

Jan Guncaga

**THE LAITY
AS CHRISTIANS BY PROFESSIONS
(THE CHRISTIANITY IN SECULAR PROFESSION)**

(c) Jan Guncaga
THE LAITY AS CHRISTIANS BY PROFESSION
(c) Translated from the Slovak original by Dr. Darina Sedlakova a Sister Rita Carberry

I dedicate this work out of love to my daughter Jana and my son-in-law Thomas

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INTRODUCTION

Under the title THE LAITY AS CHRISTIANS BY PROFESSION I have tried to present Christians who consider their whole life as their vocation from God. Their private, public, family, working, physical, spiritual and social life is in line with their faith. I was encouraged to write a book with such a title by my more than fifty-year experience in the „lay apostolate" - being worker, student, political and religious prisoner, physician, and scientist in the field of clinical research and for 28 years chairman of a national organization of Catholic Intellectuals.

This experience has convinced me, that till today a non-Christian dualistic attitude towards life persists among non-clerical Christians (laity).

Many Christians - lay people split their lives into two parts: the worldly (physical, material, professional, secular), and the spiritual (sacred, church, religious).

A large number of Christians - lay people consider their secular life and their secular profession as less spiritual, second class compared with the profession of priests and monks. From their „religious" point of view they underestimate their own secular profession. They do not sufficiently take into account, that the secular sphere of life is the primary, the dominant sphere, in which they should implement their Christian conviction.

Drawing on the ideas of the Second Vatican Council, I am focusing on three problem areas:

- 1. The role of Christians - lay people (laity) in the current pluralistic, and secularized world.,*
- 2. The unity of the secular and the spiritual sphere in life, and*
- 3. The Christianization of the secular professions.*

In connection with the Christianization of the secular sphere of life I repeatedly underline the necessity for the formation of committed Christians. Christians by profession, who at the moment represent only some per thousand (‰) of the total number of the People of God.

From the formal point of view I have divided the book into three parts:

In the first part - THE AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN IN TODAY'S WORLD - I describe the term .. committed Christian", his position in the Church and his mission in today's world.

In the second part - THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE SECULAR WORLD - I highlight the importance of the Christianization of the secular professions and describe specific Christian features of different secular professions.

In the third part - BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF SLOVAK CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS (USKI) - I present the national organization of Christian Intellectuals from the position of its chairman, as well as the efforts of this organization to form committed Christians in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

I address my position and opinion particularly to Christians – non-clerics (laity), who feel co-responsibility for the tasks and mission of the Church in today's world, and who are deliberately engaged as Christ's missionaries in the secular sphere of social life. Reaction to this common topic is expected from them.

At the beginning I would like to take the opportunity to express my thankfulness to all who helped me in my endeavour.

In the first place I offer heartfelt thanks to my wife Olga for all her dedication, inspiration and her contribution as co-author. Not a single chapter was worked out without her ideas, comments and tough criticism.

Special thanks go to all respondents to the question: „Where do you see the Christianity of your profession?"

Ing. Marian Balazia, Dr. Stefka Bohonova , Ing. Ladislav Guncaga, Ing. R. Guncaga, Prof. Dr. Anton Hajduk, Dr. Albin Koval, Doc. Dr. Robert Letz, Prof. Dr. Vlado Perichta, Dr. Imrich Staricek, Dr. Eva Sestakova, Dr. Agi Siffalovicova, Doc. Dr. Imrich Vasko, Mgr. Zuzka Vaskova and artist - painter Laco Zaborsky.

Bratislava, 3 September 1999, Jan Guncaga

REVIEW OF THE ORIGINAL SLOVAK VERSION BY MGR. Z. VASKOVA

The resolutions of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) constitute a new era in the life of the Catholic Church. The Council did not deal with the inner problems of the Church only but opened itself also to non-Christian religions and to the whole mankind. It identified itself with all problems of today's world.

One of the most important questions Council dealt with was the laity question.

Council declared laity's position in the Church and their calling and mission in the secularized world in three documents:

1. APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM (AA),
2. LUMEN GENTIUM (LG),
3. GAUDIUM ET SPES (GS).

Despite an unequivocal language in these documents (AA, LG, GS) many unclearnesses exist until today. In the daily practise the Council documents are often interpreted differently by priest and by competent lay-people. This sometimes leads to misinterpretations and even to tensions. In such a situation many Christians, both priests and lay-people, welcomed an original and top present-day book on laity problems.

The book title **THE LAITY AS CHRISTIANS BY PROFESSION** attracted already at first sight attention and curiosity. Author of this book is Dr. med. Jan Guncaga, president of the national **FEDERATION OF SLOVAK CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS (USKI)**, with its seat in Bratislava.

Dr. Guncaga is well known as a firm advocate of the Second Vatican Council ideas. In his work he concentrates with all strength on the laity problems. He sacrificed the greatest part of his life to lay apostolate as Christian worker, student, political prisoner, physician and scientist. His lifelong experience in the lay apostolate sphere is written down in the following works:

1. **UNCONVENTIONAL CHRISTIAN**, Luc, Bratislava 1997,
2. **UNCONVENTIONAL POLITICS AND SLOVAK IDENTITY**, M. Vasko, Presov 1998,
3. **THE LAITY AS CHRISTIANS BY PROFESSION**, M. Vasko, Presov 1999.

I shall concentrate myself on the third book. In my brief review I would like to emphasize the essential ideas and their originality.

The content of the book is divided in three parts:

1. **ORIGINAL CHRISTIAN IN TODAY'S WORLD**,
2. **CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE PROFANE WORLD**,
3. **BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF SLOVAK CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS (USKI)**.

• The first part consists of the following chapters:

1. Today's world, 2. Christian in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, 3. Secular and spiritual sphere in Christian's life.

• The second part contains six chapters:

1. The Christianity of secular professions, 2. The Christianity of human work, 3. The Christianity of secular profession, 4. The Christianity of various secular professions, 5. The Christianity in politics, 6. The Christianity in economy.

• The third part describes briefly the activities of the national **FEDERATION OF SLOVAK CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS (USKI)** with regard to 1. education and formation of committed Christians and 2. Christianization of secular professions in the spirit of the Council.

I.

- In the first chapter of the first part - **TODAY'S WORLD** - the author analyses the contemporary situation as an era of secularization, neoliberalism, utilitarian consumerism, pluralism, social contrasts and as post-Conciliar and post-totalitarian era.

- In the second chapter CHRISTIAN IN THE SPIRIT OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL the author characterizes the committed Christian in detail:

„A committed Christian works consciously and wisely but also with pleasure and confidence not only for his own integral well-being but also for his neighbour's good, for the world's integral well-being in all profane spheres: in politics, economy, art, science, culture, ecology.

A committed Christian is an active Christian who perceives his Christianity in everyday life as God's calling.

A committed Christian is a conscious Christian who bears witness to Christ by his profession or job and by his life style.

A committed Christian develops his faith consciously, creative and in harmony with all his daily activities.

A committed Christian inspires for Christ also the others - starting with the very most neighbours in family and colleagues in occupation.

A committed Christian cultivates his professional spirituality by systematic self-formation.

A committed Christian educates himself systematically in theology in order to bring faith and science in harmony."

In the same chapter Guncaga draws reader's attention to

1. the different attitude of the Church towards the laity before and after the Council on the one hand and
2. the different position of the laity towards the Church before and after the Council on the other hand.

BEFORE THE COUNCIL

the laity regarded the Church as a „solicitous mother".

From her one can always expect everything.

In the view of the PRE-CONCILLIAR LAITY there are active Church members, i. e. clergy and order members who are responsible for the PASSIVE CHURCH MEMBERS, i. e. laity.

These passive lay-people are content with their SECONDARY ROLE of a well „served flock". Their daily, profane work dispense them from the apostolic joint responsibility for the mission of the whole Church in the secular world.

According to these passive Church members the Church is a community of the „spiritual state" people, i. e. priests, bishops, cardinals and the pope.

And such a Church is regarded by many believers even after the Council as a „service station" where they „carry out" their sacraments and fulfil their duties.

The POST-CONCILIAR ATTITUDE OF THE COMMITTED CHRISTIANS towards the Church on the one hand and the ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH towards the laity on the other hand constitute a literal revolution.

The active Christians, committed Christians see themselves as equivalent and responsible Church members. They see their *primary sphere of activity in the everyday, secularized world*. In this world they bear the responsibility for the Church mission as Christ's missionaries in various secular spheres, i. e. in their respective secular professions.

The real problem regarding the committed Christians is the fact that there are only very few of them. They represent, unfortunately, an absolute minority of the Church members - only few per mil (in contrast to the 90% passive members!).

According to Guncaga the education and formation of committed Christians is one of the highest Church priorities for the new evangelization.

- In the third chapter Guncaga stresses the UNITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE AND FAITH. He describes the spirituality of everyday life impressively: „The spirituality of everyday life begins in the Christian marriage and family." According to the author, the marriage is a form of God's calling: „As a sacrament the marriage is a lifelong process of mutual self-cognition, self-giving, self-perfection and self-sanctification.

The Christian family as the home Church is the place where the education and formation of God's children starts quite naturally."

II.

The entire second part of the book with its six original chapters represents the core of the book. It is dedicated to the CHRISTIANIZATION OF SECULAR PROFESSIONS. The author underlines two most important prerequisites for an effective Christianization of secular professions:

1. An authentic Christian attitude towards human life,
2. Active Christians, committed Christians, Christians by profession.

According to Guncaga, the authentic *Christian attitude towards human life* is based on the unity of faith and everyday life:

„The authentic Christian faith refers to the whole, everyday, secular life -to everything about which man thinks, to everything what he plans and undertakes. The authentic Christian view understands man not only as an individual soul-body unity but also as a social creature."

Regarding the committed Christians, Christians by profession, the author does not stop repeating how necessary it is to educate and form them:

„Committed Christians are not born. They have to be educated and formed. This education and formation is by no means less important than the education and formation of clerics."

Guncaga describes also quite unequivocally the *primary and secondary tasks of committed Christians*:

„According to the conventional, current view, the *Church professions of lay-people*, as for example catechists, pastoral assistants, lay theologians, deacons, organists, sextons and members of various Church bodies, are esteemed much higher than the *secular professions of ordinary lay-believers*. Such an attitude corresponds to an anachronistic, dualistic attitude.

The primary sphere of activity of committed Christians (*Christifideles laici*) is the concrete, material world with all spheres of human life (culture, science, politics, economy).

The profane sphere with its secular professions is the sphere where the clergy cannot replace the laity (*irreplaceable position of the laity*), in contrast to the above mentioned Church professions where the laity can be replaced by the clergy (*replaceable position of the laity*)."

On the basis of the author's own experience as president of a national federation of Christian intellectuals, Guncaga presents also the METHOD OF CHRISTIANIZATION OF SECULAR PROFESSIONS:

„In principle it is a question of *systematic meetings* of committed Christians of the same profession (e. g. jurists, teachers, politicians, physicians, historians, artists, entrepreneurs) at local, regional, national and international levels.

The programme of these meetings concerns two areas: 1. professional Christian spirituality and 2. professional Christian morals.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY concentrates on spiritual life, on personal spirituality - *asceticism* and professional common spirituality.

PROFESSIONAL CHRISTIAN MORALS makes an effort to *characterize*, define the Christianity of the respective profession.

The elaboration and description of individual characteristics, properties and behavioural patterns takes place in small or bigger group communities.

The efficacy of such common group formation is magnified through common motivation and common control."

The author stresses the fact that „the individual signs of Christianity or a set of signs representing the Christianity of the respective profession as well as the stand-points of committed Christians of various professions towards current issues should be published and adequately promoted in public life.

The promotion takes place first at local, later at regional, national and international levels.

For the time being there is not much experience with such a common group formation."

In Guncaga's view, „self-formation" is the *core* of the process of adult education generally and the *heart* in the process of formation of committed Christians particularly."

The author closes this central chapter with the section the OBJECTIVE OF THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF SECULAR PROFESSIONS: „To penetrate, to impregnate all spheres of life with the Christian spirit, with the spirit of unity of faith and life. This penetration means the *harmonization of today's civilization with Christianity.*”

• In the second chapter Guncaga characterizes the CHRISTIANITY OF HUMAN WORK. In his view work should be seen „ 1. as a vocation from God, 2. as participation in the creative God's work, 3. as a participation in Christ's messianic work.”

• In the third chapter the author unconventionally analyses the CHRISTIANITY OF THE SECULAR PROFESSION. According to him „the secular profession constitutes a threefold service: 1. service to God, Creator of life, 2. service to mankind's and the world's development, 3. service to a neighbour in combating pain and sufferings”.

• The fourth chapter contains interesting positions of several respondents to the question WHERE DO YOU SEE THE CHRISTIANITY OF YOUR PROFESSION?

• The fifth chapter deals with the CHRISTIANITY IN POLITICS.

On an admirable scanty room the author tackles the most important questions of Christian's position to politics. He stresses the fact that „there is not a specific Christian politics but only politics in the Christian spirit”.

Two points are particularly emphasized in this chapter: 1. distinct comparison between the conventional and the unconventional politics and 2. the difference between the morals of an individual and the political morals which relates to questions and solutions of the whole society.

• In the sixth chapter Guncaga analyses the CHRISTIANITY IN ECONOMY.

He draws attention to the contemporary neo-liberalism on the one hand and outlines a new movement in economy - *communitarianism* as a way out of *individualistic economism* on the other hand.

As a SUMMARY of my review I would like to point out the essential distinguishing originality marks of the book, they are:

1. The term Committed Christian,
2. The term Laity as Christians by profession,
3. The term The Christianity,
4. The term Committed Christians as Christ's missionaries in the secular sphere,
5. The term Christianization of secular professions,
6. Unconventional politics, the Christianity in politics,
7. Unconventional economy, the Christianity in economy.

In my view Guncaga's work should be recommended to:

1. all Christians.
2. committed Christians,
3. priests and members of religious orders,
4. theology students,
5. catechists,
6. teachers,
7. politicians,
8. entrepreneurs,
9. all who are involved in adult education,
10. all who are interested in today's authentic Christianity.

PART 1 - THE AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN IN TODAY'S WORLD

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INTRODUCTION

The world we are living in today is full of anxiety, imbalance, insecurity and the fear of a dubious future, nearing decline. It is a world of dramatic contrasts, of social and economic boom and burst. It is a small world of the consumer welfare society and a big world of suffering and hunger. Our world is divided into the first, the second and the third world. On the one hand, there is an extremely sophisticated technology and overall scientific achievement, and on the other hand, there is a confused culture and the philosophy of relativism and religious indifference. International meetings on futuristic planning and cooperation in the field of finances, production and trade take place almost continuously. Unemployment and the chaotic exploitation of basic materials and energy sources are common everywhere. We live in a society of international organizations aiming to promote and protect the natural human rights of nations and to preserve peace. There is, however, a growing number of politically enslaved small nations and the continuous production of nuclear weapons for human destruction.

Technical progress becomes paramount whilst spiritual development is discarded. Members of the consumer society are generally indifferent to starving peoples. The new religion of practical materialism and ethical relativism is basic to the modern epidemic: „mass neurosis“, an incontestable social and health problem.

Not only today's youth, but also many adults, are obsessed with the absurdity of life, the phenomenon of „an existential vacuum“.

Our era can be described as one of secularization, neoliberalism, utilitarian consumerism, pluralism, social contrasts, post-Conciliar, and post-totalitarian.

1.1. Era of secularization

The use of foreign words in common speech is not always without difficulties. It can often lead to misunderstanding if the term used is ambiguous for the communicating parties. Therefore let me first explain what is understood by secularization, and secularism.

1.1.1. Concept of secularization

It was during the negotiations of the „Westphalia Peace“ in 1648, after the Thirty Years War, that this term started to be used in European languages. The word secularization was used to describe the „granting of Church lands“ to the laity, usually to the local authorities.

The term „secularis“ was used for temporal, worldly, or profane things - as different from holy, sacred, spiritual, religious, or supernatural things.

„Sacred“ was automatically higher than „profane“. The Church, which meant the hierarchy and clergy, distinguished for a long time, and unfortunately does so even today, between religious priests and secular priests and between the clergy and the laity.

Even today the word „secular“ means worldly, material, not religious or spiritual.

The present understanding of secularization is that it is the process of making society more worldly, a process, which diminishes religiosity, religious meaning and activities in secular society, a process in which religion loses its importance and finds itself at the margin of life. Briefly, we can define secularization as the „functioning of society“ without supernatural powers. Actually, it is the dechristianization of the secular world.

Many Christians through their dualistic attitude towards life accelerate this process of the secularization of life in general. These Christians consciously meet God only in the „religious sphere“, such as in church, in their „spiritual life“. They do not let him into their secular everyday sphere, because, according to them, that sphere is not to be dominated by God.

1.1.2. Concept of secularism

The term secularism should be distinguished from the term secularization. Secularism is an ideology, propagating nonreligious or antireligious principles as a basis for social organization or personal morality. Here we may include the ideology of militant „scientific atheism“.

1.1.3. Causes of secularization

From a wide range of different causes that have led to secularization throughout the last two or three centuries, but mainly in this century, I will mention the most important ones:

- 1. There is a new understanding of the „natural order“ of nature. The scientific viewpoint has pushed the „divine“, out of nature and has left a spiritual vacuum that has become the fundamental orientation of our culture.*
- 2. Mankind has become aware of its own abilities to control nature and to organize the economic and social good.*
- 3. The development of technology has reduced the feeling of dependence on God.*
- 4. Magic, mysterious and metaphysical phenomena have been replaced by objective reality.*
- 5. Modern society is future-oriented and aware of the fact that social good depends not on divine providence but on social planning.*

1.2. Era of neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is a product of the evolution of liberalism. From the philosophic viewpoint liberalism is based on rationalism, which apart from human reason does not recognize any „higher principle“. Followers of liberalism are advocates of secularism.

Liberalists proclaim unrestrained freedom and independence of the individual. According to them social relations are the results of private initiatives. As for the economic sphere, neoliberals are convinced that economy has its „own laws“ and is above politics.

One of these laws is the law of „continuous growth“. The neoliberal slogan „Always more“ governs every purposeful activity, cost what it may. This, of course, leads to changes in social norms and values.

The core of the neoliberal, fiercely capitalistic, market economy is the business of „making money“. Such economy is dependent on bank credits and interests, and must therefore constantly strive to make profit.

Credit, interest and growth are mutually contingent: if the entrepreneur wants to do business, he must procure money from the bank. To be able to pay back the bank credit, he must constantly strive for profit. To „produce“ profit in an environment of competitive pressure, he must constantly grow. This competitive pressure forces him to make constant investments.

Due to his greedy rapaciousness for money, the entrepreneur fails to be „homo sapiens“, a sensible person, and becomes „homo oeconomicus“, a person obsessed with the economy. „Homo oeconomicus“ is in the end ruled by the philosophy of „The survival of the fittest“ or „First come, first served“.

In particular the financial markets“ have gained much importance recently. These markets fight for profits not from production, i.e. from labour, but from speculation. This phenomenon we call „casino capitalism“.

Altogether, the neoliberal market system can be characterized as a system free of all ethical bonds, a system, which damages solidarity and, from the long-term point of view, the whole of society. Slowly but surely it is digging its own grave.

1.3. Era of utilitarian consumerism

This era has direct links to the era of neoliberalism; it is its consequence. Utilitarianism is a political and moral theory, according to which the best rule of life is to strive to achieve „the

maximum happiness for the maximum possible number of people“. Acts are good or bad depending on whether they contribute to or prevent the achievement of this aim. In theory what is promised is happiness, in reality it is, however, profit. Profit overrules everything - even truth, goodness and beauty.

A utilitarian person is fascinated by pleasure, by delight. He will do everything for it. He perceives pleasure particularly in the maximization of his benefit, relish and advantage. The meaning of his life is limited to the egoistical possession of material assets, that means the philosophy „to have“, rather than „to be“.

The utilitarian position creates such a physical and psychic milieu in society, that life becomes completely pathological. The most tragic aspect of this social dilemma is the fact, that health problems related to the economic system are caused not only by the process of production itself, but also by the consumption of many goods aggressively promoted and recommended by advertisements.

Consumerism is „the fruit“ of a philosophy of „constant economic growth“. It is a literal „overeating“. In connection with overeating, I was impressed some time ago by an article in a newspaper. The headline of the article by the Swiss professor of political science Arnold Kuenzli was „The bulimic economic system“(1). This author excellently compared the neoliberal economic system with a pathological obsession to eat, so called bulimia.

Bulimia is a neurotic obsessive „boundless“ eating (gorging). The sick person is under permanent irresistible pressure to gorge himself. If he cannot swallow more, he simply puts his fingers down his throat and activates the vomiting reflex. He vomits all he has eaten - and starts again.

According to the observations of psychologists, the number of bulimia cases in western countries has significantly increased in recent years. The causes for the spread of this disease have a social background. The individual level of bulimia has its parallel in the system of constant growth of the neoliberal economy.

It is consumerism, obsessive consumption that has degenerated to a psychic disease.

In times of a business boom the bulimic economic system bloats, in times of recession it vomits part of the bloated volume in the form of mass unemployment and new poverty. The only problem about this is, that it is no longer called bulimia, but „an economic cycle“. As far as health problems are concerned, it is worth mentioning that the food and pharmaceutical industries are good examples of how commercial interests can „produce“ different health risks. I will mention just a few examples: synthetic substances used as conservation agents which replace healthy organic products, or colouring and taste substances, heavily advertised on billboards and television, or cigarettes and alcohol.

The problems of an unhealthy diet are intensified in many people by drug abuse. The sharpest increase is observed in psychoactive drugs - sedatives, nervous system depressing substances, analgesics, pain killing substances, and antidepressants.

The overuse of chemical fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides, chemical substances used in the battle against insects and herbal pests, create another group of health risks.

The effects of long-term „chemotherapy“ in agriculture have been proven to be dangerous for the health of the soil and of people, for social relations and for the overall „ecosystem“ of our planet.

1.4. Era of pluralism

The word pluralism has its origin in the Latin word plural, meaning more than one. In general we understand pluralism as difference, diversity of views or opinions on the very same thing. Pluralism is the complete opposite of uniformity or unequivocalness.

Pluralism has links to various spheres. Thus we speak, for example, about political cultural, religious, world-conceptual, legal, economic and other pluralisms.

From the viewpoint of political pluralism, the roots of civil society have a pluralistic structure. Society represents an organic heterogenic diversity. It contains not only individuals, but partial societies too. Pluralistic society, which is a prerequisite of a democratic society, grants these partial societies even greater autonomy (principle of subsidiarity).

In the existing advanced secularization religious pluralism gains more and more importance. From the philosophical viewpoint we can understand the term religious pluralism as a theory, according to which the major world religions represent different concepts, perceptions and responses to one final mysterious divine reality.

From the point of view of religion, our world is becoming more secular. In this more secular world even the traditional exclusiveness of Christianity is problematic.

Since the Second Vatican Council Roman Catholic theology has moved significantly from the former „exclusiveness“ of the Catholic Church. NOSTRA AETATE Declaration (2) on the attitude of the Church to non-Christian religions states in Article 1: „All nations form only one society, they are of the same origin, because God granted life to the whole of humankind all over the world, and the whole of humankind has a common final goal: God, whose providence, manifestations of goodness and salvific intentions reach out to all human beings. The Catholic Church respects Hindus, Buddhists and Moslems. It is against all forms of discrimination. In DIGNITAS HUMANA Declaration (2) on religious freedom it emphasizes the dignity of every human being.

1.5. Era of social contrasts

Mankind has never abounded in such wealth and economic potential as it does today, and yet, a major part of the world's population suffers from hunger and illiteracy.

On the one hand, there is enough money for research on Mars and in space and into slimming diets, but on the other hand there are 900 million illiterates and thousands of people dying from starvation.

In its recent optimistic past the United Nations Organization (UNO) regularly proclaimed „Decades of Development“, through which it hoped to attract attention to the misery and poverty of two thirds of the world's population. These two thirds we used to haughtily call the „Third World“ (as distinct from the First, Western World and the Second, former Eastern Block World.)

In the eighties it was a „Decade of Debts“. Indebtedness, particularly of the Third World, paralyses development of these countries. Today we all know that indebtedness and hunger are caused by unjust distribution of the Earth's wealth between the poor and the rich.

The world community seems to be bewildered in trying to solve this world problem. The unjust distribution of wealth seems to have become „one of the natural economic laws“ The science of Economics, which deals with the creation, distribution and consumption of wealth has reached a dead end.

It is paradoxical that poverty in the Third World is also related to the excessive growth of the world's population. The current crisis arising from the increasing population on Earth has its roots in the rapidly expanding population of the Third World. The conclusion is: the greater the poverty, the more children.

World economic injustice manifests itself in the phenomenon that many Third World countries still remain colonized and exploited, although in a masked form. We understand this as international exploitation preventing the native population from achieving such a standard of living as would contribute to lowering the rate of population growth. The policy of „distributing condoms“ and of „education to planned parenthood“, or the policy of „state regulation of birth-rate“ does not causally solve the problem of over population.

The way out of this „vicious circle“ may only be a global, worldwide „redistribution of wealth“. As far as hunger is concerned, Fritjof Capra's latest research results (3) have shown, that it is not just a technical, but also a social and political problem.

Hunger and the agriculture industry condition one another. Several recent studies have come to the conclusion that the theory of an increasing „lack of food“ in the world is just a fairy tail. The agricultural industry is not only unable to solve the problem of hunger, but makes it worse. The crucial question is not how to accelerate production, but what we grow and who consumes it.

Introducing new technologies into the existing social system that is afflicted by social injustice cannot solve the problem of starvation.

We produce more foodstuff, and yet more and more are starving. The American studies (see Capra (3)) have proven that there is no country in the Third World that would not be able to survive using only its own resources.

The main reason for hunger in the world is social inequality. The solution must be sought by answering the question: „What do we grow and who consumes it ?“

For example, in Senegal, they grow vegetables for export to Europe on specially selected soils, whilst the majority of that country's population starves.

Today, in Mexico, which had a tradition of selfsufficiency in food production, asparagus for European gourmards is grown on the best soil. In Colombia they do not grow wheat, but flowers - carnations - to be exported to the United States. These are just a few examples of „monocultures“ in agriculture.

What is to the forefront in „economy“ is not the nourishment of a country's own population, but export. And here, the First World countries play a central role.

1.6. Post-Conciliar era

The ideas of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) go far beyond the framework of the Catholic Church. They are global ideas relating not only to all spheres of human life, but to all religions and cultures.

Pope John XXIII, who called the Council, in his opening address highlighted the signs of the new order, or the „new phase of mankind“: 1. Secularization, 2. Socialization, and 3. Search for unity.

The Catholic Church accepts secularization as a reality of the present society. The Church dissociates itself from the secular social power.

We understand socialization as the increasing interdependence of groups of people and nations. This interdependence provides new opportunities for solidarity at all levels of the society.

The efforts to achieve unity have their roots in socialization, and face the believer with the questions: „What kind of unity of people has God in mind ?“ and „How can Christians contribute to the plan of God - to reconcile everything in Jesus Christ?“

The main characteristics of the post-Conciliar era are:

1. The Second Vatican Council stresses the autonomy of the earthly spheres of life in politics, economy, science, culture.
2. The Catholic Church has become open not only to all Christians, but to all religions.
3. The Catholic Church has carried out a selfexamination and has revised its picture of itself: it respects the charisma of all its members. It perceives itself as „the People of God on the way“,
4. The People of God on the way see the contours of the future in the following perspective:
* from the Church as a hierarchical institution to the Church as the community of „the People of God“,

* from authority to collegiality, to respecting the charisma of all the members of the People of God,

* from emphasizing the hierarchy of the clergy to a recognition of the „adulthood“ and coresponsibility of all the members of the People of God.

* from the only one Orthodox Church to such a Church as would be shared by all Christians - from Catholic apologetics to full ecumenism.

1.7. Post-totalitarian era

Instead of the term post-totalitarian era it is better to use term era after the Cold War. The Cold War had its roots in the political division of the world into the spheres of interests of the superpowers. The political and geographical borders of Western and Eastern Europe were different. Slovakia, where the geographical midpoint of Europe lies, found itself in Eastern Europe. The Cold War seized the whole world and manifested itself in the accumulation of nuclear weapons in both the West and the East. „World peace“ was maintained by constant competition in arms production and by „the balance of nuclear power“ between the West and the East.

In all areas of life the West and the East were two different communities. Moreover, they were practically hermetically divided. They were two absolutely different worlds with different social structures. The standard of living in the East lagged behind that in the West. Competition in the arms industry was to the detriment of the standard of living.

Gorbacov introduced „glasnost“ and „perestroika“ as the total collapse of the Soviet Empire, particularly in the economic field, drew near. The socialist regime failed above all in the economic sphere. The decline of the imperial system led to far-reaching changes, not only in afflicted countries, but throughout the world.

Among such far-reaching changes we include for example:

1. the prevention of a world nuclear conflict,
2. the process of global disarmament,
3. the creation of global security structures,
4. the global solution of ecological, criminal, drug dealing problems,
5. an enhanced respect for the right of nations to self determination,
6. the necessity for consensus in decision making on issues of global character,
7. intensification of the use of dialogue as the „method of choice“ in inter-national conflicts.

However, mistrust between the West and former East still persists. This mistrust has been caused by a long-term „cultivation“ of prejudices on both sides. This diffidence must be carefully and patiently removed by intensifying mutual contacts and understanding. Both sides must get to know each other better and show respect for the whole range of peculiarities“ in one or the other's thinking. Both sides may profit if they are able to take a lesson from their ancestors, if they appropriate everything positive, that the former systems achieved in the political, economic and social spheres. This is the only way the post-totalitarian society can progress to a higher stage of development.

The post-totalitarian era gave birth to new European countries. States, which were formerly integrated by force, disintegrated. However it is necessary to understand the real meaning of this disintegration. Disintegration stands for the freedom of subjugated and oppressed nations and states.

Totalitarianism „liquidated“ very many problems by masking them, or using cruel violence. After its decline problems started to be „unmasked“, disclosed and visible. These problems had for a long time been „narcotized“. „Narcotized problems“ recovered from narcosis, appeared on the scene of a new political era. Among these problems were the problems of subjugated states, nations and nationalities.

In its initial phase (starting from 1989) the post-totalitarian era „did not allow“ the Western superpower to „arrange“ everything according to its imagination. It had to keep in mind the situation after World War II. The year 1989 did not resemble the year 1945. In the meantime many global changes had taken place including in the political world.

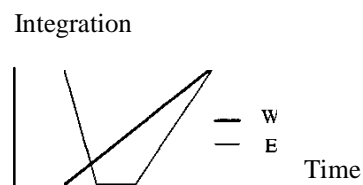
The world political arena was facing certain perplexity, insecurity, and surprise from the unexpected rapid changes in the satellite states of the former East. These changes led to „a vacuum“ of power interests in the central European region. A similar situation also developed in the former Soviet Union. Thanks to this „vacuum“ a process of disintegration was launched in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

Because the process of European integration had been under way in the western part of the continent long before 1989, some occidentals were quite unpleasantly surprised, some of them even outraged by this disintegration. During the period, when negotiations about the state and legal arrangement of the common state went on in the CSFR, I had a whole range of awkward experiences when present at discussions about integration and disintegration at various international congresses on the national factor in Europe.

Even though the disintegration of the former Eastern block was considered to be a legal disintegration, some occidentals perceived it as something unwanted, or more, as a dangerous factor for the „common Europe“ that was being re-established.

At one congress I asked whether implementation of the rights of nations to self-determination is in contradiction to the integration process. I caused uproar. I finally got the answer: „Jain“ - yes and no! (In this area the abovementioned confusion predominated.) Some of the western representatives were not able to cope with natural and legal disintegration especially because these national problems were very strange to them from the psychological point of view.

I personally have considered this disintegration process to be a „natural“ transitional phenomenon. From the long term viewpoint, common political development will, undoubtedly, lead to integration. Transitional disintegration will sooner or later transform into integration. I expressed the Western integration and the Eastern disintegration processes on a diagram: Integration East – West Integration



With the formation of independent Eastern states the integration curve falls sharply (disintegration), it will reach its minimum, then it will remain unchanged for a while (self-determination of nations and states), but after some time it will start to rise rapidly - this will be a reflection of the rapid integration efforts of independent states, and later on it will fuse with the Western integration curve. This is, of course, only a very schematic outline. The reality is far more complicated.

The scheme of integration curves may be explained in the following words: When the new Eastern independent states will have experienced the reality of their independence in both its positive and negative aspects, and will have fully established their identity, world development will, step by step, „force“ them to voluntarily join bigger units - to participate in the global integration process.

This integration process does not mean liquidation of individual states for the sake of a new common „mixed“ super state. The aim of integration is to create a supranational union, in which individual states will preserve their state and national identity.

As development in Western Europe shows, forming and enlarging the European Union will not lead to a Europe of Nations, as some people still presumed until recently, but to a Union of European States.

PART 1 - THE AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN IN TODAY'S WORLD

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2.1. The spirit of our times and God's Spirit

Today's Christians are confronted with increasing secularization, neoliberalism and consumerism. Many of them are unable to adapt to the „modern era“. It is too brutal and too secular for them. Some of them seek to escape from this situation in an „alternative lifestyle“. Others, who have not got rid of the habitual, inherited dualistic view of the world, escape from the „material world“ into a „spiritual oasis“, into various „spiritual movements“. They tolerate the material world only as an unavoidable evil. Many of them long to retire to a monastery. Some of them even emigrate to developing countries, where they seek a „more peaceful way of life“.

Authentic, unconventional Christians are fully aware of the fact, that our world, the world of all people, the whole human family with all the realities we are living in, as well as our earthly life comes from the common Creator. The earthly world is not a product of the devil's imagination. God's Spirit is in the world, in his world and thus also in our world. There is an indestructible divine element in every human being - it is part of the human substance.

Christ, the Son of God, came on earth for the sake of all of us His mission is not to enslave man, but to make him free. He came that everyone might have an abundance of life. He came to satisfy man's hunger for Freedom, his thirst for Goodness and his desire for Happiness He came to offer people participation in his divine nature. He came also for those who were not, are not and will not be members of his Church.

A Christian realizes the meaning of his life on earth, in his town or village, through earning money in his job or profession. Starting from this basis of God's Spirit, Christ's Spirit, our tasks, the tasks of beings created in God's image and redeemed by Christ (that means saved from eternal death) tasks of the heirs to heaven, are defined in this our world!

We can not be indifferent to the social, political, cultural and moral illnesses and aberrations of our modern era. They are our problems! Their solution - that is our task!

Our Christian life on the Earth has social consequences. The teachings of Christ have a universally social character. Authentic Christianity is not individualistic. A Christian as a messenger of Christ's Gospel cannot „save only his own soul“. A genuine Christian loves God, if he governs his life according to the fundamental law of love towards every man.

„Private religiosity“, religion only for private purposes without practical social impact, religion only for „Sunday enjoyment“ is in sharp contradiction to Christ's universal proclamation of the Good News. Christ does not recall us from this, our world to give us peace, „to implement“ our Christian mission and to build Christ's kingdom of love and justice only after death, in the other world. On the contrary: just as he did not bring sweet idleness, but „fire and sword“ (Mt 10, 34-35), he sends us into today's world to be „the light of the world and the salt of the earth“ (Mt 5,13-16).

The uniqueness of Christ's approach to man is based on the fact that he identifies himself with each person. He does this in such a way that according to Matthew's gospel, the last and final judgment will depend on the practical living out of love of one's neighbour: „I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat, I was naked and you did not clothe me, I was in prison and you did not visit me“ (Mt 25, 42-43).

2.2. The Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council

After the Second Vatican Council, which took place thirty-three years ago, (1962-1965), a new era in the life of the Church started. Even today there still exist people who try to play down the importance of the Council. I am personally convinced that the Second Vatican Council, as God's handiwork, means the beginning of a new Church era. „Aggiornamento“ means a present day return to the sources. When we compare the attitudes of the pre-Conciliar Church with those of the post-Conciliar Church, the epochal changes in the life of the Church become more evident.

2.2.1. Hierarchy of members of the pre-Conciliar Church

The pre-Conciliar Church stressed the hierarchical structure of its members. Above all it was a complicated scale of higher and lower clergy, that is members with „spiritual status“, and then a simplified scale of members with „secular status“, i.e. ordinary believers and learned laymen. It is necessary to highlight, that much of this „division“ still persists today. It is a „human element in the Church“ Even the Christianity of the Christian life existed in, BS it were, three variants: luxurious, first-class and common.

1. The „luxurious“ variant of the Christian life was the life in religious orders. For a long time such a Christian was considered to be an „ideal Christian“.
2. The „first-class“ variant of the Christian life was the life of „secular“ clergymen.
3. The „common“ variant of the Christian life was the life of „secular“ people, i.e. believers or lay people.

And these lay people have gradually and happily got accustomed to the Church as a caring „mother“ and very many of them also as a „service“ provider.

As part of this „service“ they carried out baptisms, first holy communions, confirmations, weddings and funerals. Their souls were in the care of untiring spiritual pastors, who even took on responsibility for them.

Such „dependence on the Church“ which they identified with the clergy (priests, bishops and the pope) has not only penetrated into „the blood“ of the vast majority of believers (laity), but has been incorporated“ into their genes as well.

Believers „inherited“ this comfortable attitude of second-class consuming Church members.

2.2.2. Hierarchy of members of the post-Conciliar Church

According to the dogmatic Constitution on the Church THE LIGHT OF THE NATIONS (2), the Church is the People of God on pilgrimage on this Earth. Who are the People of God? They are all Christian believers. These believers are members of the various „secular“ professions, called laymen, and members of the various religious orders approved by the Church: nuns, monks and priests and bishops, led by the pope as the visible head of the Church.

A measure of the Christianity of Church members is the extent to which they are following the life of Jesus Christ. All members of the People of God are of equal value. They all are equal in dignity, they all are called to holiness and all have responsibility for the mission and vocation of the Church.

2.2.3. Attitude of the post-Conciliar Church towards other religions

The sisterly and brotherly openness towards other Christian denominations as well as towards other world religions is the most remarkable characteristic of the post-Conciliar Church. In the spirit of full ecumenism the Catholic Church is convinced that God does not exclude any single human being from his love. The Council established Secretariats for dialogue with other Christian Churches, with Jews, non-Christian religions and non-believers. It is a real revolution in the field of human relations.

Church and at the same time a citizen of human society. Christians, however, cannot live two parallel lives: a „spiritual“ life and a „secular“ life.

The Council condemned the splitting of life that means the Reparation“ of the life of faith from the everyday life of work and duties. Such splitting is considered to be the greatest heresy of our era (GS, 43).

2.2.4. Attitude of the post-Conciliar Church towards the world

In the pastoral Constitution on the Church in the world JOY AND HOPE (2) the Second Vatican Council addresses not only all members of the People of God, but all people in general. The Church opens itself to the entire world. It sympathizes with all the problems and misery of humankind. Indeed, epochal is the fact that the Second Vatican Council emphasizes the autonomy of the earthly aspects of life. These „earthly realities“ are comprised of complicated political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and artistic worlds.

Apart from the autonomy of the „earthly realities“ the Council also highlighted the unity of the Christian life!!! A Christian is a member of the Church and at the same time a citizen of human society. Christians, however, cannot live two parallel lives: a „spiritual“ life and a „secular“ life.

The Council condemned the splitting of life that means the „Reparation“ of the life of faith from the everyday life of work and duties. Such splitting is considered to be the greatest heresy of our era (GS, 43).

2.2.5. Contours of the Church's post-Conciliar era

The contours of the post-Conciliar era can be outlined by the shifting of the following priorities:

- * from the Church as a hierarchical institution to the Church as the community of the „People of God“,
- * from authority to collegiality, to respecting the charisma of all members of the People of God,
- * from stressing the hierarchy of the clergy to a recognition of the „adulthood“ and joint responsibility of all members of the People of God,
- * from „the only one orthodox“ Church to such a Church as could be shared by all Christians
- * from Catholic apologetics to full ecumenism.

2.3. THE COMMITTED CHRISTIAN IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

2.3.1. The Church as a „service station“

Even today many believers look upon the Church as a service station only. Parishioners are customers, consumers: they see a priest to baptize their child, to bury their dead, or to prepare for First Holy Communion, Confirmation or Matrimony. That satisfies them. They are only „believers“, after all. They do not need to be concerned about the „salvation of their soul“, because the care of souls has always been the task of the ever ready, untiring professional pastors of souls“. These „believers“ make use of the services of the Church without any scruples: they take, but they do not give.

It seems, that over a long period of time many believers have accepted the inherited opinion, that the Church is the hierarchy, the community of the „spiritual state“ people. The masses of ordinary believers belonged to the „secular state“. Secular duties dispensed them from apostolic coresponsibility. The passive role of a well „served flock“ has become natural for ordinary believers - it is ingrained in them.

2.3.2. The Church as the People of God - laity, religious, priests, hierarchy

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the Church's life to the end of time, the constantly creative dynamic Spirit has not left us alone. Through Pope John XXIII, the Spirit, on 11-th October 1962, called the Second Vatican Ecumenical, General Council of the Church.

In its dogmatic Constitution on the Church *THE LIGHT OF THE NATIONS* (2) this Council defines the Church as the People of God on pilgrimage on the Earth! And the People of God are all Christians that means non-clergy - laity, religious, priests, bishops and the Pope as the visible head of the Church.

The Constitution *THE LIGHT OF THE NATIONS* (2) devotes attention not only to bishops, priests, and religious, but also to the laity. By laity we understand „all believers apart from the clergy and religious orders sanctioned by the Church“.

It is wonderful, that the Second Vatican Council brought a revolutionary and historical breakthrough in the understanding of the mission of laity, members of the People of God in the Church. The pre-Conciliar understanding of the term „laity“ bore the signs of a very one-sided ecclesiology.

The proper description of an active lay person - as a particularly conscientious Christian, deliberately apostolically committed, and with the specific education relevant to their sphere of activity - can be found in the Decree of the Second Vatican Council on the Apostolate of the Laity, *APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM*.(2)

This Council document represents a Magna Charta for the laity which not only ensures them of their rights, but above all charges them with obligation of coresponsibility and apostolic activity in the Church. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity serves as a norm for the revision of Church law in relation to the apostolate of the laity!

2.3.3. The Laity

Much has been said and written about the laity in the Church, particularly since the Second Vatican Council (11 October 1962 - 8 December 1965), during which the laity became the centre of attention.

The fourth chapter of the Constitution *LUMEN GENTIUM / THE LIGHT OF NATIONS* (2) is devoted to the laity. In its introduction, in article 30, the Council defines laity in the way I already mentioned. Based on this definition laity means the same as believers, both notions are synonyms.

Because in colloquial language the word layperson has the same meaning as non-professional (non-expert), it is necessary to highlight the „ecclesiastical“ meaning of this term.

Originally the term laity comes from the Greek „laos“ - the people. The Bible uses this Greek expression to indicate the People of God - to differentiate from the unbelieving or pagan peoples, called „ethne“. From the etymological viewpoint, therefore, in the New Testament a layperson indicates a member of the People of God. In the history of the Church, however, the term soon came to mean only those Church members who were not ordained priests.

Despite this explanation, according to which a layperson simply means a non-priest, many misunderstandings have occurred. The laity, the educated and even those educated in theology, are considered to be non-experts in matters of faith and religion.

Recalling what the Second Vatican Council as well as the post-synodal letter of John Paul II, *CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI / THE LAITY BELIEVING IN CHRIST* (4) expect from laity in the Church community and in particular in the secular sphere, i.e. in the world of politics, economy, science, culture, it is better to replace the ambiguous term, layperson by unambiguous term committed Christian.

The reality is that 99% of the Church's members are lay people, i.e. non-priests. Of these 99% laity only a tiny minority is deliberately engaged in the Church's apostolic work and particularly in its public life. This minority are committed Christians. I shall speak about them in more detail in the following chapter.

2.3.4. The specific apostolic work of the lay person

Despite the fact that the apostolic tasks of the laity and the clergy are different, many lay people imitate the priest. Some of them even suffer from the complex of „semi-priesthood“. On the other hand, it is not rare that a priest faces the temptation to be jealous of the layperson, and so devotes himself to activities of a „semi-lay person“.

It is necessary to underline, that it is not normal for a layperson to take over the role of a priest, while the priest deals with politics and banking. The layman's spirituality cannot be a copy of the spirituality of a religious or that of a priest. A layperson has their own, appropriate, authentic professional spirituality of a worker, a physician, a politician etc.

According to the APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM Decree (2), all believers together, both clergy and laity, have the right and the obligation to do missionary work. Just like in a living body none of the limbs behaves purely passively, but participates in the life of the whole organism, so in Christ's mystical body, i.e. in the Church „the whole body contributes to the overall growth by the appropriate activity of each limb“ (Eph. 4,16).

The co-responsibility of the laity is not a favour granted to them by the hierarchy, but a way of living the faith that gives the Church a new face.

According to Article 31 of the Constitution LUMEN GENTIUM/THE LIGHT OF THE NATIONS: „The primary task of the laity is to seek the Kingdom of God by dealing with worldly, secular matters and arranging them according to God.(God is the centre of their lives).

God calls them into the world so that by carrying out their work or profession in the spirit of the Gospel they may become as yeast, sanctifying the world from the inside, and making Christ known to other people above all by the witness of their lives and the clarity of their faith, hope and love“.

2.3.5. Co-responsibility of the laity for the renewal of the Church

One of the main expectations of the Conciliar renewal in the Church and its mission in today's world is the implementation of the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM (2). The basic condition of such a renewal is a live and missionary „local Church“ that can be created only on the basis of the co-responsibility of all parishioners, members of the „local Church“.

Every parish community, the local Church, lives on the talents, charisma and services of individuals and groups. All the members of the parish community together with the priest, the spiritual leader, establish the core of the parish in the form of a Parish council. At the diocesan level this core exists in the form of a Pastoral council. The Decree on the Pastoral Service of Bishops in the Church (2) in article 27 says: „Clergy and laity belonging to one diocesan curia should be aware of the fact that they are the bishop's assistants in his pastoral work.“.

It is worth mentioning, that while „Council renewal“ began in some Western countries only in the seventies (e.g. 1972 Synod in Switzerland) it began in Slovakia and in the Czech Republic immediately after the Church had gained a certain degree of freedom in 1968.

In these countries, religious revitalization was evident on all levels (parish, diocesan, regional and national). Already in the first months of 1968, the year of „Dubcek's effort to realize socialism with a human face“, a national movement called THE WORK OF CONCILAR RENEWAL (DIELO KONCILOVEJ OBNOVY, DKO) was established. On 14 May 1968 there was an unforgettable manifestation pilgrimage of thousands of believers and all the bishops from all over the country. (Many bishops arrived directly from prison). Elected delegates from all Slovak and Czech dioceses - priests, laity and religious -together with the bishops officially constituted DKO. The

Federal Committee was led by Cardinal Tomasek from Prague. Among the laity, I was elected to the Federal Central Committee.

2.3.6. The committed Christian

By the term committed Christian I understand a Christian who is deliberately engaged in the apostolic work of the Church and in his public life, especially in his/her own profession.

A committed Christian is characterized by:

1. Specific professional spirituality,
2. Religious and theological education,
3. Involvement in one's own Church community,
4. Involvement in public social, charitable institutions,
5. The effort to Christianize one's own profession in cooperation with members of the same profession at local, national, and international levels.

Faced with the dechristianization process even in countries with a long Christian tradition, the education and the formation of committed Christians is of the utmost importance both in the Slovak and in the Universal Church. Special „educational centres“, Catholic (Christian) Universities, specialized organizations, and all dioceses should participate in this process of education and formation, as emphasized in the apostolic letter of the Pope John Paul II *CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI* (4).

Formation of committed Christians does not mean just such a general religious education of adult Christians as would be appropriate for a much wider spectrum of believers. It means both a theological education and an intensive and systematic self-education, and self cultivation in the fields of professional spirituality and morals that would form committed Christians, Christians by profession, i.e. Christians whose whole life, private and public, is lived in accordance with Christ. More attention will be given to this issue in the chapter *The Christianization of the secular professions*.

PART 1 - THE AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN IN TODAY'S WORLD

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3.1. Unity of life and faith

Christ's message relates to the entire human being - to its physical, mental, spiritual and social dimension. It respects the reality of the secular world.

The material nature of the world and the human body, according to the Christian viewpoint, is not a wrong, secondary, minor or anti-God principle -OD the contrary, it is a divine creation.

This material reality, however, is radically different from its Creator. The World created by God cannot be identified with the Creator himself (pantheism). We understand the material world in „a secular way“, while we respect the legitimacy of individual secular spheres (culture, science, art, economy, politics).

From the Creator's viewpoint, in this „secular world“ man stands at the centre, the acme of all creatures. Human faith, however, which distinguishes between the world and God, *accepts God as God and the world as the world*, in Contrast to the superstition which ascribes all worldly dependencies and Causalities to God, and in contrast to atheism which does not take God, the Creator into account at all. I deal with heresies concerning the relations of Christians towards the world in the second part of the book.

God „assigned“ the administration of the world to human beings. People -Christians are responsible for putting the world to order. God is present in the World through the human person - the Christian, through Christians, supporters, followers, witnesses of Jesus Christ: through human hearts, human hands, human creativity, human endeavour, and human dedication. On the other hand God gives the human person the possibility to „participate in His divine nature; in His role as Creator and Redeemer“.

Authentic Christian faith, living faith, faith that is united with the secular life, can never manifest itself in isolation from the world and its problems.

A faith, which is isolated from the world and its problems, is a „dead faith“ It is a faith manifested only in the religious sphere, only during religious ceremonies, only in religious prayer and contemplation! Christians ignoring the world are „spiritual Christians“.

The „dead faith“ of purely „spiritual Christians“ was, is and will be the greatest enemy of Christianity. Such faith gives scandal and does not belong to life.

As Walter Kasper says (5), „Christianity is not just a philosophy or theory existing along with other philosophies and theories. It is not a real philosophy, but a MESSAGE. It is a unity of action and being, a unity of being and time“. God is Lord of all nations and their gods. He is Lord of the entire world, the Lord of life and death, because everything living and existing is submitted to him, because everything exists only through him and because nothing is comparable to him“.

Unity of faith and the secular life does not apply only to the Christian's individual life, to the „salvation of his own soul“ only, but to all interpersonal relations in the secular world.

Christ requires from Christians, his supporters, followers, witnesses, „conversion“, „conversion of heart“, a change in thinking, a change of mentality - metanoia. By advocating that we love our neighbour, which also means we love our enemy, he includes changes in social relations in secular society.

As each institutionalized society (establishment) has an aversion to any change whatsoever, it is understandable that Christ came into conflict with all the secular and religious institutions of his time. Nor can his supporters, followers, witnesses, Christians by profession expect any different reaction from the secular world, if their Christian faith is united with their everyday secular life.

This “unity of life and faith“ is the heart of the matter. The effectiveness of the new evangelization in the upcoming third millennium of Christianity depends on this „unity“.

This new evangelization is not just about the „salvation of individual souls“, or the mere enlargement of the Church, but above all it aims to impregnate the secular world with the Christian spirit, with the Spirit of God.

After the Second Vatican Council Christianity became the sign and the sacrament of the unity of all nations, races and classes. The Christian message is not a kind of substitute for justice but is its complete fulfilment.

3.2. Spirituality of daily life

The question of the spirituality of everyday life is a natural continuation of the previous topic of the unity of life and faith. Spirituality is the manifestation of a living faith, which is implemented in this world and for this world.

3.2.1. The Concept of Spirituality

The word spirituality has recently become very popular. It is used in the most diverse contexts. Its classical, original meaning is often deformed. Also many Christians understand spirituality to mean many different things.

The majority of Christians understand spirituality as the classical spiritual life, the life of the supernatural, immaterial soul - as distinct from the physical, worldly life, which is liable to world laws, to the laws of nature. The spiritual life includes the problems of the ascetical and mystical life: formation of passions, senses, reason, and will, the life of virtue, striving for moral perfection. Individual means of living the spiritual life are. prayer, meditation, sacraments, Eucharist, spiritual exercises, recollections etc.

As I intentionally speak about the spirituality of *every day life*, i.e. about spirituality that refers to both the spiritual and physical worldly life, I'm going to describe briefly, what *I personally* understand by the term spirituality. Being a Christian, I understand spirituality to be a *personal life experience, and a life-long personal effort to live according to Christ and in the spirit of Christ*. Because the spiritual and somatic elements, in real life, form an inseparable unit, I also understand spirituality as a very serious physical earthly reality, as an integral part of the human person.

3.2.2. Spirituality and personal life

As God's creature and God's child I realize again and again, that my whole life is bound up with my Creator, who has his plan for me. Day after day I am being convinced that I depend on Him, that I came from Him and I will return to Him. / *transform my daily life* with its banalities, contradictions, temptations, deceit, disappointment, vanity, suffering, joys, desires *into God's daily life in me*. I give more and more space to my God in my personal, family, professional and public life. I listen to God's voice in myself and gradually reconcile with myself, my face, my character, my position, my children, my profession, my nationality, my identity.

The more I think about my littleness, my helplessness, and my weakness on one the hand and about the greatness, omnipotence and perfection of God on the other hand, the more I offer myself to God to be at His disposal.

The Son of God, Jesus Christ, is my model and inspiration in life. I meet Him in prayer, meditation, in the Holy Scripture, during the Holy Mass, and above all in the Eucharistic Bread of Life.

I consult Him about my ideas and plans. I confront my behaviour with His behaviour. Through Him, with sorrow and new resolutions, I lay my failures, my falls, my egoism, my impatience, and my hostility towards my neighbour before my heavenly Father.

I have experienced many times that it is worthwhile „committing oneself into God's hands“. When everything seems to be useless, without a chance „to move ahead“, when I think that I am back again at same place, that I am always just beginning - I feel new strength, a new way, new courage, and new life in myself!

I experience my spirituality as *life in God's presence*. I try to think and undertake everything in a transparent way, without violence - in the spirit of God and of Christ. When I stumble, I throw myself again „into God's arms“. In the presence of God my life becomes more harmonized, easy, uncomplicated and without contradictions to the Christian life. It is the life of light, hope and

3.2.3. Spirituality and the apostolate

Just as Christianity is not a private religion, but the religion of a community, so the life of an individual Christian is not just their private life. The Christian life has a social and a universal character. *A Christian is not an individualist*. The Christian is focused on serving God and neighbour. His spirituality is in this service. It is a manifestation of a living faith“,

A Christian with his „living faith“ accepts Christ's challenge: „Go to all peoples and make them my disciples“ (Mt 28, 19). He is also aware of Christ's warning: „You can do nothing without me“ (Jn 15, 5).

An effective apostolate must be based both on Christ's challenge and on Christ's warning. In other words: apostolic activity, service of neighbour, service of the world, service in building God's Kingdom on earth - that means an active apostolic life, should be balanced, complemented by contemplation (meditation, internal prayer, an intense meeting with Christ, the Holy Spirit and the heavenly Father). Contemplation and action should be united. Therefore, contemplation should not precede or follow action, but accompany it. Unity of action and contemplation means, that contemplation does not only relate to eternity and action only to time, but that all Christian deeds in daily life are focused on eternity, on God.

While speaking about apostolate - i.e. the conscious, meaningful effort to spread Christ's Kingdom, God's Kingdom in the secular world - I have in mind above all the work of committed Christians, laity in the ecclesiastical sense, i.e. nonpriests, as Christians by profession.

3.2.4. Professional spirituality

Christians by profession, who have to explain, to revitalize, to free and to represent this world, are engaged in many different occupations. They live in different social and cultural conditions. In this respect their spirituality will differ too. It will be the spirituality of an entrepreneur, a lawyer, a worker, an artist, a banker, a businessman, a judge, a politician, a physician, a teacher, a farmer, a sportsman, a craftsman, a scientist, a developer, an actor, a clerk, or a soldier.

Throughout history the Church has developed different forms of spirituality - particularly, or exclusively for clergy and members of religious orders. Thus we speak, for example, about Benedictine, Franciscan, Jesuit, Dominican and other spiritualities.

Committed laymen, who wanted to deepen their faith or their religious education, received or still receive today the same „spiritual food“ in the same form as was or still is received by members of clergy, i.e. by priests and monks. The kind of spirituality it was or is depends on who offered or offers this „spiritual food“. A Dominican does not tend to promote Jesuit spirituality, just as a Jesuit does not tend to spread Franciscan spirituality.

St. Francis de Sales was, so to speak, an exception in this respect! In his work „Introduction to the Devout Life“ he elaborates on the idea that every human being is called to holiness. Joseph Cardijn, a Belgian priest and founder of the movement „Young Christian Workers“ (JOC), at the beginning of our century introduced his method: SEE, JUDGE, and ACT, which represents the basis of a comprehensive lay spirituality. The aim of this spirituality was to overcome the prevailing dualism between soul and body, between everyday life and faith, between temporal and eternal, between natural and supernatural.

The most striking breakthrough in an understanding of spirituality for the laity, however, was made by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which placed the laity, i.e. members of the People of God, at the centre of attention. This is what this whole book is about.

3.2.5. Features of a new Church spirituality

In the framework of the present post-Conciliar Church a generally „new spirituality“ has been developing, a spirituality of the People of God. The characteristic features of this spirituality are: 1. Diversity, plurality, 2. Community awareness, 3. A sense of reality.

1. Diversity, plurality

Difference, diversity, a plurality of opinions and attitudes towards one and the same thing is one of the essential signs of today's society. Plurality relates to all spheres of life as I have stated in the first part of the book *Today's World - Era of pluralism*.

This pluralism can be easily noticed in the large selection of books dealing with spirituality. One does not know where to begin, what to choose, what are the priorities, which viewpoint is the key issue - psychological, sociological, historical, anthropological, biological or philosophical.

As I have pointed out in the previous chapter about professional spirituality, plurality of attitudes needs to be taken seriously. If we wanted to enforce or transplant western European spirituality to the African, Asian or Latin American continent, it would be present day Church neocolonialism. The law of inculturation, to adapt to what-so-ever culture, applies to this sphere too.

2. Community awareness

Pope John XXIII, the pope who called the Second Vatican Council, pointed out in his opening speech the basic signs of our civilization: 1. Secularization, 2. Socialization, and 3. Striving for unification. Socialization expresses the growing interdependence of people and peoples. This interdependence creates new chances for solidarity, for community awareness. The unity of Christian spirituality should be sought not in uniform egalitarianism, but in a serving community, whose only centre is Jesus Christ.

3. A Sense of reality

A sense of reality is, as it were, a law that should govern future Christian life. A modern critical Christian, a Christian by profession, does not trust „flat ideologies“. He seeks for the reality, he seeks for the essence of Christianity: Jesus Christ. The critical Christian concentrates on the fundamental problems of everyday life and resolves them „sub specie aeternitatis“, from the point of view of eternity. *He understands his faith as real faith only if that faith gives him strength and hope in daily, real life.*

For a critical Christian not a dogma, but reality is the target. Revelation is not ruled by the laws of metaphysics or by morals, but God's laws rule metaphysics.

A critical Christian sees the reality in a more diverse and less unambiguous way, but at the same time more rich and vital. He sees reality in focusing everything again and again solely on Christ and a concrete human being. After all, Christianity has always been a religion for a concrete person and not for an abstract ideal type.

3.3. The Christianity of marriage

3.3.1. Introduction

The atheistic mentality of the present-day person, unrestrained liberalism, practical materialism and the consumer approach to life, especially in the „first world“ countries, also effects the traditional understanding of marriage. Today, the family and marriage are literally in crisis. The lasting relationship of marriage, which was until the recent past sanctioned and respected by society, is changing today to a „free, unbinding association“ of two persons. In some West European countries, e.g. in Switzerland, it is very popular for a girl friend and boy friend to live together. It has even become quite common for a wife to also have a boy friend or for a husband to have a girl friend - as if it were a certain form of „enlarged marriage“ or unofficial co-habitation. This „free association“ is reflected in the shocking reality that every third marriage, sooner or later, ends up in divorce. If you take into consideration the fact, that the family should fulfil the most fundamental role in the human community, which is first of all the „humanization of the human person and society“, you can imagine what a chain of consequences the „divorce mentality“ causes in the whole of society.

Here it is necessary to emphasize, that even many Christians with their dualistic attitude towards life have secularized, and profaned marriage. According to them marriage belongs to the secular sphere of life, which they consider to be secondary to the spiritual viewpoint.

The problem of marriage is connected to Christianization, to a new evangelization and to the individual Christian. It is about a return to authentic Christianity.

3.3.2. Christian marriage as a Divine Vocation

The authentic Christian attitude to marriage is based on the fact, that the Creator himself is the founder of marriage. He did not create a man alone, he created human beings „as man and woman“ (Gn 1, 27). Marriage represents the primary form of a society of equal persons.

When I speak about the Christianity of marriage, I refer to my conviction, that Christian marriage in its authentic form, virginity and celibacy are only different manifestations of the same Love, God himself (1 Jn 4, 8, Rom. 5, 5). Actually they are different forms of vocations from God. Christian marriage, virginity and celibacy are based on the same love of God and of one's neighbour (Math 22,36-40, Cor 13,1-7). The lifestyles of Christian marriage, virginity and celibacy are not based on the „compromise“ of serving two masters: God and mammon (Math 6,24). Jesus Christ challenged his disciples to become „the salt of the earth“ and „the light of world“ (Math 5,13-16). The same applies also to Christian married couples. In the Church as one community of the People of God all the members enjoy the same dignity. Their common charisma is Christian love.

I decided to describe the Christianity of marriage due to the sad reality, that many Christians regard the sacrament of marriage as less important than for example the sacrament of baptism, confirmation, or priesthood. There are no major and minor sacraments.

The full meaning of the Christianity of marriage is manifested also in the fact that spouses as parents participate in the Creator's work, and build the fundamental Church community - the home Church.

3.3.3. Basic Characteristics of the Christianity of Marriage

The Christianity of marriage is manifested in three main characteristics: marital love, marital fidelity and marital inseparableness.

3.3.3.1. Marital Love

In its original sense the word „love“ refers to one of the mysteries of human life. It is the essence, the centre of human existence. A man decays without love. Love is one of the noblest signs of humanity. It has the highest position in the scale of values. To be loved is the deepest desire of all human beings. We can do without bread and water longer than we can do without love. Love indeed inspires and animates all of human life. Just like man himself „human love“ comes directly from the Creator, from God. „God is love and he who lives in love remains in God and God remains in him“ (1 Jn 4,16).

The authentic Christian love of a married couple is based on God. It is bound up with Him and remains in Him. The core of Christianity of Christian marriage is in this understanding.

Marriage in this spirit is a „university of love“. This university teaches a life-long process of mutual self cognition, mutual giving, perfection and sanctification. Love basically consists in working towards fullness of life and the personal development of the other person.

Mutual self cognition is a long process in which the couple tries to know and understand both one's own „core“ as well as the „core“ of the partner, of the beloved. It is no secret that everybody has a congenital tendency to first of all recognize his bright and positive features and to diminish his dark and negative ones. Therefore, it is easier, better, more objective and more effective, to know oneself better „through the eyes“ of another person, especially of a beloved person. As it is a self-knowledge based on a higher, altruistic motivation, it is a process, which enriches both partners mentally and spiritually.

Marital love which manifests itself in *self-giving* unites the human and the divine natures. Such love incomparably outmatches the pure human erotic inclination. Self-giving does not mean giving „something“. It means giving oneself. In everyday practice self-giving means putting oneself „in the second place“. To forget about oneself, to respect the partner's condition and situation means that my partner takes priority over myself and I control myself. It is a process of self-control.

Self-perfection refers to inherited talents, personal traits and professional skills. Christian marital love involves the mutual perfecting of personal traits and professional skills as well as supporting inherited talents. The more consistent and radical is the self-knowledge, the more effective is the self-perfection. Self-knowledge and self-perfection are parts of self-education, of self-formation, which plays a key role in the overall formation of a personality. Not of less importance and necessity is professional improvement and specialization to the highest possible level. Marriage should not have a blocking effect in this sphere. On the contrary: spouses should inspire and help each other to reach the highest possible level. We learn from the history of different fields of human activities what an inspiring role was played by husbands and wives. It is necessary to stress that every improvement must be mutual. Once it becomes unilateral, it loses the character of love and becomes just a demonstration of egoism.

Self-sanctification and the consecration of the whole of marital and family life is the highest manifestation of Christian marital love. As I have analyzed above, marriage as a sacrament is not only the private accord of two people, but also a divine vocation similar to that of a religious or a priest. According to the dogmatic Constitution on the Church THE LIGHT OF THE NATIONS (2) „through the sacrament of marriage, that indicates the secret accord and fruitful love between Christ and the Church, the Christian spouses help each other to saintliness by marital cohesion as well as by the reproduction and bringing up of children“ (LG Art. 11). Spouses, therefore, live their own, specific marital and parental spirituality. They pray together, they

meditate together, they live in the presence of God, they derive power from the Eucharistic living bread and they are apostles and Christ's missionaries in their own family - in the home Church.

3.3.3.2. Marital fidelity

Marital fidelity is the second principal feature of the Christianity of marriage. It is confirmation of the marital accord, which affirms the unchangeability of personal love. Marital fidelity is the first form of marital purity, of marital asceticism. This asceticism is closely related to respecting the condition and situation of the beloved and to self-control as I have outlined. Purity is there where sexuality is the language of love, of total love. Marital asceticism is connected with honouring life, because there cannot be a contradiction between God's laws on the transfer of life and cultivating marital love. Infidelity is a treachery and the beginning of the decline of the accord. Christ himself underlines the law on marital purity and defines more strictly the notion of misconduct: „You have heard that it has been said: „You will not commit adultery! I tell you, however, that the one who with a (sinful) desire looks at a woman, commits adultery in his heart“ (Math 5, 27-28).

3.3.3.3. Marital inseparableness

The third principal characteristic of the Christianity of marriage is marital closeness or inseparableness. It highlights the stability of marital life, the stability of the family, and the stability of bringing up children as citizens of society and at same time as children of God. Inseparableness is also a sign of the faithful love of God for man, and of Christ for his Church. Christian spouses, for whom Christ is the real everyday Way, Truth and Life, respect Christ's direct challenge to them in their sacrament: „That which God has joined together let no man tear asunder“ (Math 19,6). Through their testimony, Christian spouses are the most competent in the apostolate of families. We are witnessing every day, what a „divorce mentality“ means. The problems arising have a health and social character. Divorces of couples - particularly those with little children -have a malicious impact; they destabilize the whole of society. A divorce is not a matter of „one or two persons“. The family is indeed the most elementary social establishment. In the family, as the cradle of all human beings, children are born, grow and develop their individual and social dimensions as a human creature. The instability of marriage and family influences both the immediate and the wider society. It is, therefore, in the interest of each state to protect and support family and marriage by appropriate legislation. In the Christianization of families Christian couples have an irreplaceable vocation.

3.4. The Christianity of family

3.4.1. The family - a cell of society

The family is the most fundamental human community. It represents the basic life-giving cell of the larger organism of human society. Just as an organism is composed of individual cells, that differentiate and gather into higher and higher functional units - organs, which then form specific systems to create a compact organism through their organic conjunction, in the same way a family forms the basis of a state, a nation and the whole human society.

Through the family life continues from one generation to another. Since the beginning, mankind's generations have met and have been born into the family. We understand mankind as a unified organism. Individuals, real people, mother and father, have merged their biological essence, the core matrix of their cells, together. Our parents have become the parents of our biological

substance, through which we have ever since, been bound to the biological organism of the whole of mankind by bearing in us the imprint of former generations.

A person, however, is not just a material reality in its inorganic and organic configuration, although matter is a substantial component of a human being. The material structure of the person is the ground to which a spirit incarnates. That is the spiritualization of the human being, which is expressed by the action of intelligence and will.

The Christian view on the entirety of a human being, on his cosmic and metaphysical mission goes even further. The foundation, the essence, the core and the heart of the notion of the Christian human being reads as follows: Through Christ - the God man comes into being! The Christian in full, genuine meaning, participates directly in God's nature, he has God's essence in him. He achieves the fullest significance and sense of his life, a special mission. Being in love he commits himself to Love! We have purposefully elaborated on the biological substantiality of a human being and on his being intertwined with the organism of mankind to stress, that the Christian realizes his supernatural intention in the earthly, concrete, tangible world! Our world is impregnated, soaked with God. „In Him we live, we move and are“, as St. Paul says. God is the sense and goal of our every idea, word, act and movement! The Christian solves everything in his specific way, with a supernatural orientation through Christ. He deals with all the issues of his everyday life, including his family, from the Christian viewpoint. Christianity is not a world-view of the stratosphere, but of concrete earthly life!

3.4.2. The Sacrament of marriage

The Catholic Church has its firmest foundation in the sacrament of marriage. Christ raised the marital contract to the level of a sacrament! „... That is why a person leaves mother and father and clings to his spouse, the two becoming one body. Thus they are no longer two, but only one. „That which God has joined together let no man tear asunder“ (Math 19, 3-6).

So, Catholic families are built on a sacrament! We do not classify sacraments as larger or smaller, or as more or less important. All of them come directly from God. The sacrament of marriage has the same status as the ordination of a priest. It gives supernatural character and aim to the natural marriage. The husband and wife place their lives into the hands of Christ.

Saint Paul speaks about marriage as a great mystery. In the most beautiful and unrepeatable way he compares marriage to the relationship of Christ with the Church: „Wives, be dedicated to your husbands as to the Lord“. Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy. He made her clean by washing her in water with words of life, so that when he took her to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that“ (Eph 5,22-33).

Here we can see the attractive, stirring, captivating fullness, of the real face of Christian marriage! The sacrament, however, carries an obligation! It is lifelong and binding, without reservations, retreat, negotiation or compromises. It requires the co-operation of the complete person, who wants to take part in the supernatural life and who longs for God's fatherhood and Christ's brotherhood!

3.4.3. Parents of the children of God

The mission of loving Catholic spouses is a noble one: mutual sanctification and participation in the creative work of God!!! The fruit of their love is endless: the child. In marital love the parents are an imitation and picture of God. They form a new human life, a material, biological basis for the incarnation of the soul, for the divinization of the human person. Spouses become parents. They are not only parents of worldly children, but also parents of the children of God. A child of Christian parents will not remain only a citizen of earth, but

through baptism will receive divine life and will become a living limb of the mystical body of Christ!

Therefore, parents represent an immense God, who as Father gives himself in love to the Son, and the Son gives himself equally to the Father. The consequence of their giving is the love of the Holy Spirit. Similarly parental self-giving in love results in a third person, in a child. Fathers accept the dignity of fatherhood from the first of all fathers, from the Father in Heaven. The Christian mother does not only give birth to a child, but in a certain sense she also gives birth to Christ, because she gives birth to a Christian, which means another Christ. Fathers, mothers, Christian parents, this is our essence!

3.4.4. The Education of the children of God

The task of a Christian family does not end with giving life that is just the beginning. The parents' mission is enormously difficult: to bring up children. Education! Not just looking after the children. The education of the entire person. Education for earthly, temporary, somatic, and social life, but particularly for the spiritual and divine life! It is its maintenance, trousers, dress, comb and toothpaste. Of course, this is demanding and inevitable too. Anyway, it would be too little. Even animals take care of their young for a while. Christian mother and father, a more heroic work is waiting for you! Have you ever seen great things being achieved without struggle, sweat, self-denial or sacrifice? Can it be true, that „no pain, but gain“? Certainly not. The opposite is true: „No pain, no gain!“

Who is able to educate a Christian, another Christ? Only a Christian who lives through Christ, with Christ and in Christ! There is no branch without life-giving sap. No! Christian parents, who are we in the eyes of our children before God? We are God's envoys on the earth. What does it mean? We are constantly obliged to confront our lifestyle with the requirements arising from this function! Mothers, fathers, children, we all have an excellent example in the family from Nazareth!

Parents teach their children to fight for eternal life in the conditions of life on earth. To be a Christian means to be revolutionary. To undergo revolution within oneself, to cultivate one's own nature, to re-shape it to a super nature. Christ himself emphasizes, that he did not bring peace, but a sword, fire, and revolution against evil.

The Christian realizes the meaning of his life on Earth, in his town or village, in his occupation or vocation in life, in happiness and sorrow, at school, in arts, sports, science, politics, economy, in the field, or workshop. From morning to night, from night to morning, in winter and in summer, during holidays or at work. The world in which he lives is his battlefield, where he fights and overcomes himself. His environment is the racecourse, on which he wants to do his utmost to attain the best results, to be able to achieve the crown of eternal life and glory! In these intentions and in the vividness of his own example is the best guarantee of the Christian education of children. Children gravitate with love to their parents, without being forced to do so. Step by step they consistently adopt and assimilate the behaviour and lifestyle of the child of God. The parent will always consciously use the most diverse occasions, situations and events to direct children towards God, the Creator, Messiah, and Consecrator. It is physiological, natural education. As a child lives in the Christian atmosphere his soul grows together with his body. The family milieu is for him just like oxygen for his lungs, light for a plant, or a mountain stream for a trout.

Where do people get this superhuman energy to be able to achieve together with their children this supernatural goal? The answer is quite simple. The Christian is a Christian only with God's help. God gives him power, the gift of grace. Christ declared: „You cannot undertake anything without me“, St. Paul proudly says: „I can do everything in Him, who gives me strength!“

3.4.5. Spiritual life

If besides our body we possess a soul too, we enjoy not only the bodily life with its needs, but also the spiritual life with its supernatural goal. It is well known, that appropriate nutrition is necessary for the maintenance of good somatic condition. It is an elementary prerequisite. But even this is a problem. It is a question of a rational diet with adequate representation, quantitative and qualitative, of all the necessary components: proteins, fats, carbohydrates, minerals, water and vitamins. Besides that we need sun and oxygen. Today this is a science in itself: the nourishment of children, of youth, of the ill, of the aged, of workers in extreme conditions, and of sportsmen etc.

But what about the soul, the spiritual substance of man? Is it enough to throw it something from time to time, when something remains? Isn't the soul worth more than all the treasures of the earth? Where is the life spring of the soul? It is in the spiritual life, because its essence and meaning is Christ himself.

The spiritual life is meant for all Christians. It is not reserved only for clerics. There is no real Christian without spiritual life!

Spiritual life is an inexhaustible source of energy for the Catholic family for its noble tasks. It is like a petrol station on the road to eternity. In the spiritual life parents gain contours, the face of another Christ, the holiness, to which they have been called. They radiate this spirituality directly on their children!

The main pillars of the spiritual life are: prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, religious education, Holy Mass, Holy Communion, examination of conscience, spiritual recollection and spiritual exercises.

3.4.6. Prayer

Our spiritual structure demands that we pray. It is the most natural human act. We get into direct contact, or dialogue with God the Father in Heaven, with Christ, our Messiah and brother, and with the Holy Spirit the Consecrator. Prayer is our means to be united through God with all people. In prayer we reach the fullness of our life, we stop being alone. It fills us with new life energy and spiritual freshness, it supports us in weak moments, it comforts us in sorrow, it gives us strength to bravely bear the faults of others. Prayer is the source of the optimistic approach to life, which is typical of a Christian. Through prayer we learn to love all people.

In the family common prayer is absolutely necessary. Children, father and mother speak together to their Father in Heaven and to God's Mother. They plead, thank, and implore for forgiveness. They unite with other Christians, with Christ's mystical body, with the whole of mankind. They pray both for friends and enemies, for sinners, for the sick, for those who are mistaken, for peace and progress in the world, and for the fighting and suffering Church.

The most important characteristic of good prayer is a sincere, conscious commitment to God. Not servile rattling away, reciting words without understanding their meaning. The most valuable is contemplative prayer, in which we live through each word, place the words face-to-face with the concrete situation in which we are at the moment. Let us teach our children to speak to the Father and to Jesus in their own words appropriate to their age and don't send them off to bed with just a quick sign of the cross and prayer to their Guardian Angel. Let's fill all our days with prayer. Thus prayer will become as ordinary and as vital a need as the air, which surrounds us, and in which we move and breath.

3.4.7. Meditation

Where can we learn this complex, dignified, prayer that is focused on life⁹ We must meditate for at least ten minutes every day! Without meditation a full spiritual life cannot exist. If we don't draw close to the divine truths, and don't confront our lives with the teachings of Christ we can deform or disfigure the Christian life. We would not educate our children to or ourselves to have an interior life instead we would cultivate formal, traditional, lifeless Catholicism!

What is actually going on in meditation? What is the principle of meditation? Without any mask or simulation we face God and ourselves. We examine our interior, appropriate Christ's truths, and impregnate or soak ourselves with them! We adjust our acts according to Him. We have to choose the right time for meditation, when we can concentrate without problems. The time spent in meditation is not time lost, on the contrary it is a time of gains. We accumulate refreshing spiritual energy. Afterwards, we easily overtake those, who have had no time to charge their spiritual accumulator.

Meditation is the best physiological, non-forceful sedative, a calming medicament for the nervous system amidst everyday haste and the current of mixed thoughts and ideas. It is the best defence against the invasion of the terrible monster of the modern machinery of the automated world into our interior. It is an excellent offensive against our own faults, superficial style, mediocrity, egoism, earth boundless, and slavery to material things!

While meditating, we are aware of God's presence, we fill ourselves with God, then take the prepared idea, think it over, and analyze it to be better able to understand and digest it. Finally we work out a precise, realizable plan, how to change the adopted idea into our currently lived life, our own, present earthly life: at home, in the street, in the bus, the workshop, the office, in the field, in the stable, at a sick bed, or during a parliamentary session. In this way we incarnate Christ's thinking into our own. Our thinking gradually becomes the thinking of Christ.

Meditation, which doesn't have its roots in life, which does not influence our ordinary life, which only runs parallel to life, alongside it, as something mystical, purely spiritual and sacred, something reserved for Sunday and for church, is just a caricature of the meaning of this word. Such meditation is a waste of time. And time is something very precious. Time also has an eternal value. We must put all our time at Christ's disposal. If we understood the scale of values of all things, we would never say: „I have no time for meditation!“ Because what we are saying is: „We have no time for Christ!“

3.4.8. Religious Education

Spiritual reading and religious study are not of less importance. Our spiritual lives would not remain on an appropriate level without consistently supplementing our religious knowledge. Christian awareness would dry up and wither away. Here we are speaking about one of the fundamental roots of the depth of Christian conviction: education, knowledge, and cultivation of the spirit! The greatest enemy of Christianity is ignorance. It is a common stumbling-block: many Christians are rightly blamed for being backward, rigid, impractical, being like a foreign element in society, not able to solve actual tasks of science, arts, or economics. Many of them are threatened by arrogant, trivial, even primitive statements such as: „Religion and science are contradictory and incompatible!“ They are nearly tempted to believe them. Why? Because concerning religious issues they have remained on the level they were at as children. And now, as adults, they make heavy demands on this level of knowledge.

Such backward Christians then have inferiority complexes and conflicts, they exercise false humility, and are strangers in the eyes of non-Christians.

St. Paul points out: „When I was a child I thought like a child. When I grew to manhood I left behind childish manners“.“ Parents have responsibility for their children before God. They

cannot ignore their authority as teachers. The school alone cannot be responsible for education. The school, indeed, is only an extension the parent's arm. Children come home from the street or from school and pour out questions to their parents, to which parents must give true answers. They cannot just get rid of them by a gesture, delaying an answer.

Christianization, the filling of our life with Christ's ideas, cannot be implemented to the fullest extent without the solid bases of religious education. Neither is theology the monopoly of the clergy. It is a specific feature of every Christian. In fact, theology is the incarnation of divine truth into the human person, into all of human society. This incarnation is, however, not complete, if it is not perfectly incorporated into all the professions by scientific application by believers. Our faith must be reasonable. It is our duty to examine why we believe in Christ! The more we study, the more we immerse ourselves into the greatness of the laws of nature, the sooner we come to the conclusion: real faith and real science are not in contradiction, they both lead to the eternal Truth and Source of life!

3.4.9. Examination of Conscience

Examination of conscience is the checking of our work, a self-criticism of our Christian thinking and acting. Conscience is that right compass, which the Creator himself has put in us. If we were to underestimate the importance of examining, of analyzing our conscience, we would destroy that most internal part, that most marvellous jewel in us. If the balance sheet of an enterprise, the balance of assets and liabilities is important, if the self-criticism of a politician, an artist and a scientist is necessary, if it is necessary to take inventory of material possessions, which are corroded by rust and devoured by moths, and stolen by thieves, how much more is it necessary to analyze our spiritual work, our growth, and improvement! We train children to examine their conscience, which is the voice of God in them, every day. At first we do it together with them. We remind our child of both the good and bad that has happened on that particular day. We beg our Heavenly Father for pardon and we ask for help. Later on the child will get used to checking his own conduct.

3.4.10. Confession - The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Confession is the amplest source in which the soul washes away the dirt of sins. If bodily hygiene is necessary, if you need to wash yourself after working with coal, if you enjoy a refreshing shower after an exhausting journey, even more you need to take care of the hygiene of your endlessly precious soul.

Confession is the desire for perfection, virtue and happiness. It is the unambiguous mercy of God accessible to everybody. Through confession we regain sanctifying grace, if we have lost it by serious intentional wrongdoing against God. That means we not only enjoy God's friendship, but we are children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ. Confession is an act of resurrection. If we have greater humility, then we receive in this sacrament of mercy an abundance of pardon, blessing, and strength for the continuance of the fight for the kingdom of God in us. This sacrament makes us more resistant against sin. Therefore it is necessary to confess often, and regularly. Through confession we obtain an overview of our spiritual life.

Through confession we can see if we are proceeding successfully or if we are losing ground, whether we are able to keep in step with the growing demands of life. Its psychological importance is tremendous: it is a well of harmony and equilibrium. It liquidates the disintegration and disharmony of the soul, it releases the fascinating, captivating energy of peace. By confession we establish a genuine internal peace in ourselves and in mankind, because we remove the most terrible, all destroying explosive- sin! In confession we gain an optimistic, happy state of mind, spiritual balance and security.

3.4.11. Eucharist - Bread of Life

The central point, the focus, and leading act of Christian life, the life of the spirit, is Holy Mass. Here Christ repeats his incarnation and his sacrifice on the cross! This is the greatest, infinite mystery, an act of unbelievably great, unlimited Love. From the Holy Mass Christianity derives its eternal youth, vitality, and dynamism. In the Eucharist, Christ is present physically, and personally! Through the Eucharist, every day, he carries out his promise: „And I shall be with you till the end of the world“:“ (Math 28,20).

During the Holy Mass we receive the Eucharistic Christ on the altar and into our hearts. For each Christian the Holy Mass must be an internal sun, giving light, heat, and happiness. The sacrifice of the Cross gives meaning to every movement of our mind, emotion, words, steps, acts, to our whole day, and to our life!

We bring to the altar everything that we have and that we govern. The Son of God incarnates himself into the bread and wine, the products of human work, to sacrifice himself again to his Father for mankind. Then he offers himself to us as food! We actually receive God! How much work, how much effort, and sweat is mixed with bread! How well the soil must be cultivated before the farmer's hand can put a seed in it. All professions participate in the production of bread. A variety of agricultural machinery, produced in factories by workers, designers, and engineers, are needed as well as fertilizers produced by the chemical industry. The later steps are harvesting, threshing with the help of technicians, the corn is taken to mills by lorry drivers or train drivers, flour is processed by skilled hands to a dazzling white wafer, the Host! That means, that the Host contains this tremendous co-operation of man and nature. It is the same with the wine. Human work is being re-created, its substance is changed, and it gains an everlasting value and becomes God, the Eucharist. The human person is united with God, the Creator. He participates in his life, in his nature! We sacrifice the work of our life to God. He sacrificed himself for us. That is the mystery! Marvellous! A grandiosely closed circle: God - Godman - man. Everything for man, for his immortal soul, for his eternal life. This brings me to my knees: An immense mystery beyond understanding, here God is hidden in the form of bread. No human genius would be capable of describing the endless treasure of one single Eucharistic Sacrifice! In the breaking of the Bread the children of God join with their Father and with one another. The Church militant unites with the suffering and glorified Church! Unbelievable! And yet true! That is the essence of the Holy Mass. The tragedy of Christians lies in the fact, that they neither understand, nor use this essence of the „Breaking of the Bread“. They admire beautiful churches, excellent paintings, coloured, gilded vestments, an altar covered with flowers, they listen to impressive songs, they smell the aroma of incense, carnations, lilies, and melting wax. However, they have no spiritual eyes to see Christ, who is so close, who offers himself to them. They will not meet Him, they will not join Him. Who will be held responsible for this negligence, and ignorance? It is ignorance of the Sacrifice of the Cross! How would it otherwise be possible, that they consider their sixty, or thirty minute stay in the church to be over before Holy Communion? The fact is that the bloodless Sacrifice of the Cross does not end with Communion, but continues after we leave the church and go into the street. It continues in the home, in the family, at work, throughout earthly life! We take Christ and his message with us out from the church into civic life!

The Eucharist is the culmination, the highlight of the holy sacrifice. Man -a creature, here unites with his God - his Creator. God offers himself as food. Man receives the Bread of eternal life. Christ's words are implemented through Holy Communion: „He who eats my body and drinks my blood remains in me and I remain in him“ (John 6, 57). I gain divine life, power, holiness, and eternity!!!

The Son of God calls all to the heavenly feast! Not only those selected who can afford it. Not only several aged ladies, a few widows, and once in a while a man who cannot resist the pressure his religious wife puts on him! Christ does not move among people just to show himself, but to give

us himself to enable us to participate in His Deity, to help change us step by step into Himself! His words: „If you do not eat the body of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not gain eternal life for yourselves!“ (John 6,54) are by no means facetious, allegoric, said just for the sake of saying something! It is absolutely immoral to separate presence at the Holy Mass from Holy Communion, the fruit of the Sacrifice. How can I apologize for ignoring the invitation of such a distinguished Host???

This ignorance of the essence of Christianity is the reason for spiritual invalidism, mental dryness, mediocrity, laziness, lifelessness, conformity, shyness, non-attractiveness, annoyance, caprice, false celebrity and the studied self-righteousness of very many Christians, who are recorded in the Church register!

From where does a real Christian get his power, endurance, vitality, attractiveness, self-sacrifice, altruism, cultivated personality, joyful and smiling face, and the sun in his heart? How does he reach the maximum of his worldly performance? Where does he taste „how sweet is our Lord“? Where does he obtain a heart, which is ready to be given out all the time, which wants to be everything for everyone? In a white piece of unfermented bread, which Christ changed into himself!!! The Eucharist is the main source of the father's, mother's, children's holiness! In the Eucharist, there is a well of energy for the realization of Pope John's XXIII „aggiornamento“. The Eucharist helps us to realize Christ in ourselves! Through the Bread of Angels we sacrifice our private and public life, through the Bread of Life we bring Christ to all people of good will!

We assimilate the Eucharistic Bread and it expresses itself in our ideas, movements, words, acts. Through the Eucharistic bread Christ lives in us! Thanks to Christ in the Eucharist we shall be able to fight for a full, pleasant, worthy life for all people who are children of one Father of Heaven!

PART 2 - CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE SECULAR SPHERE

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1.1. Introduction

We are living in the days of breakthrough, far reaching, until now unseen changes in all spheres of life. This breakthrough and the changes have affected also the Christian community, the Church. Even the Church finds itself in a crisis. The Church, which has been for centuries an oasis of peace, and confidence, now seems to be filled with contradictions and a polarization of attitudes. It seems that it is not able to cope with the progressing secularization of social life and the process of dechristianization taking place even in countries with a long-term Christian tradition. The Church is going through a growth crisis, a crisis of better self-cognition in the present society, a crisis of more appropriate adaptation, a crisis of more personal and more active faith of the individual believers.

Altogether it can be stated, that scientific and technical progress has much to do with the scientific mentality of today's person. The scientific mentality, however, becomes an atheistic mentality manifesting itself in practical materialism, consumerism and the questioning of traditional values. Modern systematic atheism is one of the most serious phenomena of our era. This atheism does not limit itself only to theoretic, philosophic or ideological fields. It roots itself systematically deep into all spheres of life. It creates a modern civilization, which focuses only on worldly matters.

A remedy against this atheism could be expected above all from the Church as from the „the sacrament of salvation for the world“, that means from its living limbs, from Christians. However, these Christians must be authentic. The authenticity of Christians lies in the fact, that they implement their faith in one, complex life (not only spiritual life).

And here is the core of the problem - in this one, complex life. Here also is one of the main reasons for atheism. Here also are the roots of the negative assessment of secular life. Here is the basis of the wrong understanding of the autonomy of earthly matters.

In connection with the above-mentioned systematic atheisation of life I shall focus in my reflection on its treatment, particularly on its causal treatment. This treatment should be a systematic Christianization of the whole of life, both spiritual and secular. We are after all living in the world. And where else should we apply our Christianity if not in the world, in the secular milieu, in the secular professions, jobs?

1.2. Christianization of the whole of life and the conventional dualistic attitude

Christians themselves consider the secular profession or job to be secondary in comparison with the spiritual profession of priests or monks. It is automatically presumed, that the profession of a priest or a monk is conducted in a Christian way. This is not the case for a non-priest believer (layman). Although such a believer is also perceived as a Christian, it is not common to expect that he will automatically conduct his profession in a Christian way. Here, it is automatically presumed, that the sphere of such work is subjected to other laws, to laws, which are not derived from God, but from the world. But, doesn't the world itself come from God?

The everyday reality teaches us, that common believers or laity who believe in Christ are Christians and besides businessmen, farmers, politicians, teachers, artists, physicians, advocates etc. They live a double life: on Sundays in the church, while praying and enjoying the act of worship, they live the spiritual Christian life, but from Monday to Saturday it is the everyday, hard, money-making earthly life. In the latter other rules reign: money-making competitiveness, exploitation, pushiness, shrewdness, assertiveness and graft, nepotism, bribery, personal preferences, classifying, capital, popularity, prestige, career, power, domination, commanding others etc. - simply: „First come, first served!“

And here a good many Christians will say: „If I want to survive, I must adapt myself to the hard reality“. Socialism had the saying: „Whoever does not steal, cheats his own family“. As for

capitalists, they follow the motto: „In church we believe in God, in business in getting ahead at any cost“. It is really harsh - but at the same time true! Such religion, however, has nothing to do with Christianity, it is only a cult, external, learned and not gained, inherited, traditional, superficial, pretended, registered, theoretical religion.

Theoretic and cult Christians serve both God (in the church) and mammon (at work, in profession). They are satisfied with this arrangement, because according to them it is normal to live two parallel lives: spiritual and secular. They do not even think about God in their secular profession, according to them it would be neither appropriate, nor polite. It is well-established, that speaking about God is reserved for the church and religious education and even this should be a task only for a priest as a „consecrated person“, and not for a secular man. When a layman starts to „speak about God“, we often hear: „You would make a good priest, you have mistaken your profession“.

There are also „spiritual“, „by the world unspoiled“, „clean“, and apolitical Christians. These do not want to have anything in common with the world, if possible. They endure the world as unavoidable evil. They carry out their spiritual duties at the expense of the secular, less important, human ones.

On this occasion it is worth recalling the still relevant ideas of the French Catholic thinker Jacques Maritain (6) about the Christian's relationship towards the world and politics. Maritain speaks about three heresies.

Heresy No. 1: „*The world is the devil's domain*“. This is a dualistic understanding of nature and super nature, splitting the spiritual and secular life. According to this theory, the world is selfcentered, left to its own powers.

Heresy No. 2: „*The world is theocratic*“. According to this theory the world has already been saved. God's Kingdom is already on earth - the political government of God. Such an attitude is undoubtedly against the words of the Gospel: „My kingdom is not of this world.“ (John 18,36). This idea was, in the words of Maritain, „the angel - tempter of Christianity of the Middle-Ages“. Many Christian fundamentalists stick to this idea, even today.

Heresy No. 3: „*The world is the only kingdom of man and nature*“. This heresy, in my opinion, is at present widely accepted among Christians. These Christians leave „secular“ matters to „secular experts“! Secularization as the absolute autonomy of secular matters is derived from this heresy. Relative autonomy, on the other hand, is realistic and in the Christian spirit, because secular matters as well as principles of faith have their origin in one and the same God.

As for the aforementioned heresies, it must be stated, that the Christian viewpoint is realistic, it perceives the world as a kingdom belonging simultaneously to God, man and Satan.

From everything, that I have said till now about the separation of spiritual and secular life it is clear, that still today there persists an unnatural, heretic, dualistic understanding of life and the world. We can briefly express it in the following contraries: spirit - matter, soul - body, God's children - worldly citizens, religious and scientific, religious and technical, religious and political, religious and economic, religious and cultural, spiritual and secular life.

Authentic Christian faith refers to the whole, everyday, secular life, to everything, about which man thinks, what he plans, and undertakes. It understands man not only as a soul-body integrity, but also as a social creature. The Second Vatican Council (1962 -1965) devotes special attention to secular Christians, to laypeople, to lay believers in Christ. In the pastoral constitution GAUDIUM ET SPES (Joy and hope, GS) (2) it emphasizes, that their specific role is to „put all secular matters into such light and arrange them in such a way, that they are always carried out and improved according to Christ and serve for the glory of the Creator and Messiah“ (GS Article 31).

The described schizophrenia of life and disharmony between faith and everyday, secular, professional life is considered by the Second Vatican Council to be one of the most serious

heresies of our era: „A Christian, while neglecting his secular duties, neglects also his duties towards his fellows and relatives, and even towards God himself. Thus he endangers his eternal salvation“ (GS Article 43).

1.3. Prerequisites for the Christianization of secular professions / jobs

When I speak about the Christianization of secular professions /jobs, I have in mind a positive evaluation of secularization in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (compare GS Article 36). The Council recognizes the autonomy of earthly matters (science, arts, politics, economy etc.). This is a new opening of the Church to the world in the context of a complex view of human life. The Church, as the People of God, emphasizes its secular dimension, because it is aware of its commitment to continue the salvific work of Jesus Christ, „that focuses on the salvation of people as well as on building the whole secular order“ (Decree on Apostolate of Laity, Article 5) (2). The Church's openness to the world is manifested also in the evaluation of individual and collective human activities in the secular area through improving living conditions. This activity is in line with God's intention: „Because, man created in God's image, has been ordered to subjugate the earth with everything it contains“.“ (GS Article 34)

As for the prerequisites of the Christianization of secular professions / jobs, I shall mention just the two basic ones.

1. An authentic Christian attitude towards human life,
2. Active Christians (committed Christians, Christians by profession).

1.3.1 An authentic Christian attitude

The authentic Christian attitude towards life is consistent with the implementation of Christ's lifestyle in all spheres of life. I use the notion authentic purposefully to stress, that this attitude is not a new one. It neither comes from people; the author of this attitude is Christ himself. He demanded metanoia - a change of thinking on all of human life. He enters into solidarity with all of human life; with all of humankind. If we claim today, that today's understanding of the world and man has put an end to every form of dualism between God and the world, we have to stress at the same time, that it was Jesus Christ, who first adopted this attitude.

„He himself, embodied God, wanted to participate in human community. Christ was present at a marriage in Cana, he was invited to Zacheus's home, and he ate with publicans and sinners. He revealed his father's love and the higher calling of man. In his teaching he used everyday language and pictures from everyday life. He sanctified human relations, mainly family unions, which are the basis of social life. He voluntarily submitted to the lifestyle of his surroundings and wanted to live the life of a tradesman of that time and place“ (GS Article 32) (2).

It was the people (or human element in the Church in the antique world), who joined the Christian faith with the dualistic, spiritualistic attitude to life. It was man, who sacralised and clericalized all areas of life. Nothing was said by them about the autonomy of earthly areas. In fact, clericalism was to a great extent the reason for the progression of secularization. In the sense of the authentic Christian understanding of the world and man it can be stated, that clericalism itself was not authentically Christian.

1.3.2. Active Christians

The second fundamental prerequisite for the Christianization of secular professions is active Christians (committed Christians, Christians by profession, laity who believe in Christ i.e. non-priests). I have described the notion „layman“ in the ecclesiastical meaning in the Part I, Chapter 2.3. Committed Christian in the Church and in the world (2.3.3. Laymen and laywomen).

On this occasion I have to recall again and again the Second Vatican Council. The Second Vatican Council launched epochal changes in the Church's development. The Church not only reflected on itself, but it opened itself to other Christian religions, non-Christian religions, but above all, to the whole world.

As for laymen i.e. non-priests, committed Christians, we must clearly state, and we do it with great pleasure, that the Second Vatican Council definitely abolished the pre-Conciliar attitudes towards the laity. Their importance is discussed in three Council documents: in the pastoral constitution about the Church in the world GAUDIUM ET SPES (Joy and hope), in the dogmatic constitution about the Church LUMEN GENTIUM (Light of nations), and in the decree on the lay apostolate ACTUOSITATEM APOSTOLICAM (2). The vocation and mission of laity in the Church and in the world was analyzed also during the universal SYNOD OF BISHOPS in October 1987 in Rome. On 30 December 1988 John Paul II issued a postsynodal letter „Christifideles laici“, which was a summary of the SYNOD OF BISHOPS.

It is necessary to say, that the majority of the „epochal changes“ has, unfortunately, remained only „on paper“, although the Council took place thirty years ago. After long deliberation I have come to the conclusion, that for the sake of the issue, for the sake of the topic I am developing here, it is appropriate at this moment to illustrate from my own life experience what the Church's attitude towards committed Christians still looks like today.

I have been dealing with the idea and realization of the problem of committed Christians, „secular laymen“, since my student times during the years 1944-1952. In this connection I was persecuted by the communist regime from 1945 to 1965; and imprisoned from 1952 to 1955. I continued in this work publicly during the days of the „Dubcek Spring“ in the national Movement for Conciliar Renewal in 1968. After the occupation of the CSSR I was forced to go into exile with my family for security reasons. In exile, in addition to my work as a physician and scientist, I continued with my „lay engagement“ as president of a national Christian organization. Since 1989, after the „Velvet Revolution“, I have been devoted to the education of committed Christians in the framework of the Federation of Slovak Christian Intellectuals (USKI) as its president in Slovakia.

What is the result? Despite my fifty-year interest and efforts to form committed Christians I have not found an adequate *response* and assistance even in my *own* Church.

1.3.3. Formation and education of committed Christians

In view of the progressive process of dechristianization and the growing secularization of society, the formation and education of committed Christians has become, at least in my opinion, the number one task both in Slovakia and in the worldwide Church.

While speaking about formation and education, we are fully aware of the fact, that there are two qualitatively different spheres. *Education* or learning applies especially to *man's intellect*. It means gaining new knowledge and revealing new connections. *Formation*, on the other hand, is related particularly to *man's will*. It is an effort to develop the entire man, his physical, psychical and spiritual components, to form character and morals.

Every person is determined by his hereditary factors, education, milieu and self-formation. Hereditary properties, except for egoism, are beyond his power, education and milieu can be partially influenced, but what is definitely in one's own hands is self-formation. Through self-formation a person changes into a personality. Adults do not like listening to talk about their own education. It can insult them. When I speak about education and the formation of committed Christians, I have in mind individual self formation of adult Christians. And this self-formation is a lifelong process. This is how we people are! Although education and formation is very necessary and important, for a committed Christian self-formation is even more necessary and more important. It plays the crucial role in the formation of a committed Christian. Christian doctrine refers both to education and to formation. In implementation of this doctrine in one's own life, however,

self-formation dominates. It is not so much „knowledge“, but „attitude“. Christianity is not so much doctrines, but more a movement inspired by Christ's spirit! Therefore, the major thing is not to mediate knowledge during the formation of committed Christians, but to inspire them to personal convinced faith. *Personal convinced faith is authentic faith. A Christian with such faith does not allow a „gap between Christian theory and Christian practice“.*

If we consider, that committed Christians (Christians by profession), should be Christ's missionaries in individual secular areas, it is clear, that the Church must take care of adequate preparation for this missionary service. Education and formation of committed Christians cannot be the private business of individual Christians. *The education and formation of committed Christians is by no means less important than the education and formation of clerics!*

1.3.4. Primary and secondary tasks of active, committed Christians

Despite the fact, that in the documents of the Second Vatican Council as well as in the postsynodal letter of John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, the tasks of committed, active Christians are clearly analyzed, many believers are confused.

It is a multi-centenarian inertia, that majority of lay believers see their position and mission both in the Church community as well as in their profession as a secondary, inferior one in comparison with the position and mission of the clergy and members of religious orders.

After the Second Vatican Council many Christians „compensated“ for their inferior position in the Church by their „apostolic eagerness“. They made efforts to be like priests, but they were neither professionally, nor spiritually prepared for this apostolate. And so it happened, that in some countries the ideas of the Second Vatican Council were inadequately introduced into Church life (both in parishes and dioceses). A certain type of radicalism led to misunderstandings and unhealthy „competition“ between the pre-Council thinking clerics and „eager believers“.

„Eager believers“ underestimated the importance of their secular profession - they did not perform it in an authentic Christian way. Thanks to these „eager believers“ some of the unique and so much needed fruits of the Council, e.g. parish councils, lost their reputation. This, on the contrary, increased mistrust on the part of clerics towards those „eagers“. Clergymen understood it as interference in Church matters“, that means in their own priestly profession.

On the other hand we have to highlight, that *thanks to active, committed Christians, Christians by profession, i.e. people professionally and spiritually well prepared for the apostolate, the ideas of the Second Vatican Council are spreading in their authentic sense slowly, and with great difficulties and misunderstanding throughout the Church.*

The major problem is, unfortunately, based on the fact, that there are too few committed Christians at present - only several per thousand, as I have already mentioned in the text above.

After my analysis of the „eager believers“ and committed Christians I find it also useful to characterize at least briefly the primary and secondary tasks of committed Christians.

Primary tasks - as a vocation from God

1. *To implement and to expand Christian principles in the secular sphere, in the sphere, where the clergy cannot replace them (irreplaceable position).* In this sphere they depend on co-operation with other people. It is „filling the secular, worldly society with God's laws“ (GS Article 43). These tasks relate to all professions and jobs, for example politicians, workers, teachers, writers, farmers, journalists, lawyers, physicians, bankers, singers, sculptors etc.

2. *To implement and expand Christian principles in their profession within the frame of the Church* - as professionals in Church institutions, bishop conferences etc. Here we also have in mind different professions, such as economists, lawyers, pedagogues, psychologists, counsellors for fami-

ly, marriage and children's matters, bioethics, mentally and physically handicapped, drug dependent, environmental pollution etc. *Secondary tasks:*

These relate to Church employment / professions, such as catechists, pastoral assistants, lay theologians, deacons, organists, and members of parish and pastoral councils and of other church bodies.

Committed Christians play an eminent role in the key corporations of the local Church - parish and pastoral councils. The parish council is the most important establishment in the parish community. The pastoral council is the bishop's central advisory body. These councils are the most appropriate places for the co-operation of believers with their pastors, places designed for dialogue!

1.4. Methods for Christianization of secular professions /jobs

The effort to christianize one's own profession together with ongoing spiritual and theological education are among the fundamental signs of a committed Christian, Christianization is moreover characterized by an effort to be professional at the highest possible level achievable in time and environment. It would be a fundamental error to substitute piety for expertise. Using the former instead of the latter is not in line with the authentic Christian approach. They both belong one to another. Many „pious believers“ by not being skilled professionals in their jobs lose their appropriate influence in the public life.

At this point I would like to recall again the autonomy of earthly realities. That autonomy means the obligation to respect all the individual laws, scientific methods of each individual profession and each individual scientific discipline. The Second Vatican Council contemplates genuine autonomy: „Methodological research in whatever discipline, if conducted in a true scientific way and in line with moral principles shall never be contradictory to faith because both earthly matters and facts of faith have their origin in one and the same God.“ (GS, Article 36) (2).

The highest possible professionalism is the surest way for the committed Christian to obtain necessary respect in the community of respective experts, because he is dependent on their co-operation with him.

When I speak about the method of Christianization of secular professions, I derive my contribution from my own standpoint and from my own experience. Therefore, from the viewpoint of a pluralistic solution of problems it is just my proposal, which can be modified and amended. What then is my vision?

The committed Christians of different professions systematically meet with Christians of the same professional orientation (eventually in the framework of their common organization). They meet at local, regional, national or even international levels (bilateral and multilateral meetings). Systematic meetings on the mentioned levels can be held in the form of groups (5-10 participants), seminars, workshops, symposia, study visits or training courses. A training course, which lasts some days, is an ideal form if the number of participants is bigger or if the meeting is organized at national or international levels respectively.

With respect to the aforesaid, the meetings are particularly aimed at common self-education, self-formation, and Christian self-maturation. As the psychology of adults differs from the psychology of young, immature people, the formation has its special character too. *Motivation* plays a crucial role in the process of formation. It is far greater in adults, especially because it is expected that they undergo self-formation *voluntarily*. Spontaneity is promoted by the fact, that adults believe, that through common formation they may also be lucky enough to solve some of their personal problems.

Participants having the same or similar thinking motivate each other in a group formation, they create a higher, *common motivation*. This motivation is extremely important when the implementation of common decisions concerns wider or wide public.

Common self-formation allows the participants to better and more easily „discover“ and “know“ themselves. By comparing one's own shortcomings with the others' shortcomings, and one's own charisma with the charisma of others, the participants can better realize their own *authenticity* as well as the need „to strive“ for its improvement.

All authenticity must be honoured, it is gained in a „hard struggle“. The person tends not to exercise any effort, rather to imitate. Therefore *living example and inspiration are crucial* for common self-formation.

Inspiration shows full respect for the element of self-realization of every member of the group (Besides the desire to be loved the desire for self-realization is the most essential need of every human being!). The inspirer has an eminent interest in the „promotion“ of the inspired as both of them have a common goal: *the desire for perfection*.

The above-mentioned basic remarks relating to common self-formation apply to two areas:

1. Spiritual, ascetic area - *professional Christian spirituality*, and
2. *Professional Christian morals* - gaining specific professional properties.

The format of the meetings is that they either have a double programme, i.e. problems of professional spirituality and professional morals in the spirit of the Benedictine slogan PRAY AND WORK, or the programme covers only one area, i.e. spirituality or morals. Apart from other circumstances it depends on the opportunity to meet more or less frequently.

1.4.1. Professional Christian spirituality

By spirituality I understand the fostering of God's life in ourselves, life in God's presence, life by the living Eucharist bread, lifelong striving for a life in accordance with Christ.

By self-formation in the spiritual sphere I understand self-control and self-command, the effort to overcome natural congenital egoism, the effort to take possession of altruistic Christian love while striving to be assimilated into and identified with that same love.

This self-forming effort is called asceticism. There is neither spirituality, nor spiritual progress without asceticism. Asceticism is the co-operation of man with God. The result of this co-operation is the FRUITS OF SPIRIT: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, TOLERANCE, GENTLENESS, FIDELITY, MODESTY, TEMPERANCE, and PURITY (Gal. 5, 22-23).

Even though the fundamental pillars of the Christian spiritual life - as I have described them in Chapter 3.4. THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE FAMILY - are common, the individual elements of the spiritual life are modified according to the type of profession.

So, we recognize the specific spirituality of different religious orders (Franciscan, Jesuit, Benedictine etc.), spirituality of secular priests, and thus also the spirituality of the largest variety of secular professions (workers, politicians, bankers, artists, scientists, teachers, physicians, lawyers etc.).

1.4.2. Professional Christian morals

By professional Christian morals (or the Christianity of individual professions) / *understand a set of characteristic signs, or features, which define a Christian during the performance of his profession.*

How do I imagine self-formation in the field of professional Christian morals within a group or a meeting? All participants of the same profession „seek, find and enumerate“ all signs, or features which characterize a Christian in his own profession.

This mutual effort creates space for developing all the advantages of common group formation: common motivation, individual charisma and authenticity as well as the self-realization of every group member, because every group member will contribute his own experience to the „common treasury“.

Specification of the Christian signs, or features cannot be found in general morals. The working out of special morals for individual secular professions -is a task for competent (or those who should be competent), *committed Christians, Christians by profession, who implement the social mission of the Church in various secular areas through their work.*

In some professions, for example in politics and economy, studying the Church's social teaching and the papal encyclicals can effectively facilitate formulation of the Christianity of the profession. These sources are the work of a wide range of professionals. Even today the following encyclicals are topical:

John XXIII MATER ET MAGISTRA (1962), Paul VI POPULORUM PROGRESIO (1967), John Paul II SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS (1987), John Paul II CENTESIMUS ANNUS (1991). (Of course, studying the Church's social teaching and the papal encyclicals is part of the general education of a committed Christian.)

Individual signs of Christianity or a set of signs representing the Christianity of the respective professions, as well as the standpoints of committed Christians in various professions towards current issues should be published and adequately promoted in public life. Co-operation with other people (including non-Christians) of the same profession is here also necessary.

While concluding this chapter I repeat once again: I have tried to outline a method of Christianization. From a long-term viewpoint it will be necessary to constantly improve the method according to new situations by gradual practice and training (experimenting).

1.5. Objective of the Christianization of secular professions / jobs

To answer the question „What is the objective of the Christianization of secular professions /jobs?“ we may laconically say in essence:

To penetrate, to impregnate all spheres of life - mass media, school system, education, politics, economy, science, and arts - with the Christian spirit, the spirit of unity of life. This penetration, this impregnation means the *harmonization of today's civilization with Christianity.*

Let's dilute this essence a bit.

The fact, that for ages *Christians* have not striven to improve earthly living conditions with the help of science and technology, has led to a certain kind of animosity towards *Christianity*. So, *Christianity*, so to say, has found itself on the periphery of life.

The modern, scientifically thinking person will expect a positive contribution from *Christianity* only if *Christians* prove that *Christianity* does not discourage them from improving the material conditions of secular life (after all, what other life do they possess?), but on the contrary, that *Christianity* encourages them to do so.

And indeed, the Second Vatican Council admits tremendous changes, which have appeared in the life of present day society under the influence of science and technology:

„Advance in biological and social sciences not only gives man an opportunity for self-cognition, but it allows him at the same time to influence directly the social life through technical methods“ (GS, Article 5) (2). These tremendous changes also created religious and moral changes: „On the one hand the more penetrating critical sense purges man of his magical understanding of the world, liberates him from residual superstition, and requires a gradually more personal and active

faith. On the other hand, however, there are still more numerous crowds who stop practicing religion“ (GS Article 7).

From the aforesaid facts - animosity towards Christianity and growing atheism -we come to realize, that for Christians it is desperately necessary „to reformulate“ Christianity's reputation by their authentic Christian life. Christianity has always been just the total opposite of what some people believe to be its faults. Christianity is often mixed up with „Christians“. We have to keep in mind that „Christians“ do not always represent Christianity.

Today's more universal civilization is determined by the huge expansion of natural, human and social sciences, technical advancement and the unprecedented development of telecommunications.

Lifestyle and customs are gaining a more uniform character. Our civilization raises a wide range of new problems, which Christian doctrine also has to deal with. This is the challenge for all lay Christians, Christian theologians and priests. Today's people expect the Church to present Christian doctrine in a way, which is adequate to the present times! Today's priests cannot manage with theological principles only, they have to know and apply the discoveries of current secular science too.

The greatest demands are imposed on the laity, on committed Christians, because their everyday position is in the front line. They are responsible for the performance of their professions and jobs. They are asked, as the pastoral constitution JOY AND HOPE explains „„to live in the closest possible connection with other people of their era and to strive to understand perfectly their thinking and feeling reflected in the culture“. It is they who are competent and „„should put together new scientific findings, new theories and the newest discoveries with Christian doctrine to ensure that their religiosity and virtue *keep in step* with continual technical progress. In this way they will be able to evaluate and *explain* everything in a real Christian spirit“ (GS, Article 62) (2).

To explain current problems in an authentically Christian sense is expected particularly from committed Christians, Christians by profession, Christ's missionaries in the secular areas of life.

PART 2 - CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE SECULAR SPHERE

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2.1. Work as a vocation from God

In everyday life work rarely reminds us of something that has to do with religion. Indeed, the majority of Christians - non-priests, lay believers, include work in the worldly sphere of life. Even Christians distinguish between traditional „spiritual professions“ and „secular professions“. Moreover, Christians traditionally pray, especially for „spiritual professions“, because according to them they are more demanding, more important and less attractive than those common secular ones. There are so many secular professions, that there is no need to pray for them. There are not so strict Christian criteria applying to them. „Spiritual professions“ are automatically performed in a Christian manner. This is not automatically required of the secular professions. Therefore, parishes and dioceses collect money for the formation and education of clergy or members of orders and laymen respectively, who are interested in „church professions“ (pastoral assistants, catechists etc.). The conventional distinction between laymen involved in „church professions“ and common laymen involved in secular professions applies to this field too.

Christian by profession, layman - non-priest, non-member of order, who lives his Christianity throughout his whole life, that means in his everyday activities, at work, sees his profession as being at the service of God and neighbours. He lives through his professional spirituality just like Benedictines, whose motto is *ORA ET LABORA* (Pray and work). He also strives to balance contemplation and activities. For a Christian by profession the workshop, office, studio, bank, hospital, parliament, school, nature, building site, kitchen, shop, theatre, mine, air space etc. represents a „monastery“. He also concentrates all his ideas and acts on God. In Him he lives and moves. Neither marriage, nor family or work is for him just the material sphere of life. Simultaneously it is for him his God given vocation.

The Christian by profession knows, that work comes directly from God the Creator. From the very moment of creation the Creator called man to work. God created man in his image (Gen 1,26) and charged him to conquer and govern the Earth and everything that is on it and in it (Gen 1,28). This conquering and governing is done by work.

The ability to work is one of the fundamental specifically human properties. Work of different kinds fills the major part of the earthly existence of man. It relates to the whole man, to his physical, psychical and spiritual base, regardless of whether he carries out predominantly physical or mental work. For the Christian by profession work is the essential means to sanctify his life.

2.2. Work as participation in the creative God's work

As man has been created in God's image he is at the same time capable and called to imitate the Creator. He imitates Him through discovering, investigating and utilizing treasures and values hidden in the whole creation.

The Second Vatican Council values human work, human activity in the pastoral constitution *GAUDIUM ET SPES* in Article 34(2): „For believers it is clear: human work both individual and collective, or the immense efforts through which people through the ages strive to improve their life conditions, is in line with the divine intention. Man, created in God's image, was charged to conquer the Earth and everything in it and on it, and to govern the world fairly and piously in recognition of God as Creator of everything, to focus himself and the whole universe on Him so that by subordinating all things to man God's name would become great and noble throughout the Earth“.

This applies to everyday work too. Both men and women, who work to make money for themselves and their families and who perform their activities as a purposeful service to society, can be objectively convinced, that they continue the Creator's work by their own work. They are beneficial to their brothers and sisters and they personally contribute to the implementation of God's plan in history.

Thus it has never occurred to Christians, that works, created by people thanks to their brains and power, should conflict with God's power, as if a sensible creature were the Creator's rival; on the contrary, they are more convinced, that mankind's victories are signs of God's greatness and the fruit of His mighty decision-making. However, the more the power of people increases, the more responsibility is in the hands of individuals as well as in the hands of social units. Therefore, the Christian mission neither turns people away from building the world, nor encourages them to neglect the welfare of their neighbours. On the contrary, it even strongly commits them to do so.

As I have already stated in the chapter „Christianization of the secular professions“, non-priest Christians, laypeople, are those, whose primary life task is the work in the secular sphere. They perform their work in the spirit of participation in the Creator's work, in the Christian spirit. They are those members of the Church, who are competent to carry out the social mission of the Church in different sectors of the secular sphere. Through them, through the lay members, the Church contributes to the humanization of the human family. Through them, through Christians by profession the Church Rehabilitates and increases the dignity of the human person, strengthens the solidarity of human society and adds to everyday human activity a deeper sense and importance“ (GS, 40) (2).

By their inventiveness and creativity at work, at their secular work, Christians - laypeople perfect themselves, applying their charism they realize themselves. Self-realization is, besides the desire to be loved, the strongest inherited desire of each human being.

The Second Vatican Council says this about self-realization: „Just as human activity arises from man, so it is converging to him. Once a person is working, he not only changes the world and society, but he perfects himself too. He learns a lot, he develops his abilities, he opens to the world and goes beyond his ego. Such growth, when understood properly, is more precious than the external wealth that can be gathered.

A person is precious for who he is, and not for what he possesses. Similarly, everything, that people do to achieve a higher level of justice, wider brotherhood and a more human arrangement of social relations, is more valuable than technical progress“ (GS, 35) (2).

The fact that a non-priest Christian participates through his work in the Creator's work is for him the most essential life motivation. This motivation allows him to bear all the miseries caused by different spheres of human work.

The dogmatic constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (LG) (2) in its fourth chapter devoted to laypeople highlights the fact that Christian laity particularly through their secular activities in the secular area contribute to the sanctification of all areas of human life: „Believers should therefore recognize the internal character of everything that has been created, its unity and orientation towards the glory of God. By their secular activity they should also help one another to live a more pious life. In this way they should fill the world with Christ's spirit and be able to achieve more effectively its aim in justice, love and peace. Lay people play a dominant role in the fulfilment of this universal task“.

2.3. Work as participation in Christ's messianic work.

Work as the subject matter of our usual day can be exceptionally performed with joy and enthusiasm (e.g. art and literary production). Work can also be misused (e.g. enforced work in concentration camps or as escape from problems - the work as a „drug“).

Actually, work without a Christian motivation and without a Christian cultivation is against our „uncultivated nature“. Just as *Christians are not born, but become Christians*, a higher motivation to work is not inherited, but should be consciously built, cultivated and maintained.

It is a well-known fact, that for the absolute majority of people work is inevitably connected with effort, drudgery, duties, troubles, self-discipline, burden, monotony, repetition, subordination,

obedience, discipline, responsibility, and necessity to subordinate and to relinquish. This all is, however, against our congenital „egoistic nature“, against our congenital „tendency towards evil“, and „tendency to sin“. These tendencies and this nature are both the reality and mystery of life.

John Paul II analyzes these complicated problems of human work in his encyclical on human work *LABOREM EXERCENS* (7). In the chapter on the spirituality of work he writes. „Each work, both physical or psychical is necessarily connected with effort. The book of Genesis explains this in a unique way: it contrasts the blessing of work, which is connected with raising man to the image of God with the curse brought about by the sin. This effort related to work marks the way of human life on earth and is an omen of death:“ You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce your bread until you go back to the soil from which you were formed (Gen, 3,19).

The sweat and hard work, which are inseparably related to work in our conditions give Christians and each person, who has been called to follow Christ, an opportunity to participate with love in the work, which Christ came to carry out. This work of redemption has been carried out through his martyrdom and death on the cross. If a man can bear hard work in union with Christ crucified for us, he co-operates in a certain way with the Son of God in mankind's redemption and becomes a true disciple of Jesus as he day after day carries his cross in the activity to which he has been called.

By accepting death for all of us, sinners, Christ teaches us, that we also must carry the cross, which the body and the world put on shoulders of those, who are seeking for peace and justice.

A Christian finds something of Christ's cross in his work and accepts it in the same spirit of redemption in which Christ accepted His cross for all of us.

Thanks to the light which penetrates into us from Christ's resurrection we always find in our work a glimpse of new life and new goodness as if it was an announcement of the „new heaven and the new earth“ (2 Pt, 3,13).

PART 2 - CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE SECULAR WORLD

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Introduction

It is on purpose, that I repeatedly refer to the concept of Christianity. I would like to emphasize the fact that Christians do not always behave in a Christian spirit - particularly not in the „secular sphere“. Many Christians somehow play the role of admirers or friends of Christianity. They „master“ their Christianity only in the spiritual sphere; and they do not allow it into the secular sphere of life. Even those, who due to their lifestyle consider themselves to be Christians, catch themselves thinking, feeling, acting in a non-Christian way.

It is not an easy task to always automatically behave as a full Christian. Who hasn't experienced it? And yet, from convinced Christians as from „new people“ a radical change is expected, metanoia, which as I have mentioned several times involves a change in thinking, a change of attitudes, a change in automatic acts.

This change often means hard interventions against oneself, against one's own nature, against inherited dispositions, against existing social trends, against things, which are at present popular, which are „in“, or even against public opinion.

In the course of time many Christians de-christianise without being deleted from the „register of baptized persons“. The certificate of baptism is not automatically a certificate of the Christian's Christianity.

On the other hand, however, it is also true, that many unbelievers or non-Christians think, feel and act in a Christian way without being aware of that, even without knowing Christ. These unbelievers or non-Christians are anonymous Christians (K. Rahner). Anonymous Christians sometimes show more Christianity than conventional „registered Christians“. They are more numerous than the „official“ Christians admit. We consider these anonymous Christians to behave in a Christian way. We can see Christianity in their lives. We can even feel Christianity in their secular profession. In other words: Christian attitudes and Christian behaviour are not a Christian's monopoly.

This chapter is a continuation and deepening of the former chapter. Its aim is to introduce another perspective view, to show the reverse side of the same coin. The three characteristics of the Christianity of the human work also refer to the characteristics of the Christianity of the secular profession:

1. Service to God, Creator of life;
2. Service to mankind's and the world's development;
3. Service to a neighbour in combating pain and sufferings.

3.1. Service to God, Creator of life

Man was created by God, the Creator of life. He is similar to God. He is created for God. Everything belongs to man, man belongs to Christ and Christ is God's. This is the fullness and harmony of human being and human life.

Man belonging to Christ lives in harmony with himself, with his neighbours as well as with his Creator. Through this harmony he becomes „a complete man“, adult, mature, finished human being, standing firmly on his own two feet on the ground. This earth is his, he is responsible for it.

If I agree, that God has a plan for me and if I reconcile with myself and with my dependency on God, I shall find my peace, I shall be free and shall become a child of God and thus also „an heir of heaven“.

When I live „in God's presence“, when I am aware and feel, that God lives in my heart, when I live and work deliberately for Him, I know, that He is my main „employer“ and my highest superior.

My highest superior is present everywhere. He is almighty, omnipresent and omniscient. To Him I account for my achievements in my job: for my conscientiousness, uprightness, diligence,

consistency, professionalism, incorruptibility, altruism, reliability, accuracy, and punctuality, working discipline and for my intentions, with which I approach my work.

If I do not want to lose my peace and harmony, I cannot cheat Him, lie to Him, I cannot pretend anything, I cannot hide myself behind others, I cannot wear a mask, I cannot be lazy, abuse others, seek just for my own profit, be a parasite on the efforts of others, „shirk“ during working hours, waste time, abuse the generosity and lack of knowledge of others“.

Apart from my omniscient superior, I always have by me, with me and in myself my „inner voice“ - conscience. It is my permanent navigator, compass, orientation light, guard, counsellor, preacher, confessor, teacher and protector. It is up to me, whether I listen to this voice, whether I ignore it, or whether I carefully cultivate it.

Christianity in my profession will most originally and most convincingly manifest itself when I act in line with Christ's example. He revealed the invisible God, His Father and our Father in His human appearance. He has given us the most concrete example of life.

In a concrete conflict situation, in which „I seek for advice“, I raise the question: „What would Christ do in my place, in this concrete situation?“

Christ is always my ideal. He does not just ask me to admire Him, to follow Him, to be His friend only, but first of all He asks me to change into Him. If I want to be a true-life realist, I must constantly confront my life and behaviour with Christ's life, that means, I must be loyal to Him in everyday secular reality. I can have my share in the creation and redemption of the world only in such a reality. There is no salvation beyond our everyday life.

Through the permanent confrontation of my own life with that of Christ, as well as through a systematic eating of the Eucharistic bread of life I am changing into Christ, following the example of St. Paul (Gal 2, 20).

3.2. Service to mankind's and the world's development

Man as God's creature is not only an individual person, but also a social creature. God wanted that all creatures, including man, be interdependent and that people supplement each other by their mutual service. Man as a social creature needs other people for his personal development, a society of people. In the Creator's eyes the whole of mankind forms one unity, one huge family. The people are brothers and sisters, all having one and the same Father.

In principle, every living creature, man included, is a self-governing and a self-regulating organism focusing on a process of permanent growth and positive development. This principle of positive development, progressing, maturing and improving is utilized also by modern psychotherapy based on man's self-cognition.

God, however, has charged with responsibility for mankind's and the world's development not an individual, but all people on a collective basis. Man as an individual cannot fully realize himself without the help of other people, neither is he able to implement his mission alone, although he is clever, creative and ready for self-perfection. Man puts all his abilities at the service of human society.

An authentic, unconventional, Christian is not an individualist or a hermit. His Christian vitality ensues from a community, from the big family of Christians, from a living organism headed by Christ. A Christian is a cell, a limb of the visible community, the Church; he is one of the members of the People of God. These People of God are on their way, on their way to perfection, maturity, and sanctification, on their way „home“.

The Christianity of a secular profession is manifested by a sense of teamwork as well as by the effort to create healthy interpersonal relations.

Healthy interpersonal relations require above all a transparent dialogue; a dialogue respecting not only the rules of dialogue but also its method.

Healthy interpersonal relations are the most important social factor in the economy, production, research, public life, and in all secular professions.

The core of healthy interpersonal relations should be seen in respecting every human being. Every human being is a child of his era, education, culture, geographic environment and inherited properties. The Christianity of a secular profession is manifested by constant education and improvement of professional skills in co-operation with other people in the same profession both on local, regional, national and international levels. A Christian does not regard his professional improvement as a means to increase his personal popularity and fame, but as the social development of his respective professional area.

The Christian by profession through his secular employment plays a key role in today's social dynamism leading towards the unity of mankind and towards the socialization and overcoming of international and racial disputes.

The committed Christian knows, that God did not create everything by a single act at the beginning of the world. *Creation has not yet been finished. It is still being implemented in the course of time.* Everything was created through Christ, and in Christ everything continues improving and developing.

The Christian by profession knows, that he is Christ's co-worker in the field of improving man, mankind, the world and the universe, and that his *everyday work* is the continuation of the Creator's work and *the implementation of God's plan in history.*

3.3. Service to a neighbour in combating pain and sufferings

The words service, neighbour, sufferings have lost their meaning even in the vocabularies of many Christians. For a practical materialist these words sound absolutely strange. While speaking about Christianity, I think that it is appropriate to touch on the Christian meaning of these notions.

Service in Christian terminology is a synonym for the word love. Christian love is manifested as unpaid service - in contrast to service that is paid for.

For the Christian the neighbour is every human being, both friend and enemy, neighbours are for the Christian sisters and brothers in Christ.

Jesus Christ himself as the „perfect man“ is in solidarity with every human being as it is clear from the Gospel on the Last Judgment. At this Judgment Christ speaks about neighbours as about „His least brothers“ (Mt. 25, 31-46). After his Resurrection, Christ calls his disciples - that means Christians too - „his brothers“ (Mt. 28,10, Jn 20,17).

The concept neighbour is also closely related to the second of God's Commandments - love for neighbour. Respecting this commandment forms the fundamental pillar of the Christian's Christianity. This commandment is, however, inseparably joined with the first of God's commandments - love for God.

Here it is reasonable to mention, that some „strict“ Christians understand the commandment of love for neighbour too extremely. According to such „strict“ Christians, the commandment „Love your neighbour as yourself“ means to sacrifice oneself for his neighbour's welfare to the disadvantage of his own. In other words according to „strict“ Christians this commandment means: to suppress, humiliate oneself and to dignify, raise and privilege the other, the neighbour. They do not take into account, that they should also love themselves that they are worthy of love. This commandment applies equally to the lover and beloved. Self-respect and self-love cannot be separated from respect and love for others.

Sufferings and our attitude towards them are among the central questions of human life. The world has always been full of sufferings, injustice and evil. Every man asks: „What do we suffer

for? Why is suffering a part of our life?“ There are also people, who blame God for allowing sufferings.

Pain and sufferings often test our faith. They can destroy the faith on one hand, but also enhance and deepen it on the other. Here, much depends on the attitude, ability and courage to bear pain and sufferings for the sake of higher objectives.

We observe two types of sufferings in human life: one of them is completely beyond our power and we understand it as a higher power and painful mystery (natural catastrophes, illnesses, congenital somatic and psychic deviations, big accidents etc.).

The other type of sufferings is the suffering caused, or even „cultivated“ by people themselves. This type of sufferings is more tragic, because it is or might be under our control. The better we know its cause, the more terrible it is! The cause is human evil, either individual or collective, either conscious or unconscious.

An authentic, active Christian perceives sufferings as an evil against which it is necessary to fight. He does his utmost to remove it or at least to moderate it. If he is not successful, however, he tries to bear it or to sacrifice it for a higher aim.

On the other hand, a pious, passive Christian does not fight against sufferings, he accepts them as „God's will“ being convinced, that God will honour him for it.

Pain and sufferings occurring in the world could be, perhaps, better understood if we took into consideration these two facts:

1. Redemption has not been finished yet.
2. Not everything has yet been subjected to Christ

1. Redemption has not been finished yet.

Since Christ's martyrdom we cannot be hopeless any more however great our sins are. Nevertheless Christ still requires us to carry our everyday cross. However, together with St. Paul we can be happy, that our cross is necessary for the completion of redemption (Col. 1, 24).

People redeem each other through their pain and sufferings. Just like Maximilian Kolbe, for example, redeemed the father of a family, so mother and father redeem their children, missionaries their believers, a teacher his pupils, a worker his colleagues etc.

2. Not everything has yet been subjected to Christ.

Christ's Kingdom will triumph only after ending of the last attack by „the powers of evil“. Once a „New Heaven and a New Earth“ is created, everything will be subjected to Christ. „In this New Heaven and New Earth God will wipe away all tears from everyone's eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things will disappear“ (Revelation, 21,1-4). This living and daily-cultivated *hope* makes a Christian a Christian.

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Introduction

Based on the ideas, which I have elaborated on in the previous chapters (3.1. Unity of life and faith, 1.4. Methods for the Christianization of secular professions/jobs, 2. The Christianity of human work and 3. The Christianity of the secular profession) I tried to find out the position of a large number of Christians on this topic.

I addressed more than fifty outstanding Christians - Catholics of the most diverse professions asking them to characterize personally the Christianity of their profession. In other words, I asked them kindly to describe typical signs -features, which should differentiate a Christian from a non-believer or a non-Christian while executing their profession.

Representatives of nine professions answered my question in due time (within three months): entrepreneurs, teachers, physicians, scientists, an artist, a historian, a poet, a bookseller and a lay theologian. There were about 20% of all those contacted.

I addressed members of 19 professions and I got responses from members of nine professions. I am well aware, that it is only a partial picture, with which, I have to be satisfied for the moment. This group is, of course, too small for appropriate assessment.

I would like to thank all respondents for their personal statements. I present them one after the other in the following subchapters 4.1.-4.9.

4.1. The Christianity of an entrepreneur – M. Balazia, R. Guncaga

4.1.1. Position of Marian Balazia

„The most sensitive problem in the sphere of trading is the price. In this connection we often come across the saying „this is really an anti-Christian price“. But tell me, what is a Christian price? To make it simple, we could answer: production costs, or procurement of goods respectively, plus fair profit. But, how much is a fair profit?

A real, that means a just price can be fixed only by a free market. The free market, which I consider to be God's gift, is the most effective tool, which the Creator has installed just like the other tools in this world. The important question is: Who manipulates this tool and in what way? For example, a Christian uses a knife to cut bread; in the hands of a psychopath a knife is changed into an instrument for killing.

I think that Christianity should be manifested in allowing the most effective operation of this tool and only after the creation of values is there space for love of neighbour shown in solidarity: We help in a Christian way those of our neighbours, who have not been able to gather enough resources.

We often mix up the words social and socialistic. Many of us think that the egalitarianism advocated by socialists is a Christian attitude. In my opinion there is a huge difference. Socialists say: Take from the rich and hand out to the poor.

But until now this has usually turned out in this way: that the socialists took property from the rich (mainly from those who achieved their wealth by their own work), the greater part of the property was then slyly misappropriated and in this way a new rich community came into being (not by hard work). The remaining crumbs of the property were given to the poor.

Christ says: Give to the poor (but from your own), or give away your property and follow me.

4.1.2. Position of R. Guncaga

Before starting to specify a Christian entrepreneur, I will try to answer the question: Who is an entrepreneur?

We usually identify as an entrepreneur a person, who for example:

- * Repairs shoes alone in his small workshop - that is a cobbler,
- * Sews dresses at home - that is a dressmaker,
- * Has a trade certificate, based on which he has concluded an exclusive contract to sell the products of a distribution (or other) company, that has given him all the instructions he must follow and his independence is significantly or completely restrained - that is a sales representative,

But this person can also be:

- * A strategic owner of huge industrial companies, financial institutions, insurance companies, etc.

At first sight it is very clear, that there is a big difference between the above-mentioned categories of entrepreneurs. Therefore it would be reasonable to define, what we understand by entrepreneur. There is also a difference in the professions performed by individual entrepreneurs.

In our understanding the notion entrepreneur means a person, who deliberately participates actively in whatever way in the economic competition (regardless of its form) offering goods, services or other products with the aim of gaining profit. This activity is regularly connected with investments or putting one's own property into this business.

I prefer to divide the basic categories of entrepreneurs into the following groups:

- A tradesman (who runs a small business alone on the basis of a trade certificate, or with the help of close relatives or an assistant respectively),
- A small entrepreneur (who runs a business on the basis of a trade certificate, works himself, simultaneously leads the firm and employs several workers for whom he is responsible),
- A medium entrepreneur (owner or co-owner of a certain business, big traders etc., managing companies and employing tens to hundreds of employees),
- A big entrepreneur (owners of big enterprises, networks of trading companies etc., employing hundreds or thousands „.. of employees, supervising and governing the more or less independent management of their enterprises, deciding about strategic investments). It is debatable, whether we should consider also the so-called sales representatives to be entrepreneurs. Sales representatives possess their own trade certificate, however, they are employed on the basis of an exclusive contract in big, many a time supranational companies. In this case it minimizes the company's cost of employees. Moreover, this form of work contract does not ensure the legal protection that is applicable to a regular employee. I would never recommend this form of business to anyone.

From the different positions of the above stated entrepreneurs their different responsibility and influence on society is evident.

Now I would like to characterize a Christian entrepreneur. From the viewpoint of a Christian, who wants to gain salvation and eternal life, we could say, that he should be willing to give away all his property to the poor and follow Christ, but never strive to produce tangible assets. We know also from another story, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven. These words are a reminder to Christians, whose essential sense of life and only recognized value is power and money. Let us have a look at enterprising from the other side. It can be beneficial not only for an entrepreneur himself, but to other people and their environment too. Should we leave the space only to inconsiderate entrepreneurs, these could unlimitedly exploit and humiliate all their employees as well as their clients and their environment in the name of further growth of their riches and thus their power. Therefore I think, that every person having the abilities and the prerequisites should make use of them as an entrepreneur, in this way he can:

- * Provide security for himself and his family (but not at the expense of employees, clients, suppliers, state etc.),
- * Provide an opportunity to work for other people (relatives and neighbours) and thus help them to provide material security for their family and ensure them a satisfactory social life,
- * Support charitable organizations from his profit, or realize his own projects designed for charitable activities, and thus serve the wider public,
- * Influence his environment educationally through his personal example, and thus re-shape it (an entrepreneur need not be his employee's or a certain social group's enemy),
- * Restrain the operation of inconsiderate and unfair entrepreneurs, who devastate society, and by participating in economic competition help to prevent the disappointment of many people,
- * Disseminate experience from his own entrepreneurial activity to new and fair entrepreneurs, respectively to organizations and societies with similar thinking.

A person in the position of an entrepreneur, who is able to achieve great objectives by fair work, is surely recognized by society and has enough room for social involvement for the benefit of positive global objectives of society in the spirit of Christian ethics. In the following part I will try to sum up the basic characteristics of a Christian entrepreneur.

Objective of enterprising:

A Christian entrepreneur should:

- * Try to gain adequate profit while respecting Christian ethics, profit making should not be an absolute objective, but should only serve as a means to achieve higher aims
- * Make an effort to secure the long-term prosperity of the company He should not:
- * Permit, that enterprising becomes an absolute value to which everything else is subjected (time, behaviour, ethics, morals, health, money, prosperity),
- * Make profit at all costs (the aim of profit should not be absolute and neither should his behaviour be subjected to it, he should not govern himself by the rule: make the maximum profit ,, ,.and after us the deluge.“).

Labour and legal relations: He should:

- * Remunerate his employees fairly for their work according to social conditions and achieved results,
- * Create appropriate conditions for his employees,
- * Try to stabilize his employees from their long-term perspective viewpoint,
- * Provide space for education of employees,
- * Guide his employees and their mutual relationship positively in the spirit of Christian ethics. He should not:
- * Pay inadequately low salaries, promise big incomes, but pay only a small part of them,
- * Employ people without a working contract (avoid paying social and health insurance, moreover, under this condition the salary is usually lower than originally promised, such an employee has no right to social security etc.),
- * Neglect the working safety precautions and health protection of employees and people in general,
- * Neglect social problems.

State, taxes: He should:

- * Be sufficiently acquainted with the legislation applicable to his field,
- * Respect tax legislation in force (this need not, however, prevent sanctions and the prosecution of an entrepreneur, if the legislation is ambiguous and the state does not show interest in solving this problem),
- * Try to point out insufficiencies and gaps in legislation and in the functioning of the state power, and try to adequately contribute to their solution.

He should not:

- * Neglect the legislation in force, deliberately avoiding paying taxes,
- * Sell and provide services without authorization or permission,
- * Corrupt tax and other civil servants,
- * Try to make use of the goodwill of higher officials for his own profit and at the expense of others.

Relation to a customer: He should:

- * Inform the customer truly,
- * Recognize justified customer's claims,
- * Negotiate in the spirit of Christian ethics,
- * Know how to put himself in the customer's position to be able to better understand him,
- * Serve others on a high professional level by means of his activity. He should not:
- * Impose any pressure whatsoever on the customer,
- * Bribe or demand a bribe,
- * Try to sell at any rate for the purpose of personal profit and at the expense of injured or deceived customers.

Relation to competitors: He should:

- * Compete with competitors fairly,
- * Try to be better by lower prices, services of a higher quality, and the goodwill of his staff, better information for customers, more effective advertising and promotion in the spirit of Christian ethics.

He should not:

- * Disseminate untrue information about competitors,
- * Defame,
- * Do business in those areas, which are contradictory to Christian ethics and are harmful to other people,
- * Charge usurious interests,
- * Abuse his position.

Relation to suppliers: He should:

- * Pay for goods, services and products (it may happen that he has no means to pay, but it should not become his working method). He should not:
- * Make invoice purchases with the aim of not settling them,
- * Try to hold up payments to his suppliers with the aim of valorising money for his own benefit and personal need,
- * Express doubts about services provided by other subjects with the aim of achieving the maximum profit for himself.

Family issues: He should:

- * Find sufficient time for family, relatives, and friends. He should not:
- * Neglect the upbringing of his children, forget about his parents, leave the family etc. and hide his disinterest in his closest family by abundant material goods.

Social issues: He should:

- * Support charitable organizations, that are close to him,
- * Have his own social programme in his company,
- * Convey experience, knowledge and information within the community which is in line with his attitude,

* Try to influence positively the widest possible environment from his position.

In his work the entrepreneur (as well as the manager) faces far greater challenges than a non-entrepreneur. He should resolve serious and substantial problems which are having an impact not only on himself, but also on his employees, business partners, partners, families etc. Still much could be said about personal moral features or about different types of enterprising.

Every honest entrepreneur should be aware of the above stated properties, because only by maintaining them can he ensure the long-term prosperity of the company. Just as every man has many opportunities to show his moral qualities, an entrepreneur has even more such opportunities. Therefore it is very sad, if the entrepreneur is not equipped with such properties.

4.2. The Christianity of a teacher - V. Pericha, E. Sestakova

4.2.1. Position of a university teacher V. Perichta

„A Christian pedagogue is obliged to point out, that scientific knowledge is not able to replace that, which faith and religion offer people. A pedagogue is committed to bear witness to his faith and bring up pupils according to the Church teaching both at Church schools and in pluralistic societies. He must above all set a good example for his pupils. Here I have in mind not only a permanent professional education, but a permanent religious education too. A Christian has to be ready to give reasons for his standpoint in a pluralistic conception of the universe (Weltanschauung), because the Christian Weltanschauung is only one of more conceptions and competes with other conceptions.

The Christian pedagogue is characterized particularly by his motivation, his decision and will to live and act according to the Gospel. He differs from a non-believer in this way, that his occupation is for him not only an instrument, a source of earning money, but a mission too. The mission is in his effort, just as it is formulated by the great pedagogue Jan Komensky - to become a modest co-worker of God. Thus, he has another scale of values compared to his non-believing colleague. For a Christian pedagogue the possibility of self-realization in his occupation is important, but not top-priority.

The complex problem of the Christian's professional ethics should be elaborated in the respective social and cultural context, preferably in a differentiated and concrete mode.“

4.2.2. Position of a secondary school teacher E. Sestakova

„A good teacher is to a great extent a Christian teacher too. To be a teacher means more to have a mission than to have a profession. Therefore it carries in itself the basic signs of Christianity. The soul and heart of a good teacher are generously open to his pupils. He is not only a teacher, but also a friend, a parent, a brother, an assistant or a defender of the oppressed as well. He is kind, just, objective, stirring up enthusiasm in the hearts of his pupils. He is a model for his pupils. He explains again and again, and conveys his knowledge, advice and experience with a divine patience to new generations.

The Christian teacher should perceive God's love more deeply and better see God's light on our way, and then it would be easier for him to kindle such light in his pupils' souls too.

This profession is extraordinarily demanding and exhausting. The situation, however, keeps worsening, and it is very difficult to maintain quality, both professional and spiritual or moral. It is the result of the very bad working and financial conditions of teachers. Society does not appreciate the teaching profession, or even behaves dishonourably and offensively. Unfortunately, all these negative impacts are predominantly reflected on those, who are the least guilty and it will be very difficult to overcome the damage.“

4.3. The Christianity of a physician – S. Bohonova, A. Koval, A. Siffalovicova

4.3.1. Position of a psychiatrist S. Bohonova

„I work with patients, whose illness is recognized by both the public and the closest relatives with difficulties. Thus, these patients are denounced, humiliated and devalued as human beings. A patient is sceptical when he needs to see a doctor (more usually he is forced to do so); his attitude towards a doctor is negative, adverse. Such a situation requires a Christian spirit: to accept him as a human being with respect for his human dignity; to accept him as he is; not to moralize, not to condemn, but to understand him and gain his trust. It would hardly be possible without Christian love and patience. The success of a treatment depends on the creation of a therapeutic relationship. There is no chance of being successful in this activity, if the physician is commercially oriented.

I consider the physician's personality, his personal example, to be the most important issue in the therapeutic process. It is necessary to lead the patient to change his life values in the framework of therapy. This is a broad area for a Christian-oriented doctor, who most commonly works with the patient's whole family.“

4.3.2. Position of a general practitioner A. Koval

1. If I am to perform my profession in the spirit of Christianity, I must live according to the teaching of Jesus Christ. I must try to be a living limb of Christ's body, live with Him in symbiosis and repeat His love which he has been giving me throughout my whole life.

2. As a physician I must see in a patient a suffering human being, who applies to me to help him. One of the important factors in the physician's job is expertise and manual skills. The examination cannot lack responsibility and thoroughness, and even when time is pressing, it is necessary to find sufficient time to explain, to instruct and to encourage. Sometimes it requires a great deal of self-command and patience to calm down the patient and gain his trust. The communication cannot lack kindness, modesty and truthfulness.

3. I have to behave nicely, tactfully and patiently to my colleagues.

4. It is possible to evangelize in the work! We can tell the patient about moral and spiritual values. If he is not a believer, we should not force Christianity on him.

4.3.3. Position of a neurologist A. Siffalovicova

From the viewpoint of his position at work the physician's behaviour and properties must be described in three levels:

1. Behaviour in the relationship physician - patient
2. Behaviour in the relationship physician - physician (collegiality)
3. Behaviour in the relationship superior - subordinate

Ad 1.

In the relationship physician - patient a determining, active role is played by the physician. He creates, maintains, develops and enriches the relationship. He saturates the relationship according to his communication abilities, utilizing his own personal skills and talent and medical knowledge. The first contact with the patient is the most important. During the first meeting with the patient mutual trust is established. The patient is usually not aware that the physician needs to trust the patient too, just like he tries to know his physician and have confidence in his treatment.

During the first session, while analyzing the history of the patient's diseases, the physician has to show personal interest in the patient, in his illness. He listens carefully to the patient (making eye contact during the talk), he examines him thoroughly, without rushing and nervousness, and he does not perform any other activity (e.g. giving a call, following the time on his watch, discussing with the staff etc.), but deals with the patient only.

A diligent physician - atheist is able to achieve such a nice relationship with a patient by „training“. What then is the difference between a Christian physician and an atheist physician? It is the love of the sick person that the physician shows in every moment of treatment, nursing, in private or public relationship towards the sick. The patient recognizes very soon the so-called professional approach from a kind, individual approach to each sick person. He easily classifies the approach of physicians according to external manifestations: voice tone, facial expression, hand movements and touches during the examination etc.

A Christian physician always tells the truth to the patient. He knows how to prepare patient to accept an unfavourable prognosis, he knows how to tell the patient bad news about the laboratory examinations, and he never „bounds back“ from a patient in the terminal stage of incurable diseases, but he steadily accompanies him in hard days of life, he is always his prop. It is very fruitful for the relationship physician - patient, if the physician is interested in the profession, hobbies, and family of his patient. Thanks to this he can better understand the patient and his character, moreover, he penetrates to him through the emotional sphere.

It is necessary to know the patient's close relations, to communicate with them and to involve them indirectly in the patient's treatment. This kind of relationship is no more of a professional burden for the physician and he performs even a very difficult and time consuming work with love, he is happy and achieves more than his colleagues, he is more successful and sought after.

Ad 2.

A Christian physician is friendly, honest and always ready to help as far as relations with his colleagues are concerned, however, he should never drive himself into the position of „sweating instead of others“. He is ambitious for his professional growth; he presents his knowledge in due course with healthy self-confidence, but without self-importance.

Ad. 3.

His behaviour to his superiors is correct with subordination and awareness of work well done. An adequate amount of self-confidence, adequate assertiveness in relation to superiors is necessary too not to get into the position of misused „polite workaholics“. A Christian physician is nice to his subordinates, always just, requiring conscientious work, he defends their interests, he never forgets to praise and remunerate them for good work.

4.4. The Christianity of a scientist – I. Staricek, A. Hajduk

4.4.1. Position of a physicist I. Staricek

„A physicist - believer clearly distinguishes not only between the natural and the philosophical truth, but also between philosophical and theological arguments. Theology as a science has a firm logical structure and strictly causal argumentation. This, of course, does not exclude diversity of opinions among theologians during their theological disputes. The original pictures of creation in the Old Testament had to be adjusted according to scientific progress. It was not a physical description, but only an objective commentary on the creative works at the level of that time.

A believing physicist assumes, that physics as a natural science is God's gift. The universe was created by God too subject to certain laws, which we strive to understand in a physical way.

A believing physicist is not only a part of the physical environment, but is as well a member of the religious community, in which he has to implement his talents.

From the ethical viewpoint a physicist - believer contemplates the benefit of his professional competence for the general well being of society.“

4.4.2. Position of an astronomer and astrophysicist, university teacher and university rector

A. Hajduk

Let me start with a citation from a work of a significant friend of mine: „There is no one specifically Christian politics“. there is only politics in a Christian spirit“ (Jan Guncaga: Unconventional Politics and Slovak Identity, M. Vasko, Presov 1998, page 146). Similarly, there is not Christian Science, but there are scientists with a Christian spirit as well as scientists - atheists. There even exist many books about outstanding scientists, Nobel Prize winners, and yet deeply believing and committed Christians. I am one of the less known scientists, but I fully identify with them. According to the constitution *Lumen Gentium* „The genuine calling of laymen is to seek for God's kingdom“.“ so, having experience with the work of a scientist, a university teacher and a university rector, I wrote a book *God's Kingdom* (Dobra kniha, Trnava 1997).

In it, I briefly outlined my life philosophy and expressed the possibilities of our *activity* (I underline this word), because many good Christians do not see, what can be done in all circumstances. Therefore, I have decided to structure all subparagraphs in the form of „What to do? Seek“. Grow“. Be a leaven“. Serve“. etc. To be a *scientist* means to love the truth vehemently, to discover and disclose the unknown, through scientific devices and methods to bring light to gloomy matters, to life and society as well as to the depth of the soul. To look for dependence, sequence and meaning. I personally have been tremendously lucky that I have had an opportunity to employ my interest in astronomy and astrophysics and work in these wonderful scientific areas. My book „To the Horizons of the Universe (Bozo, 1974) that I wrote together with my colleague Janko Stohl, was the first book with an astronomic theme published during the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia. The Christian spirit was noticeably shown in it; many believers evaluated it in this sense. It was breaking the atheistic self-confidence about the so-called solely right scientific conception of the universe. It gave power to believers and showed the beauty and intelligence present in the universe. By this I want to express, that even in the hard days one could find a way to put through the truth. Today I might be calling together with the St. Paul: „ Woe to me if I have not preached Christ's gospel“. A scientist cannot remain indifferent to the spread of myths and superstitions, which swamp God's garden like a malign weed. I consider the fight against such spiritual pollution of the environment, in which the light of truth should be spread, to be my everyday duty just like removing the weeds in the garden.

A teacher, whether at university or elsewhere, must above all love his/her students. Lessons without love are only like work on a conveyer belt. A part of a product is passed to another worker, who mounts another part and passes it on. Thus, a student becomes only an object, for the shaping of which a teacher is remunerated. The spirit is missing. The socialist regime was anxious to expel in particular those teachers from schools, in whom its apparatus had noticed slight signs of religious influence. At present the regime of post-communists from 1992 and 1994 is more artful; it pretends to support religious feeling, but selects whom it will help. It creates among clerics an analogy of that sad but well-known movement „*Pacem in terris*“, the so-called patriotic priests; i.e. believers for whom it prepares a spectacular support. Both people and its student component are confused by the attitudes of the hierarchy, its dubious statements, e.g. in the question of the so-called Catholic University established by the state and headed by

representatives who are far from being blameless when their past is in question - as is the case of the St. Cyril and Method University in Trnava. If in addition such a university is supported by the Apostolic Nuncio, it is not surprising that students are losing confidence in the Church. And they also openly show it, in the media too. I have mentioned this example just to illustrate the situation, well known to me, and proving that not only the former atheistic education, but a part of the Church hierarchy is responsible for this sad state of faith as well. I see the role of teachers in undeterred defence of the truth, because there are many facts withheld, but especially in the convincing power of their own lifestyle, in their own opinions on events, in adopting clear positions, and not burying one's head in the sand -in devotional idleness, being uncommitted, remaining in imaginary neutrality. Neutrality in respect of the truth and in respect of wrongdoing is the worst sign of a pedagogue. Indeed, the pedagogue not only teaches, but he educates. And educates above all through his opinions and attitudes towards the things happening around him. Jesus characterized the priests' and the Levites' neglect absolutely clearly in the parable about the Good Samaritan. A good pedagogue is also a Samaritan. We have few such pedagogues in Slovakia, but their number has been increasing thanks to those who are not indifferent to the fate of children.

Lastly, about the characteristics of a school representative: I was leading Trnava University from its foundation in 1992 till October 1996. I started with 200 students and I finished with 2500. The intention was to give those students a Christian life orientation and good professional skills. There I saw my potential contribution to the spiritual revival of the people. That was why I had accepted this post. My pedagogical staff consisted of up to 80% Christians. Other universities have quite the opposite ratio.

Despite the unwillingness of governmental bodies and their constant obstructions, next to the two originally existing faculties (pedagogical and humanistic), the Faculty of nursing and social work was also established, the Jesuits Father's Aloisianum was assumed, and St. Ondrej's Pedagogical Institute was founded in Ruzomberok, which is at present called St. Ondrej's catechist and pedagogical faculty. I could write and tell you a lot about this activity. But I just want to say, that every representative of such institutions may do a great deal for the enlightenment of people. One has to be prepared that the „the tune is short“, as St. Paul says, and that the „devil goes about like a roaring lion“, as St. Peter says, and ruins. However, he is not almighty and efforts made are not made in vain. An institutional representative, who is able to influence events within the scope of his activities, should try to carry out the maximum possible, so that he could say with St. Paul: „My fight was a good fight“.

4.5. The Christianity of an artist - L. Zaborsky

„By my paintings I would like to prove in this deeply materialistic era, that which is deepest and the longest lasting is joy in God. There is no life without joy. My mission is to show people true joy and beauty. Through my work I want to show people the direction, which they should take towards genuine spiritual pleasure. My pictures, they are the condensation of my life experience, of knowledge and of my delight in natural beauty and spiritual life.

If a painter wants to create convincing religious works, he must fall in love with Jesus. Christ must be the greatest joy of his life. Christianity in Europe is slacking, because the majority of believers do not know how to enjoy God. Religion has become a duty to them, moreover, only a Sunday duty.“

4.6. The Christianity of a historian - R. Letz

„A Christian perceives his profession as a gift. In his profession he can make use of all his abilities and talents. The motivation of a Christian historian's work is to find the truth about a certain historical problem, a historical event, a period, and a personality. He believes, that the absolute truth exists and history makes sense and has its philosophy and theology. A Christian historian finds it

very important, that God has become man and entered into history. This fact has given history meaning, perspective and orientation.

A universal vision of things is an important moment characterizing the Christian historian. He does not retouch and withhold facts and he does not misinterpret them.

A Christian historian does not work only for his own benefit and for his pleasure, fame and career, but he writes for other people, for a certain social group interested in history, for the people, for future generations to share with them his knowledge and experience. He may be ignored, mocked or threatened by his environment and colleagues, but he is aware that his work, although dealing with the past, has a great impact on the future and can influence it. Indeed, a historian is a co-creator of historical, cultural and national awareness and builds firmer foundations for it.“

4.7. The Christianity of a poet and literary historian -I. Vasko

„We could and we can continue in those values, that our good parents taught us in childhood: a genuine and deep faith, spirituality as a fundamental prerequisite of life and creation, a personal relationship with the Triune God and our heavenly Mother, to the motherland, as well as to all people on Mother Earth“.

This is how we reveal ourselves, how we create, how we grow, how we meet the needs of a deeper and fuller academic, artistic, and religious life today in our environment. But through what? In all modesty, and yet pride I give testimony of active faith, culture, cultural activity and respect for the divine gifts offered to man. Christian art addresses and raises up man. Just like in the past, a cruel, serious fight between good and evil is going on also today. What can we do about that? Gather together and get to the heart of the matter. Let us create a life, a powerful and effective dam against the noise and chaos of the present world, which is destructive. Let us create the tranquil speech of art to manifest justice, truth and beauty, which have never been so dishonored by media, or even more - by the cultural community itself, the creators of low instincts and goals.

Let us give them - goodness and justice, truth and beauty - a chance to be born again and again for the benefit of future generations of human beings. St. Paul calls this time KAIROS, the opportune time.

Artists, prophets, and thinkers of the present day! KAIROS belongs only to you, because it is your turn. Let us save our youngsters and adolescents! If they stop reading - because they develop at school and at home in that way -they are endangered by a shameful illiteracy. Let us rather teach them to look in the magic mirrors of poetry.“

4.8. The Christianity of a bookseller - L. Guncaga

„I would characterize the Christianity of my profession at two levels: a general and a concrete one.

a) General level:

A Christian, who strives to harmonize his life with his faith, should not forget about:

- * Truthfulness in his actions and relationships,
- * Willingness to take a stand on the principal life issues,
- * Utilization of the means of spiritual life for the improvement of relationships with other people and in particular with his closest family and friends.

b) Concrete level in my profession:

- * Professional growth,
- * Responsibility for the selection of titles,
- * Justice and clear rules in relations with commercial partners,

- * Awareness that apart from being the tool of economic realization, the work is at the same time an excellent tool to build wide relations based on mutual trust,
- * Respect for man as a human being - God's child in all situations.“

4.9. The Christianity of a laywoman - theologian - Z. Vaskova

What should distinguish a Christian from a non-Christian?

Courage: Whenever and wherever I confess my faith and claim it, even at the cost of being unpopular.

Humility: Even if I succeed and enjoy my success, even if I reap words of acknowledgement and admiration, I always have to bear in mind: nothing is due to myself, everything is God's gift.

Joy, that He honoured me to do something for Him.

Pride in being a Christian, a child of God. It is embedded in our conscience, that here on the earth, we are just guests waiting for to return home to the Father's house, and a guest behaves properly, truly and thankfully.

We are only caretakers of that part of the riches entrusted to us- worldly goods and spiritual gifts, therefore we have to look after and develop them and not take possession of them.

Always to *serve*, not to rule applies to every profession. The higher the function, the greater the service. This does not mean subservience and bowing, but natural kindness, which thinks and acts in respect of another person.

A Christian attitude: The more I possess, the more I can give, and this results in joyful responsibility. The precondition to make this a reality is Christian LOVE: for God, who has created and gifted me, for a neighbour, who is to a certain extent dependent on me. We must remember, that we all need each other, in particular in love and relationships. Christians live this interdependence through the consciousness of being a child of God and brothers in Him. *Shine* with love and understanding. Do not let *enthusiasm* and *eagerness* for things die out. Compassion, not hatred towards those, who do not have love. They are the greatest paupers even if they possess all world's riches. To try to show through one's life, that Christianity is a permanent silent and peaceful joy, a spiritual balance, but when Jesus is at stake - an *uncompromising position*. To know how to justify one's position, to argue - this requires adequate theological *education*. To read, to follow events. To distinguish - to classify and to select genuine values in the chaos of offers.

Conclusions from positions 4.1.-4.9.

1. During a considerate analysis we find out, that each answer more or less contains the three essential elements of the Christianity of human work (secular profession = divine calling, participation in the creative divine work, participation in the Christ's messianic work).
2. The reactions of respondents, adequate to the present times, prove that committed Christians, Christians by profession, are not dependent on guidelines from above“ while formulating, defining and implementing professional morals.
3. The personal positions of respondents prove, that the respondents strive to harmonize Christian theory with everyday Christian practice and as committed Christians that they are willing to take responsibility for the Christianity of their own profession, that means responsibility also for the social mission of the Church in the secular sphere of life.
4. Positions in individual professions are a good, precious fundamental core in the spirit of the ideas in the chapter METHOD OF CHRISTIANIZATION OF SECULAR PROFESSIONS. To this core it will be necessary to add additional layers of knowledge, findings and the experience of a larger number of Christians from the same profession, at regional, national and international levels.

PART 2 - CHRISTIANIZATION OF THE SECULAR SPHERE

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INTRODUCTION

In the framework of this publication I shall only outline the basic principles of the Christianity of modern economy in the spirit of the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

I shall focus on three issues:

1. *Characteristics* of the modern capitalism, that means economic liberalism or *neoliberalism*,
2. Efforts to be emancipated from it - to a new economic system - *Communitarianism*, and
3. Christian *entrepreneurial morality*.

In the economy, an area of comprehensive human activity, a man and his morality should be the central factor. The economy should be in man's service and morality should motivate and govern all economic activities.

The present situation, however, in many respects shows just the opposite. It is not the economy, which serves man, but man has become a slave of the economy. Morality is no longer the engine of the economic activity; on the contrary, it has become a strange, unnecessary body. It has been degraded to a subjective question of „taste“.

Not only morality but also many other traditional „firm values“ (marriage, family, religion, spirituality) are undermined, questioned, played down. The moral relativism, skepticism and disorientation of modern man are prevailing. Disorientation manifests itself in nihilism and existentialism. *Morality*, traditional customs and proved conventions are changed by modern man to *ethics*, „the morality of sense“, morality without metaphysics, without the Christian Decalogue.

The economy is considered to be an autonomous area, an *amoral area* that means an area, which is *morally neutral*. The amoral economy makes a „work-ing or farming“ person into an „economic“ person - *homo oeconomicus*. The economic person is obsessed by economy, „by earning money“ and by the philosophy „what is in it for me?“ („homo homini lupus“, dog bites dog). The economic person ignores interpersonal relations, if he does not see profit in them; he replaces the idea of an effective market economy with the ideology of a total market society, „with the market as idol“ (John Paul II), with the *economism*.

In view of the fact that tendencies toward a „market radicalism“, according to which the market is the highest goal, prevail in the neoliberal economy today, it is necessary to put morality, ethics and politics above the economy. In this situation it is necessary to point out the role of the state in the field of the economy. In this respect the encyclical *Centesimus annus* in its article 48 states: „Economic activity, in particular the market economy cannot develop in a political vacuum. On the contrary. It assumes security, which guarantees individual freedom and property as well as a stable currency and effective public services. Therefore, the main task of the state is to guarantee this security to those who work and produce to allow them to enjoy the fruits of their work and to motivate them to perform their work effectively and fairly. The lack of security accompanied by the corruption of state officials, the increase in dishonesty, in the practice of feathering one's own nest, and in easy profit based on illegal and speculative activity, is one of the main breaks on development and economic order.“ (8).

5.1. Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is an evolutionary product of liberalism, as I have analyzed in Chapter I „The era of neoliberalism“. It is a new, aggressive form of the old original capitalism, capitalism governed by an „invisible hand“, capitalism of the Calvinistic lifestyle.

Neoliberalism or uncontrolled liberalism or political economism is an economic system, in which:

1. *Profit* is the basic principle of progress,
2. *Competition* is the highest economic law,
3. *Private ownership* of the means of production is an absolute right unrestricted by social responsibilities,
4. *Constant growth* is the meaning of life, and
5. *Human work* has no exchange value if there is no interest in it (see the problem of unemployment) What is the Christian position on points (1.-5.)?

5.1.1. Profit

From the Christian viewpoint profit is justified. Profit fulfils the function of an indicator of the prosperity of the enterprise. Centesimus annus (8) in this respect states: „If an enterprise is profitable, it means that it duly utilizes the productive factors and adequately satisfies human needs. Profit, however, is not the only indicator of the real state of an enterprise. It may happen, that the economic balance is in order, but the people creating the precious heritage of the enterprise are humiliated and offended in their dignity. This is not only morally inadmissible, but the negative consequences on the economic output of the enterprise must be anticipated too. The aim of an enterprise is not only to make profit, but the existence of the entity as a whole, as a community of people, who in different ways try to fulfil their essential needs and simultaneously create a special group serving the good of society. Profit regulates the life of an enterprise, but it is not the sole regulator. Apart from profit, there are human and moral factors which must be taken into account because from the prospective viewpoint they are equally essential for the life of an enterprise.“

The Constitution on Church in the world *Gaudium et spes* in the Chapter on economic development in article 64 highlights, that profit cannot be left to the arbitrariness of entrepreneurs, it should serve every man, the whole society:

„The main task of production is not the sheer increase of production, profit or power, but the service of man, of man with all his material needs and his requirements for an intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life“ (2).

According to the aforesaid the legitimate effort to make profit is always a morally limited effort. Profit is only one of the several values of entrepreneurial creativity, but not the only measure of entrepreneurial performance. From the moral viewpoint it is necessary to investigate, what in entrepreneurial morality takes precedence over the effort to make profit from the moral viewpoint.

Finally, it is necessary to remember that many entrepreneurs, who claim to be Christians, do not think of the laws of justice and love. In their villainous profit making they do not hesitate to tyrannize the working-class. And there are even such, who misuse religion and mask their own wrongful behaviour under its name.

5.1.2. Competition

It is necessary to distinguish between two kinds of competition:

1. *Free*, i.e. regulated, and
2. *Unrestrained*, i.e. unregulated, unfair, absolute.

The second mentioned is a characteristic of neoliberalism, in which the „power“ of the stronger, more successful and more aggressive rules. From the Christian viewpoint competition cannot regulate the economy. The economy must be based on the principle of social solidarity, not on competition.

Competition and personal initiative play an important role in the development of society - they are among the significant factors in the growth of productivity and the quality of products and services. However, it is insufficient to reproduce only material possessions and to develop technology. Economy

and technology make sense only in relation to man, whom they should serve. When speaking about the progress of society, we have in mind equal care for both social progress and economic growth.

In today's world of global interdependencies global economic growth is at stake. A simple game of competitors is not able to ensure global economic growth. Here global programmes and global planning are inevitable. All nations and states have to participate in economic development. With the present „internationalization of the economy“ there are corresponding international supervisory and governing bodies, which orient the global economy to the global common well-being. This task can no longer be fulfilled by one state, not even the strongest one.

5.1.3. Private property

Catholic social teaching analyses in detail the extensive problem of private property. Especially the following social encyclicals should be highlighted:

Leo XIII: *Rerum novarum*, 1891, Pius XI: *Quadragesimo anno*, 1931, John XXIII: *Mater et magistra*, 1961 and *Pacem in Terris*, 1963, Paul VI: *Populorum progressio*, 1967, John Paul II: *Laborem exercens*, 1981, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 1987 and *Centesimus annus*, 1991.

Here I shall highlight only the most important positions, which are still topical today. I consider my contribution to be „only a drop in the sea“. I mention this „drop“ only for the sake of completing the issue of present neoliberalism.

In Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum novarum*, in article 6, the following is stressed: „Private property is not derived from human law, but from natural law. As man existed before the state, before civil society was created, he had a natural right to care for himself (9).

Pius XI in his encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*, in articles 48-49, highlights that the state may „limit the use and effect of private property in the case where it has to harmonies the right to private property with the needs of the well-being of society „ (10).

John XXIII in his encyclical *Mater et magistra*, in article 11, introduces also the social function of private property: „Private property, the means of production included, is a natural right. And the state cannot cancel it! This property carries in itself certain social functions, it is, however, a right used for one's own profit and for the good of others“ (11).

Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum progressio* analyses, in article 23, the question of the proper use of property: „Nobody is entitled to reserve exclusively for his own benefit that, which is beyond his own needs, when others are short of essential things“ (12).

John Paul II in his encyclical on work *Laborem exercens*, in article 14, mentions private property in connection with the general right of all people to use the goods of the whole creation: „Christian tradition has never defended the right to property as something absolute and untouchable. On the contrary, it has always understood it in the widest possible context of the general right of all to use the goods of the whole creation: the right to private property is subordinated to the right to general usage, to the 'universal determination of goods', (7).

5.1.4. Constant growth

I have already outlined the question of neoliberal „constant growth“ in the chapter 1.3. „Era of utilitarian consumerism“.

Neoliberal economic hegemony „produces“ through its constant growth social chasms: materially rich people become richer and materially poor become poorer. A new civilization, a „*consumers civilization*“ (John Paul II), an unrestrained desire for pleasure has become rooted in the first, „developed“ world.

Consumerism, overeating, and hedonism are concrete manifestations of a pathological one-sided „development“ a development without justice, and without human solidarity.

Excessive material development is a fruit of the „*need creation economy*“, the economy of accumulation of surplus goods, the „consumer economy“, and not a fruit of a „full life economy“.

Consumers are becoming *slaves of their property* and of pleasure: they constantly accumulate goods and throw them away. The „throw away“ society produces new social problems: the problem of the removal of excessive waste, garbage, used material, and thus ecological problems, too.

With regard to consumerism, John Paul II points out in his encyclical *Centesimus annus*, in article 36, the necessity of re-educating the consumer's mentality: „The economic system does not contain criteria allowing it to distinguish clearly new and higher forms of satisfying human needs from new and artificially created needs, that prevent the cultivation of a mature personality. Therefore, a lot of work in the field of education and culture is urgently needed. This education should cover the cultivation and training of consumers towards responsible consumer behaviour and should awaken a high level of responsible awareness in producers, especially in decision-makers in the field of media, and would provoke necessary interventions by state authorities.“ (8).

5.1.5. Man

Although modern capitalism differs in many aspects from the original, old capitalism, the principles of both are the same. These principles are embodied in *capital (investments)*. Capital, and not man, represents the centre of economic activity also today.

Even in modern Capitalism people continue to make up the „*labor force*“, which may be bought by a capitalist, who orders it to work to make profit, which he expects to achieve after investing his capital.

The worker has to sell his labour according to valid market conditions to be able to survive. In this sense *capital controls the labor force*, which capitalism separates from man as a person and as the subject of work.

From the Christian viewpoint the most important factor in economic life is man and his work, not capital. I have analyzed the basic values and mission of human work in the chapter „The Christianity of human work“.

In the past during feudalism, land was the decisive production factor, later on in capitalism it was capital, and at present man and interpersonal relations are becoming more and more important.

The core of business, the motor of progress is the principle of employees being involved in decision making (worker participation). This principle assumes the healthy interpersonal relations that are after all the genuine meaning of every human activity.

Man as God's image has been granted the ability to think, work, invent, organize, and create. Apart from his material and bodily needs man also has spiritual desires and expectations. *Man*, therefore, *is the creator of the economic system* not some god, not is it just a product of nature, nor an economic science independent of man, economy as a type of mathematics, nor the „invisible hand“ of original capitalism. From such a „bird's-eye view“ an *enterprise* does not seem to be just an association of capital, but above all an *association of people*. All those who work in it as well as those who contribute the necessary capital to it belong to this association.

5.2. Communitarianism

The problematic of Communitarianism in the economic sphere has been analyzed by a Swiss professor of ethics in economy Peter Ulrich in his work *Integrative Wirtschaftsethik (Integrative economic ethics)*, Paul Haupt, Bern - Stuttgart - Vienna, 1997. Communitarianism is a *cultural*

anti-movement against radical liberalism, i.e. neoliberalism. This movement was created in the USA. „It is a movement *against the atomistic splitting of society, against the extreme individualism of wrongly understood liberalism.*

Communitarianism is against state hegemony, against the state depriving citizens of their autonomy. In its core Communitarianism points out the sometimes forgotten third basic source of social integration - the sense of community and solidarity (13). In principle, it is a question of the relations between the market, the state and different communities in solidarity.

It is noteworthy, that Communitarianism was created mainly on the basis of experience gained in transformation of the post-communist east and central European societies after the year 1989. Its creation was substantially influenced also by the consequences of exaggerated individualism and various manifestations of moral and social decline in western societies: corruption, new social questions, revitalization of the social Darwinist world view, and political fundamentalisms of all ideological streams.

It seems, that this movement with its understanding for community needs converges to those Christian positions which I have mentioned in the previous chapter: The Christianity of economy is consistent with building of such a society, in which there is freedom for man and his work, freedom of enterprise and of participation of all citizens in the common well-being.

Communitarianism represents further a development stage in the capitalistic economic system - from the original unrestrained wild market economy through the present state regulated social and ecological market economy towards the future free economy in which man as „God's image“ should play the leading role.

Simultaneously we can claim, that Communitarianism shapes an economic system, which may be recommended to countries, which have got rid of state capitalism as well as to Third World countries seeking the way of real economic and social progress.

5.3. The Christian enterprise morality

The central role in business is played by:

1. Healthy interpersonal relations, and
2. Active participation of all enterprise employees.

The enterprise should be a human society. Rate and modes of participation depend on the concrete situation in the enterprise. The relations between the entrepreneurs and management on one side and the employees on the other side should be characterized by thoughtfulness, respect, understanding, honest and active co-operation and the promotion of the common well-being.

All members of the enterprise community should understand and live through work not only as a source of profit, but also as the fulfilment of a duty and the rendering of a service. This, however, assumes, that all employees can express their opinion and contribute to the effective functioning of the enterprise and its development.

The issue is, that each employee should feel, that while doing his work he is not absolutely subordinated to the will of others. Even if the enterprise must observe the authority and effectiveness of united management, it cannot reduce its co-workers to the level of silent passive executors of „bosses' orders“. On the contrary. The management must lead, and inspire employees to make them constantly increase their qualifications and implement their experience. This is a *Jiving capital*“, which is not vulnerable to market oscillations. Ulrich contemplates in his publication (13) on the ethics of management, the organization of an enterprise and the rights of co-workers in the enterprise. He recognizes: 1. Elementary personal rights, and 2. Communication rights.

1. Elementary personal rights

The elementary personal rights of co-workers include:

1.1. Protection of the psychic and physical inviolability of the person from every form of dishonoring a human being, e. g. sexual harassment, bullying, oppressing or psycho terror (mobbing).

1.2. Protection from discrimination or arbitrary treatment, i.e. right to equal treatment regardless of who it is (e.g. sex, nationality, religion, world view, ethnicity or social origin etc.); right to equal income opportunities (fair pay) and work assessment, or chances to achieve promotion.

1.3. Right to protection of privacy.

2. Communication rights

Communication rights include:

2.1. Right of employees to open and non-filtered information in all that is relevant to their areas.

2.2. Right of employees to free and critical expression of their own opinion about the enterprise without being concerned, that they will be dismissed upon doing this.

2.3. Right to critical loyalty. (To be able to practice the right to critical loyalty in the conditions of hierarchy dependence it is necessary to institutionalize protected communication channels or confidentially working ethical commissions).

2.4. Right to contact the critical public through the mass media, when dubious procedures and events are taking place in the enterprise. Ulrich concludes his work by a remarkable practical example of an

enterprise ethical code from the firm SOR Rusche GmbH (13), which is worth following.

Characteristics of a Christian entrepreneur

1. CHARACTER

- * uprightness
- * justice
- * diligence
- * social engagement
- * positive thinking
- * endurance
- * Courage to declare one's own opinion
- * wisdom in decision-making
- * patience in acting and deciding
- * piety
- * modesty
- * respect for a human being

2. RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS

- * oneself
- * spouse
- * family
- * company / organization
- * co-workers
- * partners in business
- * municipality
- * state
- * God

3. PERFORMANCE

- * readiness to perform
- * willingness to sacrifice
- * readiness to serve

- * healthy ambitions
- * effort to make profit
- * own initiative

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INTRODUCTION

The question of religion and politics and their mutual relation are undoubtedly among the most burning, the most general, most exciting and the most tragic issues of humankind. Unfortunately.

If abuse exists somewhere, it is surely in religion and politics! People have always been abusing religion for politics and they are still doing so today. Some of them do it deliberately, others unconsciously because of ignorance or human weakness. Christians are often amongst both groups. Christians are human being too. They also think about themselves, and about their life as about a great mystery. Dr. Alexis Carrel, physician, Nobel Prize winner, was right when he wrote the book „Man, the Unknown“. We know that we have physical, psychic and spiritual realities; we even know that these physical, psychic and spiritual realities do not divide us into three independent parts, but that these three components form one unity. This unity thinks and acts in this world. This unity is able to create good, but is also ready to create evil. This is a reality, which is often forgotten and which is not respected. Also in politics and particularly in politics. Politicians promise the people „paradise on Earth“ - and actually these are „castles in the air“. Not just Utopia, but illusions.

When we speak about politics, a lot of unanswered questions crawl in our head. What is Christianity, who are Christians? What characterizes a Christian? How is the Christianity of non-Christian Christians defined? Is there Christian politics? What is the difference between a Christian in conventional politics and a Christian in politics in the spirit of Christianity? These and many other questions have been asked many times, literature contains hundreds of examples, but the problem is, that we do not consider it in everyday practice, we do not recall it, we find it „banal“.

What should we consider, recall? The fact, that a Christian as a person is on one hand a citizen of this world, of a state, and simultaneously a member of the Church, a limb of the body of Christ, a member of the People of God on the way. Simultaneously, because the Christian's secularity and spirituality create a unity. An inseparable unity. What would spirituality mean if it was not manifested in the secular world?

Here we approach the topic „Christianity and Christians“. Christianity is one thing, Christians another. They are often „mixed“. Thus uncertainties are created. Thus Christians become „enemies of Christianity“. The uncertainties can be seen, for example, in the following questions: Should priests „interfere“ in politics? Shouldn't religion be separated from politics? Should politics be involved in religion? Is politics the specific work field of non-priests - „lay believers“, Christians by profession? Is clericalism viable today?

This confusing „whirlpool“ of questions and answers was resolved in a way that is till now unsurpassed, by the position of the French Catholic thinker Jacques Maritain (6).

According to Maritain, the Christian's activity takes place on three different levels:

1. The purely religious - spiritual level,
2. The purely worldly - secular level,
3. The level, on which the spiritual joins the secular.

It is very beneficial to live consciously, not to be like robots, not to be crushed by routine, not to lose our orientation or overview. Conscious life is fuller, richer, and more attractive. There is a big difference if I just swallow something, or if I „engage“ the taste buds while eating, when I am aware that I have something for which to be thankful. And being a Christian, a real Christian, all day and every day, living in the world, I have the greatest prerequisites and obligations to live consciously.

The authentic, unconventional Christian is the one, who is aware that he/she has to join spirituality and secularity. This is the point of his / her Christianity.

Conventional Christians separate the spiritual and secular sphere. They prefer the spiritual sphere, they see their Christianity in it. They underestimate the secular sphere, or see it as a necessary evil.

If politics is an effort for the common good, which „comprises the sum of social conditions, in which individuals, families and organizations can fully and more easily achieve their own perfection“ (GS, Art. 74), where else than in this area can and should the Christian - non-priest (layman in the church sense) be of use? Whose area should it be?

The Second Vatican Council stresses very much the co-operation of all people in political life. And in the pastoral constitution on the Church in the world GAUDIUM ET SPES (2), Article 75 it emphasizes: „It is necessary to provide appropriately for the civic and political education which is so important for people, in particular for the youth, to allow all people to fulfill their tasks in the life of the political community.“

The Second Vatican Council fully supports and deepens Maritain's „three levels of Christian activity“ and confirms that politics is an integral part of a Christian's activity.

Of momentous importance is the fact, that the Second Vatican Council unambiguously declared the *autonomy of earthly realities*, politics included. This autonomy, however, *is not absolute*, because both secular realities and properties of the faith (spiritual realities) have their origin in God.

With respect to autonomy in the political area (secular sphere) it is necessary to mention, that it would be a great mistake, to expect „patent solutions“ in secular matters from the Church as the case in the Middle Ages, when the clericalism in the Church directly created political Europe. *Laymen as Christians by profession* are competent to change and fulfil the secular order in the Christian spirit. *They should impregnate the secular with the spiritual*. They are responsible for the social mission of the Church in the secular sphere.

Now we have reached the point affecting the issue of the existence of Christian politics, a specific Christian politics. Even today there is a lot of vagueness among politicians, who consider themselves to be Christian politicians. I personally have had sad experience. During the last political seminar, which I organized in the framework of the USKI, I had to experience very unpleasant scenes, when representatives of political subjects with a Christian shield objected to my presentation, in which I emphasized that *there is no single specific Christian politics, but only politics in the spirit of Christianity*.

Here Maritain's „three levels of Christian activities“ are applied. According to Maritain there is a difference between political acts carried out by Christians as individuals, and politics inspired by the Christian spirit. In other words: To speak as a Christian-citizen is one thing, and to speak on behalf of Christianity is another thing. GAUDIUM ET SPES (2) in its Article 76 deals with the political community and the Church: „It is very important, especially in pluralistic society, to adopt a right opinion about the relations between the political community and the Church, and to make a clear distinction between the acts undertaken by individuals and organized believers on their own behalf as citizens led by a Christian conscience, and the acts undertaken on behalf of the Church. With respect to its specific mission and scope of activities, the Church on no account merges with the political community, neither does it bind itself to a political system. Therefore, it is a symbol and at the same time a shield of the transcendence of the human person.

The political community and the Church in their own field of activity, are independent of one another and self-governed. Both of them, however, although for different reasons, provide personal and social service to the same man or woman.

From the above it is clear, that while Christians confess one and the same faith, in the secular sphere, also in politics they have different opinions and attitudes to one and the same thing. This is absolutely natural. If one political subject „claims“ to represent all Christians in the country, it does not respect this natural approach.

At the end of this chapter I would like to point out, that I strongly recommend the omission of the label „Christian“ party from the names of political parties.

Recalling the above-mentioned difference between Christianity and Christians, I am fully aware that the Christian - human being can fail (and politics gives more than enough opportunities for that!). „Habitually“ people assigned this failure (in whatever form) to Christianity. It is worthless to stress that you will find corruption, hatred, desire to rule (not so much to serve), personal prestige and other human features in the „Christian“ political parties too. People excuse more and are more tolerant of the atheistic politician than of Christian politicians in general.

6.1. Principles of justice, solidarity and subsidiarity in politics

6.1.1. Politics from the Christian viewpoint

We understand politics as an *effort for the common good*. The common good lies in the „sum of social conditions in which individuals, families and organizations could better and more easily achieve their own perfection“ (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, Art. 74).

From the Christian viewpoint, *the highlight of political activity is service to man and to society*. Service to people is the most concrete manifestation of Christianity that means of Christian love.

Although this public service is a generous, honourable, meritorious, or even noble and very responsible activity, the occupation of politicians is generally accused, discredited and criticized more than any other occupation. Why is this the case? Because many politicians do not serve the interests of society, but they seek their own good or the good of their political party!

Instead of the necessary altruism it is selfishness, career, the party line, corruption, deceit, cupidity, thirst for personal power, and dictatorship that prevail in political activities. Instead of the said service to man it is about one man ruling over another.

One cannot then wonder, that many people consider politics to be a „dirty craft“ or „lordly tricks“. Rehabilitation of the political profession for non-Christians is possible only in the original Christian spirit. The Christian spirit means readiness to work for the common benefit, for justice in our world.

In my opinion, a specific „Christian politics“ does not exist, because one faith does not automatically also mean only one attitude.

Christians have adopted pluralistic attitudes in the field of politics, but of course, with one common moral core. It is necessary to highlight, that Christian notions are often misused in common speech and in everyday practice. If the label is incompatible with the content, its use it is not just an offence, but also deceit or at least unintentional deceit.

The basic principle of „politics in the Christian spirit“ is service to man and to society. Service to people is a concrete manifestation of Christianity. That service means: to be committed to human dignity, freedom and justice. This being committed or not being committed is the turning point and the point on which our lives shall be evaluated (Mt 25, 41⁴³). Politicians and political parties are liable not only to citizens - voters, but also to God.

Politics in the „Christian spirit“ is not the Christians' monopoly. I can well imagine, for example, a political party called the Party of Social Justice that would endeavour not only to proclaim, but also to implement principles of justice, solidarity and subsidiarity. Implementation of these principles is in line with politics in the „Christian spirit“.

6.1.2. Justice in politics

The notion of justice

Many people cannot come to terms with the notion of justice. There is actually no generally accepted definition. Everyone explains justice according to his „interests“ or conviction. And yet, justice can be neither a subjective, nor a party category, because we are all bound by it. Therefore, we most often say „that justice requires us to give everyone those things he has right to get“.

The notion of justice is applied in the field of human relations. There are substantial differences in the attitude of liberals, socialists and Christians towards human relations and justice.

Individualistic liberalism emphasizes individuality. It claims that man is independent in his own activities and in the implementation of his own freedom. According to it social relations among people result from private initiatives.

The recognition of one's duties towards others is not a requirement of justice according to the confessors of liberalism. In everyday practice they are governed by the slogan: dog eat dog.

Collectivist socialism adores the collective. It underestimates man's individuality. It limits his personal freedom and does not admit his spiritual essence. It reduces the human being to only an instrument of the economic and social mechanisms.

The recognition of the duties of a collective towards an individual is not a requirement of justice according to the confessors of socialism.

Christian personalism highlights man as an individual and a social creature. Being an individual, man has a physical, psychic and spiritual base. Being a social creature, he has duties towards his neighbour: he respects his rights. For a Christian justice means the application of the fundamental rights of all people. Of all people, because we all have a common Creator of life. In this spirit justice is adherence to duties towards God, towards neighbour and towards oneself.

The United Nations stand on human relations and justice is in line with the Christian attitude. Article 1 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 states: „All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights“.

Anthropocentric politics

Taking into account the above-mentioned Christian personalism, justice in politics shall be manifested by building an anthropocentric society, a society in which „every human being represents the base, subject and target of all social institutions“ (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, Art. 25).

In the spirit of this anthropocentric politics a great task awaits all Slovak politicians regardless of what their political orientation is: building a just society in which man will not be an object, but a subject for state administration.

In other words: it is the building of a society in which politicians and the government will be rendering service to justice for the benefit of all the citizens.

In everyday practice service to justice means for example:

To ensure equal opportunities for the harmonic development of each citizen,

To disallow all privileges,

To prevent „nepotism“, abuse of public function,

To remove every form of discrimination,

To provide a just wage, i.e. to ensure „equal payment for equal work“.

From the viewpoint of justice in economic politics, the aim of political parties should be:

1. Full employment,
2. Stable currency and
3. Ecological balance.

The high unemployment rate and growing inflation create a climate of uncertainty, apathy and criminality within the whole society.

6.1.3. Solidarity in politics

The Notion of solidarity

The goodness of an individual and a society assumes mutual care and responsibility. An individual has his duties towards the society and is co-responsible for it, and the other way round, society is obliged to care for an individual and is responsible for him. It is in the nature of people to be strongly dependent one on another. This co-dependence forces them to be mutually helpful.

The interests of individuals, various social and political groups, as well as the interests of different nations and states require in existing pluralist societies permanent dialogue, agreements and compromises. Application of the principle of solidarity allows a common approach in controversial issues on all levels.

Solidarity as a manifestation of sympathy is a measure of genuine humanity and has a crucial place in the Christian teaching about love of neighbour that is every human being. The Christian lifestyle is not „a private business“, because it focuses on sociality. This sociality is also the turning point of the definite balance, in the evaluation of each individual life. (It is necessary to point out that individualistic or collectivist atheists do not count with this „balance“.)

My acts carried out „for money“ for my own benefit shall not weigh in the final „judgment“. What shall weigh, are my acts carried out „free of charge“, based on solidarity and love to all people.

Social politics

While the principles of justice play one of the leading roles in economic politics, the principles of solidarity are irreplaceable in social politics. From the individual's and society-wide viewpoint this field of politics is the most sensitive and the most vulnerable, because it deals with caring for the so-called „unproductive“ part of the society.

Social politics concentrates on the protection of the socially, morally, economically, physically, psychically and spiritually weak and disabled members of the society. This „unproductive“ part of society is, however, an organic component of the social organism. The present „new poverty“ is part of it too. It consists of the unemployed, the persecuted, refugees, homeless people, pensioners, abused children, AIDS victims, criminals and drug addicts. The „new poverty“ threatens the social organism, because it is a source of various aggressive reactions and socially contra-productive ideologies.

The principles of social politics in the spirit of Christian solidarity form the core of Catholic social teaching (see the social encyclicals, in particular Lev XIII. *Rerum novarum*, 1891, Pius XI. *Quadragesimo anno*, 1931, John XXIII. *Mater et Magistra*, 1961, Paul VI. *Populorum progressio*, 1967, John Paul II. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 1987 and *Centesimus annus*, 1991).

International solidarity

Countries have never been so strongly interdependent in history as today. Many national and continental problems have become global, worldwide. The principle of international solidarity has started to be applied in ecology, politics and economy. The solution of the world economic recession is not possible without this principle.

We live in a world of global interdependencies in all spheres of human life. Since the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki there is no one country safe against radioactive radiation from other neighbouring countries. So for example, the Chernobyl catastrophe was not limited to Ukraine only, but affected also other European countries.

There are many issues, which cannot be resolved without the help of the international community (EU, UNO, UNESCO, NATO etc.). So, for example, the problem of the starving and dying in

African countries, international criminality and drug trafficking, ethnic tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the problems of Kosovo, Tibet, East Timor etc.

Even various natural and ecological catastrophes demand international help.

With respect to the European integration process, it is in the interest of the whole of Europe to encourage the economically more advanced western states to support in solidarity those less developed ones from the former eastern block“.

The former „East-European“ nations find themselves in such a miserable situation today not just due to their own failure. The reasons should be traced back to the tragic historic events in the post-war situation in Europe (Yalta agreement). It was also the Western representatives, who „allowed“ the political division of Europe into West and East, into totalitarian and democratic spheres.

6.1.4. Subsidiarity in politics

Autonomy of the individual and of social groups

Today both individuals and communities with shared interests are requiring greater co-participation and greater co-decision making in the work place, in enterprise, in politics, at municipal, regional, national and international levels. Co-participation and co-decision making inevitably require co-responsibility too. This is a concrete application of the individual's freedom and a tool for personal development.

The number of things, which should be decided at all levels, is increasing, and they are more and more complicated. Therefore, the participation of citizens in meetings and in the implementation of common decisions is a requirement. The subsidiary principle plays a dominant role in implementation of the common good.

The notion of subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity is interpreted in two ways. One explanation stresses the „support“ of higher bodies or communities given to the lower units or organizations. The other explanation emphasizes „non-interference“ of higher bodies or communities into the activities of the lower ones.

Both the first and the second explanations are important. The higher body should support the lower one only if the lower body is not able to cope with its tasks. This principle has been long known in the folk language too: „Help yourself, and God will help you too!“

The principle of subsidiarity actually means the preservation and development of the initiative, creativity and responsibility of individuals and social groups.

The principle of subsidiarity has a supporting function: it supplements the activity of individuals, families, clubs, various social associations, municipalities, towns, and regions, and thus it supports the self-government of the basic social bodies.

Subsidiarity = democratization = „this is it“

The principles of subsidiarity in „this is it“ politics are those mostly needed in post-totalitarian countries today. Just as individualistic liberalism is the enemy of the solidarity principle, so collectivist socialism is the enemy of the subsidiary principle in everyday practice.

The political system of totalitarian ideology has put on the garment of „people's democracy“, that means the „democratic democracy“ or the „people's power of people“. The „people's power of people“ has stigmatized all citizens of all former „communist countries“. It has mentally ruined and disabled the creativity of a major part of the population. The residues of the more than forty years of totalitarianism are still „circulating“ in the blood of many people, it seems that they have been even incorporated into their „genes“.

The breakdown of „real socialism“ showed that the totalitarian ideology undermined solidarity, and bureaucratized and privileged the collectivist society. The main reason for its failure was that the ideology of „state capitalism“ and „scientific“ Marxism-Leninism overestimated the effectiveness of „class awareness“ and underestimated the power of a society arranged on pluralist principles. In the times of „state capitalism“ the state took over the function of sole, omnipotent employer. All citizens were its employees. A small selected part gave the orders, and the others had to obey.

The Process of transformation

The process of restoration of the changed character of a „socialist person“ requires time. It is a revolution in thinking, a spiritual revolution.

Collective responsibility must be replaced by personal responsibility. It is necessary to transform official totalitarian politics that once formed apolitical citizens. Many politically immature citizens must be trained, educated for the democratic pluralistic political system of the country. The obligatory waiting for „orders from above“, which destroyed in many people the ability to think and act independently, must be replaced by initiative „from the grassroots“, the initiative of every citizen of the state.

This complex revolutionary „re-education“ in the spirit of subsidiarity is not only a task for the state (see the principle of „non-interference“), but also for all citizens and intermediate non-governmental (NGO) organizations, as for example our USKI.

It is necessary, however, to highlight that in the spirit of subsidiarity both individuals and various intermediate groups, NGOs and communities need for their activities material and moral support from the respective state organs, for example ministries (see the principle of „support“).

6.1.5. Summary

Politics as a service aiming to achieve the common good is the obligation of all citizens, but in particular of politicians by profession.

The most fundamental principles in our current pluralist politics are: principles of justice, solidarity and subsidiarity.

- * The application of principles of justice in politics complies with anthropocentric politics. This politics considers each human being to be a base, a subject and target of all social institutions.
- * The application of principles of solidarity in politics is a manifestation of social politics focusing on humanity; both in the national and international arena.
- * The application of principles of subsidiarity in politics is typical for decentralized politics, the politics of co-participation, co-decision making and co-responsibility of all citizens and intermediate NGO organizations.

Anthropocentric, social and decentralized (self-governmental) politics should be adopted by the present community of nations.

6.2. Morality in politics

6.2.1. Position of a politician in politics

Despite the fact that the politician's profession due to its nature and extent is one of the most demanding, most responsible, most respectable, most generous, or even noble-minded ones, we can hardly find a profession with a generally worse reputation. This bad reputation is not something new. It has been a tradition in all parts of the world. It is striking that this „unpopularity“ of

politicians is much greater in the „second“ and the „third“ world compared with the „first“ world. This „unpopularity“ of public representatives results from the increasing participation of citizens in public affairs. The lower the degree of participation of citizens in political affairs, the more „unpopular“ are the politicians. It is generally known that dictators are the „most unpopular“. In other words: the more autonomous and independent and distant the politician is in relation to the people, the less respect he gains in society.

There is no doubt about the answer to the questions: „Why are so many politicians just the opposite of what they should be?“ or „Why do so many citizens consider politics to be a dirty business?“ Because through their everyday practice they create a gap between what the people expect from them, and what they actually give them. Instead of serving citizens they serve themselves. The difference between „theory and the practice“ exists in other professions too, however, as I have mentioned already in the introduction, the sphere of politics has far greater public and social impact and consequences. The greater the politician's competencies, the more altruism is required of him.

6.2.2. Conventional politics - the conventional politician

In our understanding conventional politics means the science and art of ruling, a public work (*res publica*) focused on achieving the power to rule.

This politics is characterized by power, domination and command. The power itself is neutral, it is neither good, nor bad. It changes to a good or a bad one according to its user, according to the hands in which it finds itself. Every man due to „his nature“ yearns for good, but due to „his nature“ he is inclined to evil and due to „his nature“ he carries in himself also a desire to rule.

The result of this „nature in man“ is not only the possibility of the good and positive, but the danger of a powerful man too. Much depends on the person's responsibility. If the person separates his free activity from responsibility for his acts, the danger of power is closer. The danger of egocentric, group, party politics, „nip and tuck“ politics, and the politics of violence arises.

From the above said it is clear, that the politician's everyday activity depends predominantly on his moral profile. Political commitment is constantly confronted with temptations: the power of money ruling the world, the desire to be dominant, to dominate others, career, popularity, prestige and fame.

To succumb to these temptations means having an inclination or readiness to corruption, which is the most characteristic and the most frequent phenomenon in the life of many politicians. The desire to rule and to dominate others shows itself in authoritativeness, arbitrariness, blackmailing, and put-downs. The obsession to achieve personal prestige and fame leads to deceits, intolerance, hatred and the liquidation of „opponents“. Instead of transparent altruism a diplomatic secrecy and hypocrisy prevails, ending up with a form of „a wolf in sheep's clothing“.

In conventional politics, the more apolitical are the citizens - voters, the more „autonomous“, powerful, and independent are the politicians. Conventional politicians are not sufficiently aware that they are firstly public employees, in the service of those who elect them. It is very paradoxical from the original democratic viewpoint, when citizens - as employers - are left at the mercy of their employees - governors. Conventional politics expresses the degree of democracy by the degree of „control from the bottom“, i.e. from citizens.

6.2.3. The Politician's self-formation

The person's properties, his physical appearance, character, and behaviour are conditioned genetically (congenital material), by living and the social milieu, education and self-formation.

While the genetic component cannot be influenced at all, the environment and education are partially in man's hands. However, what is completely „in his hands“ and in his power is self-formation.

People are born as persons. They become personalities through their own efforts, through „working on themselves“, through a self-formation process. Self-formation aims at getting better control of oneself, self-control. The effort to master oneself, which is process of perfecting the self, we call ascetics.

There is no personality without ascetics.

The process of self-formation is a very complex one - it is related to all people, to all professions. I shall concentrate only on one sphere, which is, according to me, the most topical in post-communist countries at present, the education to think in a democratic way.

The post-totalitarian states of the former „eastern block“ are still in a phase of transformation. This transformation concerns not only the field of politics and economy (social arrangement), but above all the field of thinking.

The collectivist totality „taught“ the people not to think and act independently. The totalitarian ideology not only invalidated the creativity of a large part of the population, but also raised very many apolitical people. Based on the dogma of the „equality of all people“, it forced on the citizens a „higher form of democracy“, that means a „democratic democracy“, a „people's power of people“. In this people power both citizens and politicians were obliged „to wait for orders from above“.

The „democratic democracy“ liquidated the fundamental principles of free democracy, in particular the principle of personal freedom, personal responsibility and personal subsidiarity.

As far as personal freedom and the resulting personal responsibility are concerned, we must be reminded that socialist totalitarianism adored the collective. It underestimated the individuality of man and limited his personal freedom and personal responsibility. The individual was just an instrument of economic and social mechanisms. Collectivist socialism introduced collective responsibility in all spheres. This responsibility was in fact anonymous.

Even the politicians as individuals were only „apparatchiks“, implementers of guidelines and orders „from above“. It is a psychologically objective fact that during the forty or seventy years of totality many citizens, including politicians „lost“ the feeling and awareness of self-responsibility. Much could be said about this. It is still a reality today that many people are neither willing, nor capable of taking over personal responsibility. This inability is one of the manifestations of the moral devastation of the socialist individual.

The principle of subsidiarity

Apart from personal responsibility the principle of subsidiarity (supporting, promoting, supplementing principle) creates the core of democratic thinking. The basis of this principle is that the higher parts, organs, or institutions do not interfere in the activities of the lower parts, organs, or institutions. They support them only if the latter are not able to cope. The aim of this principle is to support initiatives, creativity, autonomy and responsibility of individual persons, social groups, organs, and institutions. In democratic states this subsidiary principle relates to all spheres of the life of the society. In the political sphere it is reflected through decentralization, co-decision making and co-responsibility of all citizens. Without the subsidiary principle there is no free democracy.

Politicians by profession are charged with the fundamental task to care for the general political awareness of the population. That means they should do their best to promote self-government on local and regional levels. This attitude is in fact a revolution in thinking“, a „change in political thinking“. Such a „change“ requires much personal effort, much altruism, much self-formation and asceticism on the part of politicians.

Communist totalitarianism ignored the principle of subsidiarity. It centralized and levelled all spheres of life: there existed only one „native party“; one planned economy, one employer (state), one pro-Soviet culture and science, one religion of scientific Marx-Leninism“.

Education towards democratic thinking is in concrete post-totalitarian circumstances a long-term process. The first phase of this process is the phase of „giving up“ totalitarianism, uniformity, hypocrisy, non-independence and anonymous responsibility. The second phase, which will be incomparably longer than the first one, will be the phase of assimilation (adopting, incorporation) of the democratic elements (personal responsibility, tolerance, pluralism).

The reality today in former communist countries shows that there are only a few politicians who can say that they have already passed the phase of assimilation. The majority of politicians is either in the phase of „giving up“ totalitarianism, or has just entered the phase of „assimilation“. It is the new generation that has greater opportunities to graduate from the phase of assimilation during its life.

6.3. Unconventional politics and the unconventional politician

6.3.1. Unconventional politics

In my understanding unconventional politics means efforts to achieve the common good, care for public affairs (*res publica*).

The common good means care for freedom, protection of life and health, personal and social security, cultural needs, economic progress and protection of the environment for all citizens regardless of their political, national, religious and racial background.

The characteristic feature of this *overall care* for man and society in unconventional politics is the *attitude of service* - in distinction to conventional politics, where power dominates.

The motivation to serve individuals and society is altruism, unselfishness in each politician. Unconventional politicians are fully aware, that they are *employees of the public*, that they serve their voters to whom they are also responsible for their activities. They fulfil their tasks in the spirit of a „temporary mandate“ from their employer, the citizens. They know that this employer can recall them at any time, at the latest at the end of their term of office. The autonomy of such politicians consists predominantly in their altruistic invention and intuition. They do not understand control „from the bottom“, from citizens, as a break or threat, but as co-operation and co-responsibility or as an inspiration for their daily work.

6.3.2. Political morality

As politics is one of the practical human activities, its nature is mostly human, that means moral. Altruistic, unselfish service is based on the moral incentives of the politician's personality. Politics is, therefore, substantially subordinated to morality. This subordination is a human, practical, but not antihuman, inhuman or unpractical subordination.

The specificity of political morality consists in regulating all social relations. Political morality cannot be reduced to individual morality regulating only private relations among persons.

Faced with the progressing internationalization and globalization of political problems the task of political morality is more and more universal.

6.3.3 Anthropocentric and holistic politics

The centre of a politician's focus is man. The politician serves with all his physical, psychical and spiritual substance. His service consists in creating such „social conditions, in which individual citizens, families and social organizations more easily achieve their full perfection“ (Gaudium et spes, Art. 74).

In this anthropocentric (man centered) politics „every man is the basis, subject and goal of all social institutions“ (Gaudium et spes, Art. 25).

According to the fact that politics focuses on the common good of the whole society and in the widest spectrum of spheres of life we may call it holistic (comprehensive, integrated) politics. Holistic politics sees the problems of man in comprehensive dependence just as holistic medicine concentrates on microstructures and macrostructures of cells and organs in the framework of the whole organism.

I have mentioned the notion of holistic politics, because we conventionally often understand political activities in a narrowed sense. Usually we speak separately about the social, cultural, scientific and political spheres. Holistic politics endeavours to develop all spheres of life without interfering negatively with specific competencies of individual spheres (social, cultural, scientific). Its task is to *harmonize all spheres of life* while being at the service of man.

We cannot, for example, say that the question of gene technologies is a purely medical, scientific problem. Similarly, bioethics, morality in biology, morality in medical research, is not only a scientific issue but also an issue for the whole society. Similarly, the question of drug abuse, the killing of unborn children, equality of the disabled, problems of ecology in the widest sense of the word - all this is part of holistic care for man, for the common good.

6.3.4. Characteristics of an unconventional politician

This anthropocentric and holistic understanding of politics shows how demanding is the politician's profession and what an overview is required from him in the different spheres of life in society. In this spirit a politician plays a central role on the scene of life. A politician, who wants to successfully cope with this task, must be adequately prepared for it.

From my personal viewpoint I shall try to outline the basic features of an unconventional politician.

a) Professional education

The most important prerequisite for competent performance of political function is a general and a specific political education. In everyday practice too many people commit sins in this sphere. Many of them think that it is enough to be a good and just man, in order to be a good politician. It is not enough to be good. Competence also requires professional preparation. Politics is both a science and an art and must be backed by knowledge and specific talent. In general political practice we, unfortunately, come across many ungifted politicians: the will is present, however, an adequate sense of man as a human being is absent. Heartlessness has nothing in common with political talent.

b) Moral maturity

A politician stands on the stage of society. The eyes of citizens are staring at him. He is directly confronted with the public. The latter expects from him good work, better than from itself. Citizens want him to be at their „disposal“, to serve them. And to serve means to see, to judge, to act and to manage „everyday issues“ in relationship with all. A politician is not a private person. Neither is his morality a private matter. Political morality is not identical with individual morality, but it has its roots in the individual morality of each politician.

The level of political morality is the level of altruism and the level of the suprapersonal interests of each politician. Altruism requires hard self-formation, and self-knowledge. Self-knowledge facilitates mutual understanding, understanding of the needs of others and of society. Understanding of the needs of others and of all people is the basis of the „philosophy of altruism“, the philosophy of unselfish care for others. The underlying principle of this philosophy is: „*What I wish that the others do*

to me, I do to them.“ This principle encompasses the whole morality, the whole art of the constant popularity of an educated politician.

c) Openness

Thanks to the mass media and the growing political awareness of citizens the activities of politicians are becoming more and more visible and transparent. Keeping secrets and the distortion of reality will anyway sooner or later come to light. Corruption scandals followed by processes are a good example of this. From an unconventional politician we request openness, straightness, and transparency that means truthfulness. In contrast to conventional politics, as „dirty business“, this unconventional politics is pure politics, a readable and transparent politics. Openness, truthfulness and exactness bring with them trust and security. This security is closely bound up with social peace and the harmonized development of society.

d) Ability and readiness to work in a team

Political tasks have recently become more complex, especially when we take into consideration the holistic attitude towards politics and the progressing internationalization and globalization of problems. Many political experts and super experts share the resolution of diverse tasks. If teamwork is the rule of the day in practically all spheres of life, then it is doubly so in politics, in unconventional politics.

Soloists can be still successful in arts, sport, philosophy, and literature, but they have absolutely no place in politics. I have in mind, of course, politics in a democratic system. In a totalitarian system, which has its own rules and requirements, the leaders are like soloists, „irreplaceable“, „indispensable“.

e) Tolerance and readiness to engage in transparent dialogue Tolerance is one of the essential properties of a democratically thinking politician. It is a positive, cultivated moral feature that is essential for mutual co-existence in today's pluralistic society. Tolerance is a measure of democratic thinking and political culture.

Tolerance is closely bound up with the ability and readiness to engage in dialogue. Dialogue is the most accessible human form of conflict resolution both in private life, interpersonal relations and the political sphere respectively. Dialogue is today the best alternative to confrontation. It is the method of „non-violent understanding“ of enemy „camps“ in political work, beyond political work as well as in international conflicts.

The prerequisite for a genuine, transparent dialogue in practice is a trained readiness that means the willingness to come to terms. Experience has taught us that we cannot force anyone to talk to us if he himself does not want to.

The unconventional politician leads a dialogue transparently, that means he explains his position to his partner in a way that his *words correspond to the truth*, and not to a „diplomatic“ obscuring. Only unambiguous dialogue „from the bottom of one's heart“ is priceless.

The ability to lead a right dialogue, a dialogue respecting rules and method, is a manifestation of the political culture and spiritual maturity of a politician by profession.

6.3.5. Summary of the characteristics of a politician in the Christian spirit:

- * „EMPLOYEE“ OF CITIZENS - VOTERS
 - * PUBLIC SERVICE (NOT A PRIVATE BUSINESSMAN)
 - * TRANSPARENCY
 - * TOLERANCE
 - * ADHERENCE TO PRINCIPLES
 - * WISDOM
- RESPECT FOR THE CONVICTIONS OF OTHERS

UPRIGHTNESS
TRUTHFULNESS
ALTRUISM
MODESTY
PROFESSIONAL SKILLS
ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN DIALOGUE
READINESS TO ENGAGE IN TEAMWORK

6.4. Conclusion

I have based my contribution on the conviction that political activity is by its nature a public oriented activity. It is a part of the human sphere, and thus of the moral sphere. Political morality governs social relations. A politician is not a „private person“, his work is not „private work“. He is in the service of society. This service requires a certain degree of altruism and unselfishness. The degree of altruism is that of the ideal.

According to the current situation in former communist countries politicians are expected to undergo an intense self-formation towards democratic thinking. The basics of democratic thinking comprise personal responsibility and the cultivated consciousness that a politician performs his activity in the function of „employee“, while his employers are citizens, voters.

True democratic thinking is to a great extent underlined by political morality. Political morality is shaped by the individual morality of each politician. Moral politics depends on the morality of politicians. Morality as a positive human value is given by the personal effort of individuals for self-control, for suppressing egoism, and egocentrism.

As far as altruism is concerned, we have to learn it, to cultivate it. We must motivate and inspire ourselves to it. Egoism, on the other hand, is part of our uncultivated nature. There is no need to learn it, to cultivate it. We all are confronted with the tension between the cultivated and uncultivated nature in ourselves, with the tension between the desire to achieve the ideal and the tendency to „love just ourselves“. Such is reality. Reality is also the fact that man cannot ensure his own happiness. Making others happy generates happiness. That's the law of higher life. Generally this law is applicable to all human beings. Particularly, this law is applicable to those whose profession deals directly with the well being of the whole society. Such a profession is the profession of a politician.

The profession of a politician is subjected to the tension between power and service, corruption and unselfishness, violence and respect, personal and public interests, the conventional and unconventional ideal perception of politics.

It depends on each individual politician whether politics will retain its conventional character, or whether *the political profession will be rehabilitated.*

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PART 3 - BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE FEDERATION OF SLOVAK CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUALS (USKI)

1. Definition

USKI is an impartial, national, non-governmental, non-profit making organization of Slovak Christian intellectuals.

2. Goals

1. Association of Slovak Christian intellectuals which aims to deepen their Christian conviction and to implement Christian principles in cultural, economic, scientific, social and political spheres;
2. Formation of committed Christians in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council;
3. Christianization of secular professions;
4. Edition of Christian publications.

3. Position and competency

All USKI members work on a voluntary basis for the common benefit. All USKI functions are honorary - that means not only that all its officials work free of charge, but that they cover the expenditures resulting from performance of their functions themselves. They perform all activities, which they carry out besides their own job (profession) in the Christian spirit, at the expense of their leisure time, personal and family interests. They consider it a service to God and neighbour as well as a service to the nation.

All USKI members and officials work from the Christian conviction, that in the definitive balance of earthly life the most important thing will be what they have done free of charge, based on love of God and neighbour, and not what they have done „for themselves“, for money.

Despite the fact, that USKI plays an active role in the process of the transformation of Slovakia, in the rehabilitation of the morally devastated „socialist man“, and in „re-education“ towards better co-participation, co-deciding, and co-responsibility of all citizens (not only Christians) in the public life, USKI has not yet been adequately appreciated and supported neither by the government, nor by the Church. It is still dependent only on itself and on the readiness of its members to serve society without being paid for it. Without adequate assistance from the state and Church, in the spirit of subsidiarity USKI cannot perform its mission to the fullest extent.

4. Organization

Today, USKI has approximately 500 members from all parts of Slovakia. The USKI Central Committee, seated in Bratislava, organizes the national and international activities. Branches in Bratislava, Kosice, Presov, Trnava, Nitra, Zilina, Martin, Banska Bystrica, Michalovce and Bardejov, carry out the regional and local activities.

5. History

The present Federation of Slovak Christian Intellectuals (USKI) is the legal continuation of the Federation of Slovak Catholic Intellectuals (USKI), which operated in the years 1962-1990 abroad (Belgium, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, France, United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Argentina and Australia), in exile.

The Federation of Slovak Catholic Intellectuals was established on the basis of the former Federation of Slovak Catholic Students (USKS). USKS had its roots in the congress of Slovak students on 4 August 1919 in Ruzomberok. In 1921 USKS was one of the founding national members of the world movement of Catholic students Pax Romana, seated in Fribourg, Switzerland. To the very end of World War II (1945) USKS was the centre of Christian and national spirit. Many outstanding national patriots developed among its members.

In 1948 USKS became one of the first victims of the new, communistic regime, which prohibited its activities. The first wave of political refugees was comprised of many USKS members and officials. They re-established the organization abroad. The successor of USKS until 1962 was the Association of Slovak Catholic Students Abroad (ZSKSvZ). Due to new circumstances, the plenary assembly of ZSKSvZ on 7 August 1962 in Rome changed the name of the organization to the Federation of Slovak Catholic Intellectuals (USKI). USKI associated both students and graduates. In 1964 Pax Romana recognized USKI as the legal successor of USKS.

During the years 1962-1971 Prof. Dr. Ing. Anton Bugan was chairman of USKI, from 1971 to 1989 it was Jan Guncaga, M. D. After the „November Revolution“, that took place in CSSR in 1989, Dr. Guncaga tried to return the seat of the USKI back to Slovakia. On 30 June 1990 the USKI constituting assembly was held in Bratislava with participation of Church and state representatives. The federation of Slovak Catholic Intellectuals was renamed to the federation of Slovak Christian Intellectuals. Dr. Jan Guncaga was elected as president, who has been in this function since then till now (1990 -1999).

6. Summary of activities in the years 1990-1999

6.1. Political seminars with participation of representatives of political parties in Slovakia

- a) Current questions of the Slovak politics (27-28 July 1990, Javorina)
- b) Principles of justice, solidarity and subsidiarity in politics (5-6 June 1993, Bratislava)
- c) Integration of political powers (11 June 1994, Bratislava)
- d) Tolerance in politics (27 May 1995, Bratislava)
- e) Morality and ideal in politics (11 May 1996, Bratislava)

6.2. National symposia

- a) Christian in politics (11-12 May 1991, Nitra)
- b) Responsibility of Christians in the present society (6-7 June 1992, Nitra)
- c) Christian in economy (12-13 June 1993, Nitra)
- d) Christian in the family (18 -19 June 1994, Bratislava)
- e) Family testimonies (23 September 1995, Sielnica)
- f) Christian's identity in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council (25 May 1996, Svit)
- g) Ethics in economy (14 June 1997, Bratislava)
- h) Culture - the present time accents (26-27 June, 1999, Svit)

6.3. International conferences

- a) New evangelization of Europe (7-8 September 1991, Nitra)
- b) Christianity in mass media (7-8 March 1992, Bratislava)
- c) Church schools of the 21st century (10-12 September 1993, Bratislava)

6.4. Seminars for young generation

- a) Young Christians and the present society (20 May 1995, Bratislava)
- b) Young Christian in the secular and pluralistic society (30 September 1995, Sielnica)
- c) Committed Christian (18 May 1996, Presov)

- d) Education of committed Christians (28 September 1996, Nitra)

6.5. Scientific theological seminars

- a) Life and work of R. Guardini (28-29 July 1995, Svit)
- b) Karl Rahner and his work (30-31 August 1996, Svit)
- c) J. B. Metz and his political theology (29-30 August 1997, Svit)
- d) Walter Kasper and his work (4-5 September 1998, Svit)

6.6. Active participation in the international undertakings abroad

- a) International symposium National Factor in Europe (17-19 February 1991, Vienna)
- b) Congress of the Hungarian Pax Romana (1-6 April 1991, Gyor)
- c) Conference of the European Federation of Adult Education (24-26 May 1995, Prague)
- d) European Pax Romana (27-29 September 1991, Fulda, Germany)
- e) German Catholic Days (15-21 June 1992, Karlsruhe)
- f) World Congress of Pax Romana (15-16 July 1992, Bilbao, Spain)
- g) European Conference Pax Romana (21-23 October 1994, Mainz, Germany)
- h) World Congress of Pax Romana (28 July-3 August 1996, Dobogoko, Hungary)

6.7. Spiritual and work meetings of the USKI members and clergymen

- a) Catholic church after the Second Vatican Council (3- 4 October 1992, Nitra)
- b) People of God and its present tasks (24-25 September 1993, Dolny Smokovec)
- c) Faith in a pluralistic society (22-24 September 1994, Dolny Smokovec)
- d) Professional spirituality (21 22 November 1998, Svit)

6.8. Publishing activities

Monographs - theological, philosophical, historical, political, journal of the USKI „Joy and Hope“.

Books of proceedings from symposia, political seminars, theological seminars.

6.9. Various undertakings of the USKI branches

* In Bratislava, Bardejov, Banska Bystrica, Kosice, Martin, Michalovce, Nitra, Presov, Trnava and Zilina.

6.10. Various activities organized in co-operation with other organizations

(For details, please, see the books: Jan Guncaga UNCONVENTIONAL Christian (14) and UNCONVENTIONAL POLITICS AND SLOVAK IDENTITY (15).

7. USKI's activities in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council 1990-1999

7.1. USKI's activities after the totality

Like every beginning, the beginning of USKI's activity was very hard too. However, the enthusiasm that came from freedom, in particular religious freedom, after November 1989 was indescribable. Step by step it overcame initial barriers. I personally had a clear vision about USKI's mission as a national organization of Christian intellectuals.

After forty years of cruel atheistic terror I expected, that all the chained and oppressed creative forces would be released, join together and find their place in a new era. Even the universal Church anticipated spiritual light and religious revival from the East. I lived in the joyful hope, that all groups of active Christians, who had, for security reasons been in the „underground“ apostolic and educational activities and had been dispersed, isolated and „autonomised“, would be ready to cooperate, to integrate forces.

In this atmosphere of a joyful hope we established USKI headquarters in Slovakia. In course of two -three years, however, we paradoxically encountered more and more barriers and difficulties. The initial enthusiasm lasted only one year. It was shown, that forty years of totality had left unimaginably greater damage than one could have expected. Moral devastation appeared in full nakedness in all spheres of life.

This moral devastation was shown in social and religious life by a lack of independence, a reluctance to engage in teamwork, opposition towards integration efforts and disinterest in a common organization. The totalitarian collectivist regime had brought up individualists and apolitical citizens. The system of collective, and thus anonymous responsibility taught the people not to take over personal responsibility. The only employer in state capitalism invalidated the personal engagement and responsibility of its employees. Employees in conformity tolerated the government of the sole „mother party“, that temporarily ensured them „social security“ for their subjection.

The religious sphere revealed and still reveals the extent of the damage caused by militant atheism. It succeeded, to a great extent, in the de-christianization even of Slovakia.

Faced with the demands imposed on everyday Christians in our world, we have to treat with reserve the quantitative data about the number of those who „confess“ the Christian faith. A long-term effect of dogmatic and materialistic Marxism-Leninism has been to significantly blunt the individual's awareness of living membership of the Church as well as of the feeling of co-responsibility for its mission in the present pluralistic and secular society.

The forty year isolation of „East block“ Christians from the life of the universal Church has been reflected in the stagnation and atrophy of understanding the Church.

The new era of understanding the Church (as the People of God on the way) and its mission in the world (opening to the world) after the second Vatican Council (1962-1965) has started only in the course of recent years (especially after the visit of John Paul II to Slovakia).

With reference to my more detailed report on USKI's activities during the years 1990-1995, which I presented to the general assembly on 28 May 1995 in Bratislava, USKI started its work in the full post-Council spirit in a pre-Council atmosphere. After a short period of time the echo was also of a pre-Council character. USKI has become a „foreign body“.

During practically all-national and international undertakings the discrepancy between what USKI wanted and what USKI could do was obvious. There was not enough understanding for our intentions, needs and work priorities neither on the part of the hierarchy (Conference of Bishops of Slovakia, KBS), nor on the part of the state, which traditionally considers religion to be a private affair“. After a thorough analysis of USKI's activities, as well as of my personal total material and

spiritual efforts in the years 1990-1995 have come to the conclusion, that we have underestimated the existing problems (pre-Council attitude) and that we have built on unrealistic assumptions without an adequate foundation. The gap between investments and effect was remarkable. Many of the very carefully prepared activities did not meet with a lively response - it was just a „voice crying in wilderness“. Even some of the Christian institutions blocked USKI's activity. The sporadic access, which had been gained with difficulty to presentations in television and radio broadcasting, in newspapers and journals, has quickly faded away.

To sum up, it can be said, that this first period of USKI's activity in the midst of the „post-totalitarian reality“ and pre-Conciliar atmosphere was the initial, experimental period.

7.2. Priorities of USKI's activity in the years 1995-1999

On the basis of the described objective experience it was necessary to change the structure and focal points of the national, supra-diocesan USKI activities.

To change means to adjust the activities to the present reality. Such adjustment requires a radical decentralization of USKI's undertakings and the formation of committed Christians among USKI members. That means starting work from the bottom, from the foundation, from the individual USKI members.

In the first period 1990-1995 we adopted a wrong assumption that USKI members were already prepared for this work. Later we tried to determine objectively the readiness and suitability for this type of apostolic work by questionnaires. The responses were minimal. We came to the conclusion, that the major part of USKI's central undertakings was premature. They would have to be repeated in a modified version sometime in the future.

At present USKI branches will play a crucial role in USKI's activities. Differently from the recent more or less parallel, independent and diverse activities organized by the central secretariat and branches, which have even failed to fulfil the function of multipliers of the central undertakings, it is necessary to adopt a uniform, homogenous strategy and a uniform, homogenous approach - in the spirit of diversity in unity. At present a uniform, homogenous Christianization strategy is the only alternative. Due to the fact, that in our country the pre-Conciliar atmosphere is still dominating we cannot afford various „individual“ local programmes. We have to concentrate mainly on the formation of committed Christians, Christians by profession in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

7.3. The formation of committed Christians

In accordance with USKI statutes, one of our common tasks is the formation of active, committed Christians in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council in co-operation with the clergymen and the Conference of the Bishops of Slovakia (KBS).

What is meant by the formation of committed Christians? It does not mean only the general religious „education of adults“, which is designed for larger groups of adult believers. By the formation of committed Christians, Christians by profession, i.e. the Christians who arrange their whole life - private and public - according to Christ, we have in mind not only education (theological and professional), but above all an intensive and systematic self-education and self-formation.

A committed Christian is characterized by:

1. A spiritual life, life in God's presence, a specific spirituality,
2. Religious education, a basic knowledge of theology, theological education, further education,
3. Active work in one's own religious community,
4. Active work in public social and charitable institutions,
5. Christianization of one's own profession (employment) in co-operation with members of the same profession at various levels - local, national, international.

At present the formation of committed Christians (active Christians, active laymen and laywomen, laypeople who believe in Christ) is the primary task not only of the Slovak, but also of the universal Church. Special „educational centres“, Catholic (Christian) universities, specialized organizations (e. g. USKI), dioceses and parishes should contribute to this formation, as stressed in the apostolic exhortation of John Paul II *CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI* (Articles 59-63). (4.)

7.4. Scope of activities of the USKI branches

As I have already mentioned above, the homogenous, united Christianization strategy of USKI requires a homogenous, united working procedure, and the harmonized co-operation of secretariat and basic units, which are today represented by branches. In addition to what has already been said, the branches have the following work priorities:

1. To multiply all central activities - i.e. repeat, supplement, modify according to local conditions: national symposia, international conferences, political seminars, Young Christians workshops, national spiritual and working meetings etc.,
2. To deepen the personal spiritual life of individual USKI members, e.g. in the form of an interesting group, basic community, in co-operation with the branch or the local clergymen.
3. To care for the basic theological education of all members either by individual study, or even better by distance study on a theological faculty.
4. To study the documents of the Second Vatican Council referring to the mission of the laity (committed Christians, lay people who believe in Christ) -namely the dogmatic constitution on the Church *LUMEN GENTIUM*, the pastoral constitution *GAUDIUM ET SPES* and the *DECREE ON APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY APOSTOLICAM ACTUOSITATEM* (LG, GS, AA).
5. To study the social teaching of the Church, particularly the papal encyclicals, which were worked out by a whole range of experts, for example: John XXIII *MATER ET MAGISTRA* (1961), Paul VI *VIPOPULORUM PROGRESSIO* (1967), John Paul II *SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS* (1987), John Paul II *CENTESIMUS ANNUS* (1991).
6. To organize lectures and seminars for the wider Christian public (i.e. not only for USKI members) to discuss topical themes, the social teaching of the Church and the documents of the Second Vatican Council.
7. To form USKI members for their activities in the framework of Parish Councils and in the framework of Diocesan Pastoral councils in co-operation with a clergyman of the branch or local clergyman respectively. It is necessary to highlight, that studying the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Church's social teaching constitutes the basis for political education in the Christian spirit, which is, in my opinion, very important for the re-education of apolitical Christians in the post-totalitarian period.

The listed work priorities of the branches and their implementation are, according to me, the fundamental prerequisite for fulfilment of the long-term tasks of our USKI. As long as all USKI members are not qualified committed Christians, Christians by profession, USKI will not be able to realize those activities for which it was originally established: to apply Christian principles in the cultural, economic, social and political sphere - see the USKI Statutes. The application of Christian principles in the secular sphere will mean the *CHRISTIANIZATION OF ALL SECULAR PROFESSIONS*, which is our most serious and irreplaceable task and the mission of our life as children of Light, children of God.

8. Activities within Pax Romana

The USKI representatives have been actively participating in all regional, European, and world undertakings of PAX ROMANA since 1964.

At the latest world congress of PAX ROMANA, which was held from 28 July to 3 August 1996 in the Hungarian Dobogoko, the USKI chairman Jan Guncaga again highlighted the necessity to form and educate committed Christians at all levels in the Church - local, national and universal.

In framework of the initiation of projects by PAX ROMANA Dr. Guncaga proposed a project on the CHRISTIANIZATION OF SECULAR PROFESSIONS.

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(c) Jan Guncaga
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