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DIVINE PEDAGOGY IN THE FACE OF EDUCATIONAL
CRISIS. ON THE APPROACH
OF JOSEPH RATZINGER/BENEDICT XVI

INTRODUCTION

Joseph Ratzinger, or Benedict XVI, is duly labelled as one of the greatest thinkers of humanity and the greatest Pope-theologian in the history of the modern Church [Rowland 2010, 9]. In his impressive research and pastoral legacy, he devoted sustained attention to a critical assessment of the spirit of his times and the spiritual condition of contemporary man, “living as if God did not exist,” *veluti si deus non daretur* [Ratzinger 2017a, 38].

His deep analysis of the present-day world was expounded in *The Ratzinger Report*, Vittorio Messori’s famed 1985 interview with the *Panzerkardinal* on the state of faith [Ratzinger and Messori 1986]. It was a collection of theses and arguments contained in Ratzinger’s earlier texts, largely diversified in terms of themes, genres, and volume. They started with the cardinal’s doctoral dissertation, *People and the House of God in St Augustine’s Doctrine of the Church* (1953) and post-doctoral work, *The Understanding of Revelation and the Theology of History of St Bonaventure* (1957), and closed with his spiritual testament, the two-volume meditative work, *Jesus of Nazareth* (2007; 2011).

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It is not an exaggeration to say that one of the main distinguishing marks of Benedict XVI's teaching is a polemic dialogue with the present. The intention is best captured in the title of the two-volume work containing pope's interviews, *W rozmowie z czasem* [Eng. *In Dialogue with Time*] (2017). The source of this debate was a specific existential experience of the author. As a young lecturer at the University of Tübingen, he witnessed the eruption of the social revolution of 1968 and waged his first battle for the soul of the world. When leaflets asking, "Is the Cross of Jesus anything other than an expression of the sadomasochistic apotheosis of pain?," and saying that the Gospel was only "a large-scale lie to the masses" were distributed within the university campus [Terlikowski 2011, 6], Ratzinger did not hesitate, as Vatican commentator and the Pope's biographer John Allen reports [Allen 2005, 115] to protest vehemently and "fight with his pen." The outcome was the monumental undertaking and fundamental work known as, *Einführung in das Christentum. Vorlesungen über das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* [Eng. *Introduction to Christianity*] (1968), a collection of university lectures. The author proved that faith was logical and rational, and that the only hope for contemporary people was the Church. It was Ratzinger's first clash in the great struggle for the future of Christianity and Europe. It triggered a hostile reaction of German progressives and induced a continuous wave of hatred against the author, which, among some groups, has not died out even until today. Since then, Ratzinger had been observing, assessing, and analysing modern trends more scrupulously while warning against their inevitable and pernicious effects.

1. ASSESSMENT OF THE CONDITION OF THE MODERN WORLD

Benedict XVI's assessment of the condition of the modern world, backed, on the one hand, by constantly updated scientific statistics, and, on the other, investigated spiritually on a regular basis, is unambiguous and deeply pessimistic. The Pope from Germany speaks openly about "a spiritual desert, the drama of our time, and even a tunnel in which humanity has found itself" [Górecka 2016, 85]. Scholars exploring Ratzinger's thought often use Kierkegaard's story about clown and fire to instance the pope's view. It so happens that the story was cited in the opening part of Ratzinger's *Introduction to Christianity*.

The Danish philosopher once told a story about a travelling circus in Denmark that caught fire. The circus manager sent the clown, who was already dressed and made up for the performance, into the neighbouring village to fetch help, especially as there was a danger that the fire would spread across the fields of dry stubble and engulf the village itself. The clown hurried into the village and requested the inhabitants to come as quickly as possible to the blazing circus and help put the fire out. But the villagers took the clown's shouts simply for an excellent piece of advertising, meant to attract as many people as possible to the performance. They applauded the clown and laughed till they cried. The clown felt more like weeping than laughing. He tried in vain to get people to be serious, to make it clear to them that this was no stunt, that he was not pretending but was in bitter earnest that there really was a fire. His supplications only increased the laughter. People thought he was playing his part splendidly. Until finally the fire did engulf the village. It was too late for help. And both the circus and the village were burned to the ground [Ratzinger 2017a, 49].

In his work, *The Church – a Sign among the Nations*, this ingenious visionary and analyst [Nichols 2005, 383] refers to the spirit of modernity using the strong term of “hell.” He defines it as a state of God's absence, out of reach for even a single ray of His presence [Ratzinger 2015, 1150]. To support his thesis, Benedict XVI gives a number of examples from the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Among them, there are human trafficking,¹ prohibited under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights,² and the exploitation of the foetuses of innocent human beings whose rights are ignored altogether [Ratzinger/Benedict XVI 2022, 42] in the name of the alleged good of mankind to accelerate research on diseases, but also for the purposes of body care and many others.³ In his view, the visions of these non-worlds, designed to pave the way to the world of future humans, who are the masters of themselves and do not need any God, are no better, in their cruelty and destruction, than Dante's descent into hell, and are even more terrible as they reveal such faces of evil that even the author of the Divine Comedy could not see.

¹ See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings 2021-2025, 14.04.2021, COM/2021/171 final.

² Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Official Journal of the European Union, C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 391-407.

³ By referring to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the pope alludes to, it seems, unbelieving philosopher Michel Serres's introduction to the book by French biologist Jacques Testar, *L'oeuf transparent*, who raises the question of respect due to the human embryo.

According to Benedict XVI, at the root of this drama are two postmodern phenomena that have “become a sort of dogma:”⁴ relativism (relativization of absolute truth and fundamental human values) [Meyer 2009, 38] and secularism (laicisation and dechristianisation) [Gózdź 2022, 359], both leading to alienation and hostility among people, and, finally, to the person’s existential alienation through the challenging of the ontological identity of man. In the Pope’s view, relativism claiming that there is no objective truth or absolute point of reference, and that everything is equally relevant, meaning that is definitive, that the only norm is your own self and your own desires that need to be satisfied, today takes the form of dictatorship and calls into question the objectivity of truth, thus doubting the very possibility of finding it and the inviolability of moral principles. Referring explicitly to John Paul II, Benedict XVI says that in an ambience of relativism, where God is replaced by science and everything becomes subjective, humanity loses its compass. It was the relativisation of the truth and moral principles that first caused indifference and then the crisis of the Western world by promoting education and upbringing that aim to save people against the truth. Dominating European culture today, relativism can inevitably lead it off to the destructive path of nihilism [Ratzinger 2005a, 135].

The Pope from Bavaria openly names secularism, which works hand in hand with relativism, an ideology because it promotes a concept of the world whereby reality can be explained completely and exclusively by itself, without regard to the transcendent Being. Thus, it implies that man and reality can be cognized autonomously and consciously ignores, or even denies, any other points of reference from human life, including relation with God. Consequently, secularism, in Benedict XVI’s view, is a committed promotion of all freedom from religion, a hostility and protest against anything Christian, and even an open struggle against Christianity [Hulaś 2014, 44; Napiórkowski 2014, 14].

According to Ratzinger, the ideology of secularism has recently taken the form of practical anti-religious action by eradicating religion from public life and confining it to the sphere of privacy. This, in turn, has led to the secularization of entire societies and their cultures and has caused the

⁴ Benedict XVI, *Discorso di apertura del Convegno della diocesi di Roma* (11.06.2007), https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/speeches/2007/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070611_convegno-roma.html [last access: 30.06.2023], no. 4.

decline of religion in social institutions, has reduced religious practices in society, and has belittled religion as an element of everyday life. In an extended talk with Peter Seewald, *Light of the World* (2011), the author who previously working for left-wing magazines and newspapers, *Der Spiegel*, *Der Stern*, *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, and after talking to the Pope he returned to the Roman Catholic Church, Benedict XVI says that there is a growing aversion to the Church, and the way of the contemporary world is increasingly in conflict with her. He pointed to a specific mechanism that is at work here:

Christianity feels subjected to intolerant pressure that first ridicules it as belonging to a perverse, false way of thinking, and then tries to deprive it of breathing space in the name of an ostensible rationality. It is very important for us to oppose such a claim of absoluteness conceived as a certain sort of rationality. In the face of the current eruption of secularization, which has disrupted the bedrock of society as a whole, you must be aware of the processes taking place and their destructive effects. You must speak out about them and tackle them – everyone in their own way – with the power of your own faith [Ratzinger 2017b, 802-803].

2. CHALLENGES FACED BY TODAY'S EDUCATORS

This primarily concerns all the teaching and education of children and youth who, like the rest of modern society, are currently in crisis as a result of the ideological and axiological revolution and promotion of a culture of pseudo- and antivalues [Ratzinger 2005b, 41-43; cf. Goraj 2005, 279]. In the process of transformation and weakening faith, young people are at risk of spiritual regress, and even de-formation and perdition. Therefore, for Benedict XVI, the spiritual growth of young people is the most urgent challenge and priority task. The Pope points to this urgent task, among other writings, in his 2008 *Letter to the Faithful of the Diocese and City of Rome*:

As opposed to what happens in the technical or financial fields, where today's advances can be added to those of the past, no similar accumulation is possible in the area of people's formation and moral growth, because the person's freedom is ever new. As a result, each person and each generation must make his own decision anew, alone. Not even the greatest values of the past can be

simply inherited; they must be claimed by us and renewed through an often anguishing personal option.⁵

An essential prerequisite to meeting this objective is the joint action of all those who have an influence on the process of education of the youth: parents, educators, teachers, religion teachers, and members of the clergy [Stańkowski 2015, 82-83]. This objective is particularly highlighted in *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Bishops of Poland on Their "Ad Limina" Visit*. The Pope emphasizes that the formation of new generations is a task incumbent on the entire Christian community at various levels: parish, diocese, region, and it requires close cooperation of parents, the Church and the state. This is in complete opposition to the attitude of extreme individualism promoted by contemporary media culture.⁶

Apparently, Benedict XVI is well aware of the fact that all these groups, including the family as the natural environment for the formation of new generations of young people, are often themselves affected by the effects of the socio-cultural crisis. By extension, they are exposed to two threats: the temptation to back down and decide not to undertake the demanding education duties and failure to understand their actual role, or even mission, permanently embedded in the saving mission of the Church. Mindful of these threats, adults themselves, given the prevailing mentality, are not sufficiently convinced of the relevance of what is "valid and certain" and they thoughtlessly accept "modern" models of life, which, in turn, leads to the questioning of the meaning of truth and good, of the value of the human being, and, ultimately, of the goodness of life. In such circumstances, passing what is valid and certain, rules of conduct, and credible objectives, around which to build life, from generation to generation becomes by far challenging. In the Pope's view, the difficulties that education encounters today are not insurmountable. They are only the other side of the coin of that great and precious gift which is our freedom, with the responsibility that rightly goes with it.⁷

⁵ Benedict XVI, *List do diecezji rzymskiej o pilnej potrzebie wychowania*, "L'Osservatore Romano" (Polish edition), no. 4: 4-11. Also: https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt_xvi/listy/wychowanie_21012008.html [last access: 10.07. 2023], no. 4.

⁶ Idem, *Przesłanie do biskupów polskich przybyłych do Rzymu z wizytą „ad limina”*, <http://www.pedkat.pl/benedykt-xvi/mlodziez/51-przeslanie-papieza-benedykta-xvi-do-biskupow-polskich-przybylych-z-wizyta-ad-limina-apostolorum> [last access: 30.06. 2023].

⁷ Idem, *Discorso di apertura del Convegno della diocesi di Roma*, nos. 4-5.

Benedict XVI counters the effect of the anti-cultural revolt with Christian education, one in the Spirit of Jesus and employing the divine pedagogy of true freedom embodied in His person, teaching, and activity. The divine pedagogy, as evolving in the official ecclesiastical doctrine, has been rooted in official documents of the Church. The current understanding of the Church's pedagogy is implanted in the pedagogy of the Old and New Testaments. The process of evolution of the divine pedagogy is based primarily on the foundation of Jesus Christ. In contemporary times, it is continued and deepened through the power of the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiastical documents emphasize that the divine pedagogy appears especially in the gift of the Law. The letter of the law was given as a "guardian" to lead people to Christ (Galatians 3:24.)⁸ However, the failure of the Law to save a person deprived of the "likeness" of God, as well as the growing knowledge of sin that it gives, arouse the desire of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the purpose of pedagogy of God is to make a person who acts fully autonomously, responsibly, and with a sense of inner freedom [cf. Goraj 2005, 288-89].

According to Benedict XVI, the achievements of the divine pedagogy are not, despite what the clamorous anti-propaganda seems to profess, something either past or confessional, or intended for a limited group of people, but they have a universal dimension. Therefore, education of the youth should go hand in hand with evangelization, the primary goal of which is to prove the beauty of being a Christ's disciple. "For the problem of education cannot be resolved without exploring the contemporary anthropological problems, which are directly linked to the mission of the Church. There is an essential bond between education and evangelization: no profound and lasting evangelization can exist without education; there is no growth towards maturity, and there is no process of change in mentality and culture" (Stańkowski 2015, 82). For this reason, for Benedict XVI, the ultimate goal is well-established evangelical education of young generations. It should provide the antidote to transient, fluid, and unstable identity.⁹

⁸ *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, Pallottinum, Poznań 1994, no. 708; Dicasterium pro Clericis, *Dyrektorium Ogólne o Katechizacji*, Pallottinum, Poznań 1998, no. 139.

⁹ Benedict XVI, *Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Faithful of the Diocese and City of Rome on the Urgent Task of Educating Young People*.

3. FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION IN THE FACE OF THE CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

Of the many tasks and objectives facing educators and helping them develop the means that Benedict XVI named in his speeches and writings, such as documents, letters to young people, messages delivered during meetings with young people or communities [cf. Chrobak 2010, 6; Różyło 2012], three aspects seem fundamental: personalism, theocentrism and Christocentrism, as well as integrity and reference to conscience.

3.1. Personalism

Benedict XVI highlights that education requires that young persons be regarded as subjects in the personalistic view. That is why the entire human being, along with their attitude and behaviour, must be placed at the heart of education. He points out that the evolution of young person's attitude and behaviour occurs along with the development of their own cognitive and personal framework involving self-realization, self-responsibility, and co-responsibility, and it is not an outcome of lessons and skills learned. Hence, in the opinion of the Pope, the process of education must not be approached as a measurable product of human activity and assessed in terms of effectiveness or purpose driven by economic and productive processes, in which the person is only seen as a resource while his or her development and promotion as a human are downplayed [cf. Stańkowski 2015, 85]. The truth about the person is multidimensional. It can be learned only in part because everyone is a being capable of reflective self-cognition and discovering their potentials and the need to update them. The true development of the person reveals a mounting capacity to receive gift from another one while being a gift on their own. Education as an action and experience at the same time is a unity finding its subjective dimension in what is specifically human among persons. In Benedict XVI's view, every education should be ultimately focused on making one "more of a person." Education as part of being is creative and dynamic; it can be something taking place in the interpersonal space, instead of being a mere human act or an effect of someone's influence [cf. Chrobak 2010, 128].

3.2. Theocentrism and Christocentrism

According to Benedict XVI, educators should approach learners mindful of the ontological relationship with the living God revealed in Jesus Christ. Therefore, education must not omit the religious and spiritual dimension and must be theo- and Christocentric. The Pope says that the person, especially one that is growing up and seeking his or her identity, reason for being in this world and his or her own place, cannot be understood without reference to Christ as God.¹⁰ True education is not possible without reference to universal truth. Seeking the truth is part of the human nature, and every young person will sooner or later doubt the value of their own life if this link is absent.¹¹ Hence, it is mandatory that every learner be constantly reminded of the relationship between faith and reason, *fides et ratio* [Ratzinger/Benedict XVI 2022, 111] and be assisted in the rational acceptance of faith in one God. A young person needs God, and therefore, from an educational point of view, he who does not give Him always gives not enough.¹² The educational environment must make young persons sensitive to contact between people as subjects and should open them to transcendence and others. It is therefore a priority to educate new generations in faith, to make them follow Christ and imitate Him. You can open up to God and others only if faith is communicated as something current and possible to materialize by means of the cognitive faculties of the mind. “We need people who have their eyes fixed straight on God, and who learn from him what true humanity is. We need people whose intellects have been enlightened by the light of God and whose hearts have been opened by God, so that their intellects can speak to others’ intellects and their hearts can open others’ hearts. God returns among people only through people who are touched by God” [Ratzinger 2005b, 70-71].

¹⁰ Benedict XVI, *Discorso di apertura del Convegno della diocesi di Roma*, no. 13.

¹¹ Idem, *Litterae encyclicae de Spe Christiana Spe salvi* (30.11.2007), AAS 99 (2007), pp. 985-1027, no. 37.

¹² Idem, *Wiara, rozum i uniwersytet – wspomnienia i refleksje, wykład na uniwersytecie w Ratyzbonie* (12.09.2006), http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt_xvi/przemowienia/bawarai_ratyzbona-12092006.html [last access: 30.05.2023], 608.

4. INTEGRITY AND REFERENCE TO CONSCIENCE

As to educational challenges at the anthropological level, Benedict XVI points to an essential element of dialogue between persons. Young people must therefore be offered not only classroom teaching and vocational training but the complete formation of the person, where one of the essential elements is the development of identity on the basis of people-to-people relations¹³ [Benedict XVI 2009, 61]. In this approach, it is indispensable to perceive the person in the moral and spiritual dimension, which are often ignored in state-made legislation:

In principle, if we know how to do something, we are allowed to do it and this is our only limit. But man knows how to do many things, indeed, increasingly so, and if this knowledge is not measured by a moral norm, it becomes, as we can already see, a power to destroy human dignity (cloning of humans, atomic bombs, terrorism). Some spokesmen of the Enlightenment culture say that man mustn't believe that he is anything special with respect to any other living being, and so he ought to be treated as they are [Ratzinger 2005b, 60-61].

Given “the standard of action driven by the Enlightenment idea of progress, understood only in line with Marx’s dialectic and the theory of evolution as materialistic and deterministic” [Rojek 2017, 495], the Pope from Germany attaches a great emphasis on the formation of conscience because in conscience the person discovers a law that is not man-made. He or she only discerns it and tries to follow the “voice” that insists on doing good and taking responsibility for committed evil. Education must therefore include the formation of conscience. Owing to conscience, a young person makes informed choices of true values, shapes their own humanity, self-responsibility, and co-responsibility for others.¹⁴

¹³ Idem, *Litterae encyclicae caritas in veritate de humana integra progressionem in caritate veritateque Caritas in veritate* (29.06.2009), AAS 101 (2009), pp. 641-709, no. 61.

¹⁴ Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People in Justice and Peace. Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace* (01.01.2012), https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/pl/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20111208_xlv-world-day-peace.html [last access: 09.07.2023], no. X; Idem, *Lecture by the Holy Father Benedict XVI at the University of Rome “La Sapienza”* (17.01.2008), https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2008/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080117_la-sapienza.html [last access: 25.04.2023], no. 11.

Engulfed in the ubiquitous relativistic culture, it is impossible, in the opinion of the “collaborator of truth,”¹⁵ to deliver a true education without reference to universal truth, as the desire for truth is part of the human nature, and, consequently, the education of new generations must take this principle into account. “...an education would be most impoverished if it were limited to providing notions and information and neglected the important question about the truth, especially that truth which can be a guide in life.”¹⁶ Without reference to the truth, sooner or later, every young person, as the Pope puts it, is in fact condemned to doubting in the value of his or her own life and the relationships of which it consists, the validity of his or her commitment to build with others something in common.¹⁷ Hence, it is critical to constantly keep in mind the relationship between faith and reason and the threats that surface as a result of the separation of the two. Dialogue between faith and reason, if conducted in accordance with the principles of science and with a sincere heart, can help a young person accept faith in one God rationally. The Pope warns the Western societies that contemporary people, fascinated by knowledge, power, and pragmatism, may ultimately lose touch with the truth, “The moral treasury of humanity is not readily at hand like tools that we use; it is present as an appeal to freedom and a possibility for it. ...Even the best structures function only when the community is animated by convictions capable of motivating people to assent freely to the social order” (*Spe salvi*, no. 24).

CONCLUSIONS

Modern education is facing a crisis, just like modern society and the culture of pseudo- and antivalues that it creates and promotes. The celebration of consumer society, the promotion of corporality and sexuality, the challenged hierarchy of values, wrong life models and visions, the absence of dialogue and person-to-person relations, education as a “measur-

¹⁵ J. Ratzinger’s motto as the Bishop of Munich (1977-1981).

¹⁶ Benedict XVI, *Letter of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Faithful of the Diocese and City of Rome on the Urgent Task of Educating Young People*, no. 5.

¹⁷ Benedict XVI, *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Participants in the Ecclesial Diocesan Convention of Rome, Basilica of St John Lateran, 6 June 2005*, “L’Osservatore Romano” (Polish edition), 2005, no. 9, p. 33.

able product” – all these contribute to the decline or even thwarting of the effort of real education of the young generation. In all his teaching, Benedict XVI sets out a clear roadmap for the education of young people. It can be summarized as follows: education must perceive a young person as a subject in the personalistic view, through his or her ontological relationship with the living God, the giver of life, revealed in Christ Jesus. That said, education must not ignore the religious and spiritual dimension. Hence, it must cover the formation of conscience which empowers a young person to make conscious choices of true values, shape their own humanity, self-responsibility, and co-responsibility for others. In Benedict XVI’s view, education in the Christian way is a pedagogy of hope and can restore this hope to the contemporaries and the world, “The Church looks to young people with hope and confidence; she encourages them to seek truth, to defend the common good, to be open to the world around them and willing to see “new things” (Is 42:9; 48:6).”¹⁸

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¹⁸ Idem, *Educating Young People in Justice and Peace*, no. 2.

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**Divine Pedagogy in the Face of Educational Crisis.
On the Approach of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI**

Abstract

Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI, one of the greatest thinkers of mankind and the greatest Pope-theologian in the history of the modern Church, has devoted much attention to a critical analysis of the spirit of the age and the spiritual condition of modern people, living as if God did not exist. The Pope's diagnosis is unequivocal and utterly pessimistic. He writes openly about the spiritual void, the drama of the times and even the tunnel in which humanity has found itself. At the core of this condition, according to Benedict XVI, there are two postmodern phenomena: relativism and secularism, leading people, above all young people, into spiritual regress and deformation. In the face of these threats and their disastrous consequences, the Pope from Germany proposes that the spiritual development of young people become the most urgent challenge and priority task to be carried out jointly by all the different groups of educators: parents, teachers, pedagogues, catechists, and the clergy. Of the many tasks and remedies needed to achieve success, which Benedict XVI outlined for educators in his speeches and writings, three aspects are particularly fundamental: personalism, theo- and Christocentrism, and integrity and reference to conscience. The perception of a young person as a subject through his or her ontological relationship with the living God revealed in Jesus Christ and the formation of a conscience, through which a young person may take responsibility for himself or herself and co-responsibility for others, guarantee authentic education and can restore hope to contemporary people and the world.

Keywords: Joseph Ratzinger; Benedict XVI; crisis of faith; Christian education; spiritual development of youth; personalistic approach; theo- and Christocentrism; integral approach; formation of conscience; divine pedagogy

**Pedagogia Boża wobec kryzysu wychowawczego
w ujęciu Josepha Ratzingera/Benedykta XVI**

Abstrakt

Joseph Ratzinger – Benedykt XVI, jeden z najwybitniejszych myślicieli ludzkości i największy Papież-teolog w historii współczesnego Kościoła, bardzo wiele uwagi poświęcił krytycznej analizie ducha epoki i naznaczonej nim kondycji duchowej współczesnego człowieka, żyjącego tak, jakby Bóg nie istniał. Papieska diagnoza jest jednoznaczna i nader pesymistyczna. Pisze on otwarcie o duchowej pustyni, dramaturgii czasu, a wręcz tunelu, w jakim znalazła się ludzkość. U podłoża takiego stanu rzeczy leżą, według Benedykta XVI, dwa postmodernistyczne fenomeny: relatywizm i sekularyzm, prowadzące człowieka – w pierwszej kolejności człowieka młodego – do duchowego regresu i deformacji. W obliczu tychże zagrożeń i ich zgnębnych skutków, Papież z Niemiec postuluje, by duchowy rozwój młodych ludzi potraktować jako najpilniejsze wyzwanie i priorytetowe zadanie, realizowane wspólnie przez poszczególne grupy osób wychowujących: rodziców, wychowawców, pedagogów, katechetów i du-

chownych. Z wielu zadań i służących ich osiągnięciu środków zaradczych, jakie Benedykt XVI w swoich przemowach i pismach nakreślił przed wychowawcami, trzy wskazania są fundamentalne: personalizm, teo- i chrystocentryzm oraz integralność i odniesienie do sumienia. Podmiotowe postrzeganie młodej osoby przez pryzmat jej ontologicznej relacji z żywym Bogiem objawionym w Chrystusie Jezusie i formowanie sumienia, poprzez które młody człowiek bierze odpowiedzialność za siebie i współodpowiedzialność za innych, są warunkami autentycznego wychowania, które może na nowo przywrócić współczesnemu człowiekowi i światu nadzieję.

Słowa kluczowe: Joseph Ratzinger; Benedykt XVI; pedagogia Boża; kryzys wychowawczy; wychowanie w kluczu chrześcijańskim; duchowy rozwój młodzieży; ujęcie personalistyczne; teo- i chrystocentryzm; podejście integralne; kształtowanie sumienia

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