studies giving qualifications to teach religion at all stages of the school, the Resolution of the Polish Episcopal Conference and the Agreement on the professional qualifications required of teachers of religion, gives the opportunity to complete post-graduate studies of pre-school catechesis, which entitle to teach religion in kindergartens. Theological preparation includes the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in the field of theological subjects, catechism and religious education, taught for no less than 180 hours.⁶² The fact that, according to the Resolution of the Polish Episcopate, conducting post-graduate studies, giving qualifications to teach Roman Catholic religion, is reserved exclusively to universities run by the Catholic Church and Catholic theological departments of public universities is worth emphasizing.⁶³

In the responsible activity of the theological education of teachers of religion, an important element will also be all forms of vocational training proposed in

⁵⁹ *Porozumienie pomiędzy Konferencją Episkopatu Polski oraz Ministrem Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 3 kwietnia 2019 r. w sprawie kwalifikacji zawodowych wymaganych od nauczycieli religii*, Dziennik Urzędowy Ministra Edukacji Narodowej, Warszawa, 15 kwietnia 2019, item 9.

⁶⁰ *Uchwała Konferencji Episkopatu Polski z dnia 7 czerwca 2016 roku w sprawie minimalnych wymogów w kształceniu nauczycieli religii*, §2 [in:] J. Szpet, M. Gogolik, *Nauczanie religii w polskim przedszkolu i szkole. Katecheza, rodzina, parafia i szkoła*, t. 16, 2018, annex pp. 155–156.

⁶¹ *Porozumienie pomiędzy Konferencją Episkopatu Polski oraz Ministrem Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 3 kwietnia...*, §2 point 3, §3 point 3, §4.

⁶² Cf. *ibidem*, §1 point 4; *Uchwała Konferencji Episkopatu Polski...*, §3.

⁶³ Cf. *Uchwała Konferencji Episkopatu Polski...*, §4.

the framework of continuing formation, which should not only cover issues of methodology and pedagogy, but should also present the latest theological aspects of the Church's teaching and a deepened reflection on the theology and contemporary challenges faced by the student and his environment.

The need for intellectual development should first of all be sensitised to post-graduate students, whose, as it is impossible not to notice, Framework Programme is only a certain minimum, necessary to be realised in an academic form. In view of the new initiative of the possibility of gaining qualifications to learn religion as part of post-graduate studies and the limitations of lecture hours, it is also necessary to approach with great responsibility the preparation and conduct of lectures in particular theological, catechetical and pedagogical sciences, as well as to select appropriately the staff of academic teachers who, having knowledge of the catechetical environment and the specifics of religion teacher's work, will appropriately select the lecture material.⁶⁴

Undoubtedly, the specificity of teaching religion is closely related to the need for personal experience of faith and testimony, lived relationship with God towards students. Therefore, it will be essential in the theological formation to awaken among students and later religion teachers a greater awareness of the mission and attachment to the community of the Church. "Taking into account the different level of motivation to undertake the mentioned postgraduate studies, and above all the specificity of religious education, which is confessional in Poland, it is necessary to take care of the necessary spiritual care by the Church and the spiritual self-development of religion teachers".⁶⁵ The responsibility for properly conducted ongoing formation rests primarily with the Catechetical Departments of the local churches, and can also be the subject of an additional, specialized offer of further education courses at higher ecclesiastical universities and theological faculties.

Summary

John Paul II, in one of his catechesis dedicated to evangelization and catechesis, distinguishes the formation of catechesis as an essential element of the common commitment to the development and vitality of the Church. He points to the need for the formation of all those who are responsible for teaching the truths of the faith, that is, pastors, catechists and all those who have expressed their willingness to help proclaim the Good News. Lack of adequate preparation among those who undertook catechizing leads to small effects and lack of required fruit in catechized people. The

⁶⁴ M. Gogolik, *Zmiany w kwalifikacjach zawodowych nauczycieli religii*, "Studia Bydgoskie" 10 (2016), p. 263.

⁶⁵ Ibidem.

broadly understood intellectual formation is intended to deepen the life of faith of the person who serves in catechesis. However, besides the theological knowledge itself, it is important that the catechist is able to develop his own catechetical style.

This article analyses the current indications of the Universal Church and the Church in Poland relating to theological education of lay and clerical religion teachers, which is carried out within the framework of studies and later in continuing formation.

Keywords

theological preparation, theological studies, religion teacher, intellectual formation of religion teachers

Przygotowanie teologiczne nauczycieli religii w świetle aktualnych wskazań Kościoła w Polsce

Jan Paweł II w jednej z katechez poświęconych ewangelizacji i katechizacji wyróżnia formację katechetów jako zasadniczy element wspólnego zaangażowania w rozwój i żywotność Kościoła. Wskazuje na potrzebę formacji tych, którzy są odpowiedzialni za nauczanie prawd wiary, a więc duszpasterzy, katechetów i wszystkich, którzy wypowiedzieli swoją chęć pomocy w głoszeniu Dobrej Nowiny. Brak odpowiedniego przygotowania wśród tych, którzy podjęli się katechizowania, prowadzi do braku wymaganych owoców u katechizowanych. Szeroko pojęta formacja intelektualna ma pogłębić życie wiary osoby posługującej w katechezie. Obok jednak samej wiedzy teologicznej przede wszystkim istotne jest, aby katecheta potrafił wypracować własny styl katechetyczny.

W artykule poddano analizie aktualne wskazania Kościoła Powszechnego oraz Kościoła w Polsce odnoszące się do kształcenia teologicznego świeckich i duchownych nauczycieli religii, które dokonuje się w ramach studiów oraz później w formacji stałej.

Słowa kluczowe

przygotowanie teologiczne, studia teologiczne, nauczyciel religii, formacja intelektualna nauczycieli religii

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