

# Apostolate of women according to Blessed Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński

## Apostolat kobiet według Błogosławionego Stefana kardynała Wyszyńskiego

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**Abstract:** In the article, the author dealt with the teaching of Bl. Primate Stefan Wyszyński on the apostolate of women. In the first part, he presented the tasks and mission of women in the Church and society, and in the second one, their baptismal vocation to the apostolate. He included a summary of the presented content in the conclusion. The author developed the issue by analyzing, on the one hand, the public statements of the Blessed Primate regarding women and the apostolate, and on the other hand, his teaching addressed to the members of the Secular Institute of Helpers of Mary of Jasna Góra, Mother of the Church, commonly known as the ‘Eights’. The article shows, among others, that Blessed Stefan identified the vocation of women to the apostolate with the vocation of men, however, he pointed to its specificity resulting from the conditions of the woman’s nature and her tasks in the Church and society.

**Keywords:** Wyszyński; vocation; woman; apostolate; spiritual life; evangelism

**Abstrakt:** W artykule autor zajął się nauczaniem bł. prymasa Stefana Wyszyńskiego dotyczącym apostolatu kobiet. W pierwszej części przedstawił zadania i misję kobiety w Kościele i społeczeństwie, a w drugiej jej chrzcielne powołanie do apostolstwa. Podsumowanie prezentowanych treści zamieścił w zakończeniu. Autor opracował zagadnienie, analizując z jednej strony publiczne wypowiedzi błogosławionego prymasa dotyczące kobiet oraz apostolstwa, a z drugiej jego nauczanie skierowane do członkiń Instytutu Świeckiego Pomocnic Maryi Jasnogórskiej Matki Kościoła, zwanych popularnie „Ósemkami”. W artykule wykazano m.in., że bł. Stefan utożsamiał powołanie kobiet do apostolstwa z powołaniem mężczyzn, jednakże wskazywał na jego specyfikę wynikającą z uwarunkowań natury kobiety oraz jej zadań w Kościele i społeczeństwie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Wyszyński; powołanie; kobieta; apostolat; życie duchowe; ewangelizacja

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## Introduction

In order to show Wyszyński's thought on the issue of the apostolate of women, we must refer to both his teaching on the mission of women and the issue of responsibility for the salvation of others, i.e. apostolate. For this reason, in the first part of this article, the tasks and mission of women in the Church and society will be presented, and in the second part, the baptismal vocation to the apostolate. A summary of the presented content is included in the conclusion. The author of the article developed the issue by analyzing, on the one hand, the statements of the Blessed Primate regarding women and the apostolate addressed to everyone, and on the other hand, his teaching referred directly to the members of the Secular Institute of Helpers of Mary of Jasna Góra, Mother of the Church, popularly known as 'The Eights'<sup>1</sup>.

### 1. The vocation and tasks of women in the Church and society

In one of his speeches, Stefan Wyszyński said, 'Let's try [...] to stop at God's creation, which is woman. Let us try to look at it through the eyes of [...] the Father the Creator, as He thought us in the eternal ideal of creation'<sup>2</sup>. For the Primate it was obvious that the personal nature of man makes men and women equal in dignity, and they have the same purpose of existence: the perfection of life on earth and union with God in eternity<sup>3</sup>. Neither man nor woman can be merely

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<sup>1</sup> Wyszyński often met with the Helpers, took care of them, cooperated with them, cared about their spiritual formation, writing the first Laws and watching over the next ones, conducting monthly days of retreat, annual retreats, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, services, presiding over Jasna Góra appeals. This lasted until his death in 1981. The teaching of the Blessed, containing over three thousand statements, was largely recorded on tapes, then transcribed and prepared for authorization. Missing speeches were of necessity reproduced not from tapes, but from notes kept by members of the Institute. All the material has been collected in the archives of the Institute, in the main house in Choszczówka (in Warsaw). Texts of Bl. Stefan, marked with appropriate numbers and used in this article, are typescripts and come from the archives of the same Institute. They were authorized years ago by Wyszyński or later, on his authorization, by the Institute of Primate Wyszyński. Concern for a faithful rendering of the nature of Fr. Wyszyński caused some stylistic mistakes to be noticed in the quotes (it should be remembered that the texts were transcribed from tape recordings and were delivered 'live'). In the quoted words and in the footnotes, you can find different spellings of uppercase and lowercase letters, which has also been deliberately left in this article.

<sup>2</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Kobieta pochodzi z woli Boga*, Warszawa 5.08.1964, in: idem, *O godności kobiety*, Zielonka 2020, p. 29 [further: GK].

<sup>3</sup> Vide J. Hadryś, *Jedna świętość czy dwie różne? „Gaudete et exsultate” papież Franciszka a „non possumus” Stefana kardynała Wyszyńskiego*, w: *Świętość — wysilek czy łaska? Wokół adhortacji „Gaudete et exsultate” papieża Franciszka*, eds. P. Roszak, P. Orłowski, Toruń 2019, pp. 111–126.

a means and an instrument for any other good<sup>4</sup>. According to the Cardinal, the differences and mutual complementarity of men and women, their equal dignity, subjectivity and responsibility should be recognized. Christian life, based on the action of grace, is — in his opinion — intended for a woman as well as for a man, although a woman is usually more sensitive to God's action.

It took a long way to understand God's deep plan, to take it over and to acknowledge it. [...] Finally, the most far-reaching moment came. After the first 'ennoblement' of a woman — Eve — in the act of creation, the second one took place in Nazareth, when another Woman — Mary was honoured in an unusual way by the Creator, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with You, blessed are You among women' (Lk. 1.28). From that moment on, a Woman entered God's Redemption plan<sup>5</sup>.

Blessed Stefan taught that a woman through baptism and confirmation becomes a full member of the People of God, therefore she is called to the same extent as a man to serve the Church<sup>6</sup>. He reminded that just as for centuries women played a great role in the development of the Church and Christianity, now they also perform responsible, sometimes important tasks in the Church and the world. Their presence is connected with an extraordinary diligence, effort fulfilled in humility and concealment<sup>7</sup>. Christ chose women to be the first to preach the good news of the resurrection. However, not only the women known from the pages of the Gospel received the apostolic mission, but all women living in the Church were called to the apostolate. Wyszyński emphasized that for them, as for every baptized person, this was the most important task they had to fulfill in the Church. He called on women to revive their apostolic vocation, because there are still many people who have not come to know Christ. He believed that women respond to the call of the Church not only when they go on missions, but they should be everywhere to make the contemporary world more Christian. For this reason, he spoke about the Christian apostolate of women entering professional life, into the world of upbringing and pedagogy, about adopting an apostolic attitude in everyday work<sup>8</sup>. Speaking about the role of women in the Church, Wyszyński also referred to the participation of the baptized in the common priesthood of Christ, as well as the role of Mary in the mystery of Christ and the Church. For the Primate, it was obvious that by imitating Mary, a woman should live her everyday life in close

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Chrześcijańskie a neopogańskie koncepcje kobiety*, Lublin, 28.08.1957, in: GK, p. 237.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, *Boży plan Odkupienia*, Warszawa 8.03.1968, in: GK, pp. 11–12.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, *Nadprzyrodzona więź Kobiety z Kościołem*, Warszawa, 6.08.1964, in: GK, pp. 195–202.

<sup>7</sup> H. Wistuba, *Kobieta w Kościele i w świecie*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 3 (1990), p. 415.

<sup>8</sup> Vide M. Ozorowski, *Kobieta — służebnica w nauczaniu Stefana kardynała Wyszyńskiego*, „Studia Teologiczne” 19 (2001), pp. 77–87.

relationship with Christ and care not only for her own salvation, but also for the salvation of others. According to him, the Marian cult, as well as numerous examples of holy women, starting with the martyrs of the first centuries, had a key role in shaping the Church's attitude towards women.

From the beginning, cooperation between women and priests, in the spirit of the common, royal priesthood has been discussed. In the Church, a woman will not replace the priest in his role and function, but she is supposed to complete through her female mission, in the form of cooperation, what the priest does not possess and what he is unable to do, because he is less prepared for it as a man. [...] Christ's priesthood was instituted, accomplished and completed with the participation of Mary, so in the Church the hierarchical priesthood is to be supplemented, completed with the cooperation of women. [...] As an attempt to answer how and in what this should be expressed, we see a model — the Holy Mother. Mary is not a representative of Christ, although she remained with Him in the strictest unity and cooperation. And a woman in the Church has no mission to represent Christ or act in His name, *in persona Christi*, because that is the job of priests. But she is to live and breathe Him as closely as possible through grace and unifying love as His bride. [...] If the question has been so often asked why a woman cannot be included in the hierarchical priesthood, perhaps it is sufficient to answer that she participates in the hierarchical priesthood without being a priestess, just as Mary participated in the priesthood of Christ, which was formed in her, but she was not a priestess. And every woman, through the consecration of her life in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and matrimony, or through consecrations, vows and resolutions in religious orders and institutes, enters into the priesthood of Christ. Thus, one can speak of the common priesthood of the faithful, which is born in baptism and confirmation. That would be enough to work effectively<sup>9</sup>.

According to the Blessed, woman was equipped by the Creator with certain special features and gifts, different from men, so that she could cope with the lofty and difficult mission she received from God. In his statements, Wyszyński pointed to a woman's natural tendency to be religious<sup>10</sup>, her innate altruism and the ability to bring peace and reason to turbulent interpersonal relationships<sup>11</sup>, her concern for human life and everything that is needed to sustain it<sup>12</sup>, as well as her tendency to assistance and care to those in need<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Kobieta w Kościele*, Warszawa 10.08.1967, in: GK, pp. 219–223.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, *Kobieta pochodzi z woli Boga*, pp. 35–36.

<sup>11</sup> Idem, *Niewiasta mężna (I)*, Warszawa, Warszawa 6.08.1964, in: GK, pp. 67–74.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, *Matka — Królowa — Służebnica*, Warszawa 8.12.1976, in: GK, p. 151.

<sup>13</sup> Idem, *U stóp świętej Bożej Rodzicielki*, Jasna Góra 20.04.1958, in: GK, p. 231.

In the catacombs, in the drawings preserved there, Jesus is depicted as a Child. The Magi pay homage to Mary as Queen, marked with a star on her forehead, but holding a tiny Child in her arms. Jesus is still a Child, while She — Woman — has already taken a certain position. She is a Mother. Perhaps because the Church is also a mother, and it was necessary to familiarize all humanity with this idea. [...] The Church, assigning important tasks to women, encouraging them to act, gave them a field of work and sanctified their efforts. For it constantly multiplies the number of women entering the altars. Through the development of religious orders and congregations, through their participation in a great charity, educational and cultural action, it gave history a new development impulse<sup>14</sup>.

According to Wyszyński, there are three main places for the implementation of the tasks entrusted to women: the family, the Church and society. In his opinion, the tasks of a woman in marriage and family are of a twofold nature. Both in the husband-wife relationship and in their relation to children, mutual love and cooperation are needed. In mutual relations, they are, of course, equal, which is why the Primate made similar demands on both of them. However, in relation to the family, the tasks of men and women differ because they have different predispositions. The role and task of a woman in the family, according to the Cardinal's instructions, are special, because it is she who has nurturing and upbringing skills. Wyszyński repeatedly emphasized that the Church needs the involvement of women, since they have many tasks to perform in it. Their importance in the ministry of evangelization, according to the Primate, justifies the great participation of Mary in the building of the Church, as well as the apostolically involved figures of women from the New Testament and the history of the Church<sup>15</sup>. Christ recurrently highlighted the evangelizing ministry of women, for example, He called a Samaritan woman to evangelize<sup>16</sup>, He accepted help from Martha<sup>17</sup>, He ordered women to tell the apostles about His resurrection<sup>18</sup>. The justification for the apostolate of women is the Church's teaching on women. The evangelizing involvement of women results, according to the Primate, from their participation in the common priesthood of Christ and should be carried out following the example of Mary<sup>19</sup>. Since she is a model for the Church, she is

<sup>14</sup> Idem, *Kościół wobec awansu kobiety*, Warszawa 5.08.1964, in: GK, pp. 184, 190–192.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. idem, *Podczas Mszy świętej*, Easter Monday at the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 11.04.1977, pp. 2–5, No. 2104.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. idem, *Własne zadania Maryi i każdej kobiety wyznaczone im przez Boga*, Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 9.08.1967, p. 11, No. 476.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. idem, *Homilia mszalna o świętej Marcie*, Bachledówka 29.07.1971, p. 1, No. 907a.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. idem, *Pierwsze o Zmartwychwstaniu zaczęły mówić kobiety*, Easter Monday at the Primate Institute, Warszawa 7.04.1969, pp. 2–3, No. 597.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. idem, *Kobieta w dziejach Kościoła*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 10.08.1967, pp. 9–10, No. 480.

also a special model for women and determines their place in the Church<sup>20</sup>. The Blessed especially emphasized Mary's prudence and humility visible in the scene of the Annunciation, as well as presenting her as a model of maturity, subtlety, delicacy, availability, vigilance, openness and sensitivity to others and readiness to serve them. According to Wyszyński, this feature of servitude towards God and other people characterizes the soul of a woman to an exceptionally high degree<sup>21</sup>. Wyszyński defined the tasks of a woman in society broadly: from the defense of the conceived life, through devoting herself to menial professions, to the daily so-called Crusade of Modesty. He was very positive about the social advancement of women in his time. He was glad that 'women are increasingly entering social, public, professional and scientific life'<sup>22</sup>.

Just as Mary exercises her maternal mission in a spiritual way towards the followers of her Son and all humanity, i.e. the People of God, so a woman, every woman, is called to motherhood (at least spiritually) in family life, religious life or in the apostolate. Therefore, a woman can and should fulfill in her life the double function of the Church, as the bride of Christ and the mother of souls [...]. A woman in the Church must fulfill these two tasks specifically. By her union with Christ, by her nuptials with Him, she becomes *sponsa*, but in order to abound in her spiritual motherhood, to give birth to Christ. [...] Each sacrament deepens the relationship with Christ and obliges us to bear fruit. And the sacrament of marriage commits [...] a woman to spiritual fruition, to spiritual motherhood<sup>23</sup>.

## 2. Calling a woman to be responsible for the salvation of others

The Primate of the Millennium frequently addressed topics related to evangelization, although in accordance with the nomenclature adopted at that time, he used the term 'apostolate', which he basically understood as evangelization in the modern sense of the word<sup>24</sup>. He referred his statements equally to men and women, since, as already mentioned in this study, he identified the vocation of

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Zadanie Maryi przy Chrystusie wzorem zadania kobiety w Kościele*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 9.08.1967, pp. 5–6, No. 474.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. idem, *Boży plan Odkupienia*, Warszawa 8.03.1968, in: GK, pp. 12–15.

<sup>22</sup> Idem, *Konieczna i błogosławiona obecność kobiety w życiu społecznym*, Warszawa 31.01.1965, in: GK, p. 212.

<sup>23</sup> Idem, *Kobieta w Kościele*, Warszawa 10.08.1967, in: GK, pp. 221–222.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. W. Seremak, *Apostolstwo*, in: *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej*, ed. M. Chmielewski, Lublin–Kraków 2002, pp. 59–60; W. Seremak, *Ewangelizacja*, in: *ibidem*, pp. 260–263. In this chapter, the term 'apostolate' is to be understood as 'evangelization'.

women to the apostolate with the same vocation of men<sup>25</sup>. According to Bl. Stefan, apostleship consists in preaching and professing Christ, especially the truth about His resurrection<sup>26</sup>. The content of the apostolate, however, is not limited to the resurrection, as it concerns the entire earthly life of Christ. A Christian to preach the faith is sent by Christ and should imitate Him<sup>27</sup>. Apostleship consists in ‘writing’ the Gospel in human hearts<sup>28</sup>, in caring that ‘everyone believes and entrusts themselves to the Love!’<sup>29</sup>, on ‘the desire to convince the world that God is Life and that it is His will that people “should have life and have it more abundantly”’<sup>30</sup>. The Primate also defined the apostolate as sharing with others what was received from God<sup>31</sup>. According to him, it is ‘nourishment, feeding, opening the windows of the soul to the whole world, to see everyone, to love everyone, to embrace everyone with the joy that man has acquired for himself by God’s grace’<sup>32</sup>. According to the Blessed, ‘the concept of an apostle consists of: the goal, the task and the Name for which the apostle is to act’<sup>33</sup>.

It follows from the above that in apostolic activity ‘the element of the call is essential and it is necessary to know in whose name the apostle is to act. For this action to have the quality of the apostolate, it must be in the Name of Christ’<sup>34</sup>. Hence — as the Primate said — everyone who is aware of the obligation to profess Christ towards others is an apostle<sup>35</sup>. According to the Cardinal, the apostolate is about being sensitive to others and their needs, and this sensitivity is characteristic of women, ‘This is the school of the apostolate, when we see Christ more and more clearly in every person and when we remember his words: “Whatever you have done to one of my least of the brethren, you

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<sup>25</sup> J. Hadryś, *Powołanie do świętości i apostołstwa w nauczaniu kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego*, in: *Święty i Mąż Stanu. W hołdzie Stefanowi kardynałowi Wyszyńskiemu*, ed. idem, Poznań 2020, pp. 45–68.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. idem, „*Chwała oblicza Pańskiego...*”. Jubilee retreat of the Institute, Warszawa 6.08.1962, p. 2, No. 250.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, pp. 2–3.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. idem, „*Nie wyście Mnie wybrali, ale Ja was wybrałem...*”. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute Choszczówka 25.02.1973, p. 13, No. 1191a.

<sup>29</sup> Idem, „*Święć się Imię Twoje!...*”. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Łaski 1.12.1961, p. 6, No. 201.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. idem, *Radujcie się...* Rekolekcje Instytutu Prymasowskiego, Warszawa 10.09.1963, p. 2, No. 275.

<sup>32</sup> Idem, *Ziarno gorczyczne wyrosło w Polsce dla Kościoła i świata*. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute after the election of the Polish Pope, Choszczówka 31.10.1978, p. 6, No. 2422.

<sup>33</sup> Idem, *Praca społeczna a praca apostołska*. Conversation with the Team during the retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 31.08.1972, p. 2, No. 1107.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 4.



have made Me”<sup>36</sup>. The pinnacle of the apostolate is laying down one’s life for others, renouncing self, personal comfort, and some personal behaviour for others<sup>37</sup>. Apostolic commitment is to be associated with a positive attitude towards every human being, with awakening faith in life in others, encouraging continuous development, finding such a style and such ways that even difficult situations can be resolved through hope and love. In the apostolate it is important not to be afraid of people and not to doubt anyone<sup>38</sup>. Blessed Stefan was aware that there are also situations in which you cannot say anything about God, but you are an apostle because you are among people in the name of Christ<sup>39</sup>. ‘Every Christian is a letter from Christ. [...] The one who chooses and calls will write his letter on the chosen hearts not with ink, but with the spirit of the Living God. And all to whom Christ sends us will read His teaching on our faces, in our words and deeds’<sup>40</sup>.

Every Christian is an apostle, wherever he is — in his professional work, e.g. a farmer, worker, doctor, official. If there is an awareness of the obligation to profess Christ before people, then every work — even if it is not a word professing — has an apostolic character. It is about the inner attitude, the inner intention, and that is what matters. If, however, a man loses the awareness that he is doing his work in the name of Christ, his work will not be apostolic. It is necessary to be aware that one is sent and that one is sent in God’s Name<sup>41</sup>.

In educating lay apostles, it is necessary to awaken the awareness that they are called and that they have specific duties, that there is an ‘obiectum circa quod’, that is, that they do it in the Name of Christ living in the Church. It is the responsibility of the lay apostle to have this awareness<sup>42</sup>.

The apostolic character of man’s activity is ‘expressed through obedience, revolves around the object of obedience’. Such an action is rooted in the awareness that it is carried out in the Name of Christ. For a correct evaluation of apostolic work, at least three of the above-mentioned elements are needed<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> S. Wyszynski, *Podczas Mszy świętej*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 18.08.1976, p. 8, No. 1946.

<sup>37</sup> Idem, „*Jak my się jednak miłujemy...*”. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 28.01.1973, p. 13, No. 1182.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. idem, *Droga krzyżowa*. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 8.04.1979, pp. 14–15, No. 2505.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. idem, *Praca społeczna a praca apostołska*, p. 4, No. 1107.

<sup>40</sup> Idem, „*Bądźcie listem Chrystusowym...*”. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 25.02.1973, p. 7–8, No. 1190a.

<sup>41</sup> Idem, *Praca społeczna a praca apostołska*, p. 4, No. 1107.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, pp. 2–3.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p. 3.



Primate Wyszyński motivated the evangelizing involvement of lay Catholics, both men and women, primarily with: the command of Christ, belonging to the Church, the consequences of the received sacraments of baptism and confirmation, love, tradition and the social character of the human person. With numerous justifications, he referred to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council concerning the apostolate of the laity. He strongly emphasized the commitment of women to evangelistic involvement. In the argumentation used by the Primate, it is not difficult to see a close relationship with the Church and its teaching, as well as very clear Marian accents.

According to the Blessed, the basis for carrying out the mission of evangelization is the will of Christ, who ordered his disciples to go and preach the Gospel, 'Christ conquers the People of God for the fullness of His Body of Christ. This is the starting point for all apostolic and missionary work'<sup>44</sup>. Christ commissioned His disciples to go and teach, which is a concrete commitment for every baptized person<sup>45</sup>. As stated by the Primate of Poland, 'all the baptized are called, they participate in the Church not so much through legal, juridical ties, but rather through spiritual, supernatural ties, through internal participation in the life of the Church'<sup>46</sup>. According to the Primate, an important argument for the need to perform the ministry of apostleship is the very mystery of the Church, the mutual dependence of its members on one another<sup>47</sup>. Merely belonging to the community of the Church obliges us to evangelize<sup>48</sup>, so there is no need for a special vocation to the apostolate in the world, because 'we are all obliged by virtue of this community that Christ has created in us'<sup>49</sup>. The Church is a supernatural organization of love. All the actions of man, whether he thinks about it or not, whether he wants it or not, are still actions of the Church. Primate Wyszyński described the above truth in colorful words. As said by the Blessed, it is about the so-called

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<sup>44</sup> Idem, *Rozdział II. o Ludzie Bożym*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 18.08.1965, p. 19, No. 368.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. idem, „*Biada mi gdybym Ewangelii nie przepowiadał...*”. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 30. 09.1966, p. 6, No. 415.

<sup>46</sup> Idem, *Nadprzyrodzona zależność od Kościoła*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 6.08.1964, pp. 2–3, No. 328.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. idem, „*Nie wyście Mnie wybrali...*”. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 20.08.1970, p. 1, No. 762.

<sup>48</sup> 'The entire justification for the teaching on the social action of man in the Church, on the apostolate of man, and the justification and commitment to such activity stem from [...] «de Mysterio Ecclesiae»' — idem, *Apostolski charakter Ludu Bożego*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 18.08.1970, p. 1, No. 755.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem.

‘royal priesthood’ and supernatural sociology<sup>50</sup>. According to him, everyone is needed in the Church<sup>51</sup>.

This is the reason for the apostolic zeal and at the same time pressure and perhaps torture, ‘Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel’. This is a constant and effective burden on the apostolic soul and on every person who is called. [...] The conscience is moved by Christ’s command, ‘Go and teach’. It forces us to act, extracts us from immobility, inertia, overcomes our sluggishness, indecisiveness, comfort that sometimes overwhelms us; getting used to the Word, which can fly to us like a dead leaf from a tree in autumn without making any impression<sup>52</sup>.

There is no place in the Church for egoists and selfish people, egotists and self-centered people who only hang around themselves. The apostolate is a completely natural function, arising from our position in the Church. Therefore, ‘if one member suffers, all the others suffer with him/her. And if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with him/her’<sup>53</sup>.

It does not matter if it is the work of ‘wheat’ or ‘tares’ in the Church of God, but it is always the work of the Church. [...] the Church [...] is in my every action. Of course, the more conscious it is, the more effective it is, but even if it is unconscious, it does not cease to be the action of the Church. [...] We are like a huge ‘factory’ in which the supernatural process of ‘production’ is completed<sup>54</sup>.

Let no one think that what he/she can do is less than he/she would like, that the Church does not need it, that it is somehow useless. Hence, one has to protect oneself from such pride, the pride of wise men, which sometimes underestimates the rosary recited by a grandmother in front of the Church, while they deliver a paper on the presence of the Church in the modern world. Because both the rosary and the reading are needed by the Church, similarly typing, or a tape recorder, or a well-driven car, all this is needed by the Church, so that the ‘revealed truth’ can be constantly, more and more deeply felt, better understood and presented more appropriately<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> ‘In each of us, an internal, supernatural process takes place, and it is through this that we supplement “what the Passion of Christ lacks”, as the Apostle said. And so the Church grows. Let us take the example of Francis of Assisi. How many people live to this day from the mass of good that he worked out in himself through enormous seraphic love’ — *ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *idem*, *Zadanie Kościoła w świecie współczesnym — komentarz IV rozdziału Konstytucji pastoralnej*. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 4.12.1967, pp. 25–26, No. 491.

<sup>52</sup> *Idem*, „*Nauczajcie wszystkie narody...*”. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 30. 09.1966, p. 3, No. 414.

<sup>53</sup> *Idem*, „*Wy jesteście Ciałem Chrystusowym...*”. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 10.09.1963, p. 13, No. 277.

<sup>54</sup> *Idem*, *Nadprzyrodzona zależność od Kościoła*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 6.08.1964, pp. 5–6, No. 328.

<sup>55</sup> *Idem*, *Zadanie Kościoła w świecie współczesnym — komentarz IV rozdziału Konstytucji pastoralnej*, pp. 25–26, No. 491.

The mystery of Christ and His presence in the Church are the foundation of the apostolate, however, as it was stated by the Primate, the obligation to the apostolate also results from receiving the sacraments of baptism and confirmation<sup>56</sup>. Every baptized man or woman is required to be an apostle<sup>57</sup>. Lay people, according to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, are to 'be the evangelical leaven to sanctify the world from within, just as the evangelical leaven put in three measures of flour, which changes from the inside'<sup>58</sup>. They should consciously participate in the mission of the Church in their daily lives and thus be apostles, because through baptism and confirmation they are to activate it where they work, and where it can reach only through the laity<sup>59</sup>. Every Catholic is consecrated to the common priesthood, 'He/She is always a kind of holiness, and by this baptism he/she is already consecrated as the House of God and as a priesthood'<sup>60</sup>. The royal priesthood is associated with an attitude of sacrifice<sup>61</sup>.

The received baptism, and with it the Holy Trinity, makes the seed of the Good News and the accepted Word activated in us. In Nazareth, the Word was activated by the Father and the Spirit. [...] The Word is in us, becomes flesh and must be born. It cannot be retained in us. [...] This is how an apostle is born, an active man who is simply carried by God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit. They carry it to bear fruit. This is why the Holy Trinity acted in Mary, so that She would give the Fruit — the Word. [...] The word is not in us for this purpose, the grain of wheat did not fall into us so that it would stay in us, but so that it would come out of us to others. This is the essence of the apostolate<sup>62</sup>.

In the supernatural organism of the Church, an apostle necessarily arises through an internal process. He may be more or less aware of his duties. This is what the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church's Presence in the World and the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity are for, to deepen this awareness. But these are secondary things. It is a rescue for people who [...] do not

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. idem, „*Biada mi gdybym Ewangelii nie przepowiadał...*”. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 30.09.1966, pp. 6–9, No. 415.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. idem, *Praca społeczna a praca apostołska*. Conversation with the Team during the retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 31.08.1972, p. 3, No. 1107.

<sup>58</sup> Idem, *Rozdział IV — O Świeckich*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 19.08.1965, p. 5, No. 373.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 9. Cf. idem, *Apostolski charakter Ludu Bożego*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 18.08.1970, p. 7, No. 755.

<sup>60</sup> Idem, *Rozdział II. o Ludzie Bożym*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 18.08.1965, p. 5, No. 368. Cf. S. Wyszyński, *Apostolstwo świeckich w Kościele*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 19.08.1970, p. 2, No. 758.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. idem, „*Rozpoczynamy rekolekcje w obliczu pogodnych oczu Matki...*”. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Jasna Góra 28.07.1958, pp. 4–5, No. 48.

<sup>62</sup> Idem, „*Biada mi gdybym Ewangelii nie przepowiadał...*”, pp. 6–7, No. 415.

act, perhaps not feeling the presence of the seed thrown into the soil, which dies in them and bears fruit. Maybe you just need to get this fruit out?<sup>63</sup>

Another justification for the evangelizing commitment given by the Primate of the Millennium is love, i.e. care for the good of fellow human beings<sup>64</sup>. According to the Cardinal, there is ‘no other way to the home of the Kingdom of Heaven but to fight for this Kingdom. So going through some kind of torment in love. Man must inflict this torment on himself so that his love can be purified and deepened’<sup>65</sup>. Additional motives are: love for Christ, care that His Mystical Body lacks nothing, as well as the grace of faith<sup>66</sup>. In his argument, Stefan also referred to a tradition dating back to apostolic times. He noticed that St. Paul used the help of lay people, including women<sup>67</sup>. In building the Church, the Cardinal emphasized the role and example of Mary, adding that ‘the Heavenly Father Himself gave an indication that the female half of the human race must not be missing in building the Mystical Body of Christ’<sup>68</sup>. He pointed out that Mary, Elizabeth, women accompanying Christ, women under the Cross, women mentioned in the books of the New Testament, martyrs, virgins, founders and lawgivers, all testify to the importance of the role of women in the apostolate<sup>69</sup>. He reminded that the heralds of the resurrection were women who, although not called to be apostles, received the command to go and preach about the resurrection<sup>70</sup>. Wyszyński recalled that Pius XII ‘showed three areas of the apostolate of women: “the apostolate of truth, the apostolate of love, the apostolate of action”’<sup>71</sup>. The Primate emphasized that the apostolate of women results from the universal priesthood and is to be implemented following the example of Mary, ‘Every woman [...] through the consecration of her life in the sacraments, especially baptism, confirmation and marriage, or even through consecration, vows and resolutions in religious orders and institutions, also joins the priesthood of Christ. So that one

<sup>63</sup> S. Wyszyński, „*Biada mi gdybym Ewangelii nie przepowiadał...*”, p. 10, No. 415.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. idem, *Niech nas wyzwoli nowe w ciele narodzenie...* Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 18.12.1959, p. 11, No. 118.

<sup>65</sup> Idem, *Radość w sercu świętych*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 22.08.1975, p. 11, No. 1618.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. idem, „*Biada mi gdybym Ewangelii nie przepowiadał...*”, pp. 3–4, No. 415.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. ibidem, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. idem, *Apostolski program Kościoła — ku kobiecie*. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Łaski 4.08.1958, p. 1, No. 75.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. idem, *Apostolski program Kościoła — ku kobiecie*. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 9.04.1978, pp. 3–6, No. 2301.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. idem, *Pierwsze o Zmartwychwstaniu zaczęły mówić kobiety*. Easter Monday at the Primate Institute, Warszawa, 7.04.1969, pp. 2–3, No. 597.

<sup>71</sup> Idem, *Kobieta pochodzi od Boga*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 5.08.1964, p. 1, No. 325.

can speak of that universal priesthood of the faithful which is born in baptism and confirmation<sup>72</sup>.

The desire for the liberation and redemption of humanity shakes the Church, it also shakes everyone who has a Catholic sense, a religious sense [...]. It shakes us and spurs us to some spiritual energy: to prayer, to vigilance, to some zeal in apostolic work, to sacrificing for others<sup>73</sup>.

Although people are different, God loved everyone and [...] therefore we can and must love our fellow human beings as ourselves. And this is the starting point for our apostolic service, and at the same time for our auxiliary work at the side of the Mother of the Church, to whom Jesus Christ entrusted such a task on this earth — maternity<sup>74</sup>.

If the seed of the Gospel falls into my soul, it also becomes ferment, leaven, anxiety. Arousing anxiety, it fills the soul with it and must get out of it. [...] The apostles and people with the apostolic mind are not restful. They are tireless, they fidget, they spin, they always have something to say, something inside them is boiling, fermenting. Constantly new initiatives, attempts at solutions, activities, movements, aspirations, journeys — endless movements and roads. Such is the thoroughly apostolic soul, which has nothing to do with the habituation of sedate people<sup>75</sup>.

The value [...] of our lives, our sacrifice, our deeds, our hardships and efforts depends on our willingness, humility and love to offer God what we are capable of<sup>76</sup>.

Wyszyński noticed that every good, as well as evil that man does, has social significance<sup>77</sup>, hence the social character of the human person was for him another justification for the need to undertake an evangelizing mission. For the sake of justice, man has a duty to give himself to others, he also needs help from others<sup>78</sup>, ‘A bird wears wings, but wings also carry a bird. The doctor heals and the baker serves him. And so the necessary services are balanced out’<sup>79</sup>. As it was stated by the Blessed, the social character of the human person is very visible, because man is a part of the supernatural organism of the Church, which, like any organism, consists of various members performing various functions. Individual

<sup>72</sup> Idem, *Kobieta w dziejach Kościoła*, p. 10, No. 480.

<sup>73</sup> Idem, *Niech nas wyzwoli nowe w ciele narodzenie...*, p. 11, No. 118.

<sup>74</sup> Idem, *Słowo przed Mszą świętą*. Choszczówka 16.01.1979, pp. 1–2, No. 2483.

<sup>75</sup> Idem, „*Biada mi gdybym Ewangelii nie przepowiadał...*”, pp. 3–4, No. 415.

<sup>76</sup> Idem, *Grosz wdowi...* Homilia. Dzień skupienia Instytutu Prymasowskiego, Choszczówka 24.11.1975, p. 4, No. 1719.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. idem, *Człowiek — istota społeczna*. Retreat of ‘The Eight’, Łaski 1943, p. 1, No. 135\*.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. ibidem, pp. 3 and 5, No. 135a\*; idem, Retreat of ‘The Eight’, Łaski 1943, pp. 1–2, No. 135b\*.

<sup>79</sup> Idem, *Spoleczny charakter osoby ludzkiej jako fundament apostołstwa*. Retreat of the Primate Institute, Choszczówka 17.08.1976, p. 10, No. 1941.

members work together and help each other in order to ‘achieve that social good which in secular terms is called “*bonum commune*”, and in the Church “*sanc-torum communio*” — “*communion of saints*”<sup>80</sup>. There are many people in the Church who need help<sup>81</sup>. The social character of the human person enables him to cooperate with other people. Purely sociological contact with others in the Church is enhanced by supernatural bonds. In this way, the Christian participates in the spiritual energies that pulsate throughout the body of the Church. All this, according to Wyszyński, indicates the necessity of social, collective pursuit of God and additionally justifies the evangelizing duties of Catholics<sup>82</sup>.

We know it from experience, from contact with people around us, that many of them cannot cope, they require the help of the environment, the help of other people. [...] Salvation in the Christian order takes place in the Church, and the Church is ‘Ecclesia’, and therefore a collection, assembly, community, and not only in this specific dimension of the liturgical action, the Sacrifice of the Altar, but in the universal, Catholic dimension, this ‘Ecclesia universalis’<sup>83</sup>.

## Conclusions

The conducted analyses of Cardinal Wyszyński’s teaching on the apostolate of women allow for the following statements:

For Bl. Stefan Wyszyński, it was obvious that the personal nature of man makes men and women equal in dignity, and they also have a common goal of existence — the perfection of life on earth and union with God in eternity. As it was said by the Primate, the differences and mutual complementarity of men and women, their equal dignity, subjectivity and responsibility should be recognized. Christian life, based on the action of grace, is — in his opinion — intended for a woman as well as for a man, although a woman is usually more sensitive to God’s action.

According to Wyszyński, there are three main places for the implementation of the tasks entrusted to women: the family, the Church and society. The tasks of a woman were defined broadly: from the defense of the conceived life, through devoting herself to service professions, to the daily so-called Crusade of Modesty. The Primate was very positive about the social advancement of women in his time.

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<sup>80</sup> S. Wyszyński, *Spoleczny charakter osoby ludzkiej jako fundament apostołstwa*, p. 2; cf. idem, *Komentarz Konstytucji pastoralnej. Rozdział II — Wspólnota ludzka*, =. Day of retreat of the Primate Institute, Warszawa 5.12.1966, pp. 18–20, No. 419.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. idem, *Spoleczny charakter osoby ludzkiej jako fundament apostołstwa*, p. 3, No. 1941.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. ibidem, pp. 2–5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibidem, p. 3, No. 1941.

Wyszyński believed that a woman, just like a man, is called to the apostolate. The universality of the vocation to the apostolate was justified by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and the reception of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. He believed that a vocation to the apostolate required personal holiness.

The Blessed Primate in a pastoral and at the same time extremely colourful way presented issues related to Christian life, including the implementation of the vocation of women to the apostolate. For this reason, he did not leave one specific definition of the apostolate, but many mutually complementary definitions. In his statements on the apostolate of women, he relied on God's revelation and on the teaching of the Magisterium of the Church, especially the Second Vatican Council.

As it was stated by Wyszyński, the apostolate means above all the preaching of Christ and His resurrection. The baptized person is to be a letter of Christ to others. It is to act on His behalf. He is to be aware of the obligation to profess Him before people, to whom he should have a positive attitude. His apostolate should be aimed at helping the Church and conducted under its authority. It should be humble and firmly attached to Mary, Mother of Christ and the Church. The model of helping the Mother of the Church is Mary's spouse, St. Joseph.

The vocation of women to the apostolate outlined in this article in terms of Bl. Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński may encourage further research on the issue of evangelization in the teaching of the Primate of the Millennium. It seems interesting to analyze Wyszyński's statements regarding the sources and means of fruitful service to others and determine to what extent they have retained their relevance in the light of the current theological and pastoral guidelines of the Church, especially those given by Pope Francis in the exhortations *Evangelii gaudium*<sup>84</sup> and *Gaudete et exsultate*<sup>85</sup>.

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<sup>84</sup> Franciszek, „*Evangelii gaudium*”. *O głoszeniu Ewangelii we współczesnym świecie*, Rzym 2013.

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