

## Summary

### Alter Christus. The Critical Reconstruction of John Paul II's World Outlook

The most important key to understand the world outlook of John Paul II seems to be a double identification. At first the pope identifies himself with the divine (God, Christ, Holy Mary) and all that belongs to the divine (the Church, Polish nation). This is an aspect of his thought which is clear to all. But not everyone is able to see his second identification that is actually a second step in his religious development. His second identification consists in identifying the divine with himself. This process cannot easily be spotted because it takes place in the shadow of the former one. The pious and lofty character of identifying himself with the divine can account for difficulty of noticing the dark side of the identification of the divine with himself. An act of deep religiosity in John Paul's world outlook is followed by an act of religious narcissism. While identifying with the divine he is a Christian, whereas, while identifying the divine with himself he becomes Christ himself, the second Christ, i.e. alter Christus.

The act of double identification can account for many facets of the papal doctrine. Within its framework he presents himself as a powerful man who is able to do great heroic things, i.e. actions that Christ himself would do, if he still lived on earth. The pope thinks he was the person who, with the help of God, abolished communism. In order to better understand his sense of power we can interpret his ideas from the perspective of the world view of the primitive mentality. According to some scholars the primitive culture is fascinated by power and worships power as its main religious object. The primitive cultures seem to do in an open way what other cultures do in a more hidden way. While it is clear the pope is representing the power of community of one billion Catholics, and his office charisma – as any other pope's – comes basically from this fact, it is less evident that also the power of self-overcoming is one of the most important factors contributing to his sacredness in the eyes of the faithful. The Roman Catholic clergy, expounding the power of self-overcoming as a part of their self-description, is the main social basis of John Paul II's sacred power. In the book it is maintained that the Roman Catholic clergy are in fact a separate Christian denomination that hid and hides its true nature from the lay people trying to show their status that is actually rooted in the feudal times as the will of God. The clergy and John Paul II are playing on the word "Church" calling themselves a "Church" but, when it is needed tactically, attributing the term also to all Catholics.

The psychological assumption behind confounding self-overcoming with the sacred is an intuition that if you do something against your sensual nature, you actually do something spiritual. Only after the power of self-overcoming is felt and venerated, reference to Christ and his alleged chastity comes into play. Chastity is in fact regarded by the pope as the main characteristic of the Christ himself. Pope's and his clergy's chastity is regarded by him as a self-sacrifice which is meant to supplement the redemptive suffering of Christ.

In this way the core of clerical vocation is strictly connected with the main mission of Christians that is, according to John Paul II, suffering for the redemption of humankind. He himself describes himself as the one who suffers in a very particular way for current and universal needs of the humankind.

There are interesting results of the idea of self-overcoming in his relation to Christian religions. The teaching and the pontificate of John Paul II are namely marked by

contradictions in his position on non-Christian religions. The acceptance of the latter (expressed as, e.g., in interreligious meetings in Assisi or the conviction that God did not break his covenant with Jews) is contradicted by his strong criticism of them (except for Judaism) and his call to convert them (including Judaism). Interreligious dialogue in his thought is definitely out of tune with this call as well as with a conviction that the Catholic Church has the whole truth and “the fullness of the means of salvation”. The author is attempting to explain these inconsistencies by referring to the psychological ideas of repression and the return of the repressed and by applying these ideas to the domain of the intellectual, to the domain of views. This application seems to be justified by the finding of an extreme glorification of self-overcoming that can be seen both in the writing and the practice of life of the pope. John Paul’s self-overcoming, which is to be understood as an act of repressing, turns out to be an overcoming of plurality of religions in himself and self-elevation over them. In this context the return of the repressed in his mind seems to be characterized by what may be regarded as a specific kind of impulsivity, namely thought impulsivity. As it is the case with the repression of instincts, the impulsivity of the pope’s thought results in unexpected and “irrational” acts of the affirmation of non-Christians. These acts do not have any grounding in the doctrine that is proclaimed by him on the regular basis (e.g. kissing a copy of Quran).

John Paul’s stance on the meaning of the nation seems to be marked by a double identification that is similar to his double identification with the divine. In fact, since the Polish nation is regarded as a Christian nation by its very nature, both processes are the same: John Paul II, like a regular patriot, identifies himself with the Polish nation, and in the second step, unlike a regular patriot, identifies the Polish nation with himself. That’s why he can call himself – and is called in the same way by his compatriots – as a “son” as well as a “father” of Polish nation. Apart from the emphasis on the identification with the nation, the book underscores in the pope’s thinking an importance of the identification of the nation with himself. The text underlines also the meaning of the Polish nation conceived of as an intrinsically Christian nation for the pope’s reflection on nation in general and his social philosophy. Ambivalences between the ethnic-Christian and the Jagiellonian models of the Polish nation in his thought are highlighted. Finally the book is trying to show a link between John Paul’s thoughts on nation and his willingness to influence social life in a political way. His identification of national values with religious values seems to be the main way to restore pre-Vatican II alliance of the church and the state.

It is often said that John Paul II is a “pope of contradiction”. It does not seem to be an inadequate description. His main idea is that virginity is superior to marriage but sometimes he says there is equality between the two states. He says that suffering is a mystery, but he also says it is also a punishment, a trial and ultimately a way to save the world. In other words on the one hand he assumes Christ to be the ultimate Redeemer, but on the other hand by saying that Christ’s suffering must be “supplemented” he clearly assumes the imperfection of Christ’s sacrifice. There is a disharmony between the pope’s openness to non-Christian religions and his harsh criticism of them as well as with his unwillingness to debate with progressive Catholics within the Church itself. A tension can be spotted between his intention to represent all Catholics and his leadership of the clergy that must actually be conceived of as a separate clerical Christian denomination. One cannot forget about a contradiction between his conviction that the creation is good because it is a work of the good Creator and his tendency to overcome the nature and “the world”. There is also an inconsistency between John Paul’s idea of Polish nation as the community of people of

different faiths and the idea that Polish nation is based on its Christian identity. In the book I try to point out that contradictions expounded by a charismatic man does not put his charisma in jeopardy. Paradoxically, when they are not too clearly visible they can strengthen it because contradictions can weaken those who already believe in someone's charisma. Contradictions can weaken them in at least four ways: by creating confusion in the minds of the faithful, by making an impression that contradictory people of charisma are in fact profuse bearers of all possible (because contradictory) powers, by making the faithful dependent on theological statements who in fact are formulated only at the discretion of clergy, by increasing the number of the followers (there are followers who follow one set of statements and the ones that follow the contrary set of statements).