From the Editors

The twenty-sixth issue of *Christianity-World-Politics* will explore the relationship between identity and religion in a post-liberal world. After more than a three decades triumphant march, Western liberalism has been halted and is experiencing a serious crisis: one that necessitates a consideration of the post-liberal social order. Many scholars have no doubt that the West itself, with its post-Cold War "liberal interventionism," unbridled lust for profit and pervasive globalization processes, has contributed to this state of affairs [Kuźniar 2016: 195]. The reevaluation of liberalism is related to a series of international and domestic events and processes. In international relations, these include the rise of non-Western powers led by China, the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath, the economic crisis, the energy crisis, adverse environmental changes and mass migrations, and above all the return to power politics, observed recently especially in the form of Russia's unjustified aggression against Ukraine. On the domestic level, one can see, among other things, the proliferation of old/new ideologies that change the understanding of the human good and the common good. Such ideologies occur often in opposition to or in conjunction with religion; they also can be utilized to shape religion according to one's needs. One can also see so-called populism as an old/new form of mobilization of people by politicians. It is worth considering whether, under these circumstances, we can already speak of an "epochal change," or rather, we are dealing with a continuation of previous approaches and paradigms, albeit in a new guise. If the march of liberalism on the national and international level

seems to have stopped, what could replace it? What role does identity and religion play in this shift?

Identity (individual and collective) today stands at the center of attention of social science researchers. With the help of this category, social behavior, phenomena and processes are explained, which in the 20th century were freed from the stigma of determinism. Uncertainty about the nature and character of the "other" was reflected in the existential question of who am I myself or who are we as a group (the phenomenon of "self-consciousness" of an individual or collective subject). Identity, by definition, combines two meanings: the first related to continuity ("remaining the same" = sameness), and the second - to distinctiveness, differentiation [Jacobson-Widding 1983: 13].

The post-liberal stage of the world's development and the "return of religion from exile" observed for several decades now in social life and research, especially in the form of post-secularism, poses a natural question about the role of "sacredness" in the construction of various dimensions of identity. It seems that the category of identity makes it also possible to better understand and explain the complex relationship between religion and politics. This applies equally to the Western system, as well as to other regions of the world, and consequently to the global order. One can venture to say that religion is one of the phenomena that has contributed to the reevaluation of the ideology of liberalism. As early as 30 years ago, Samuel Huntington emphasized the role of religion in the world, claiming that on a global scale the "expansion of the [secularized] West" had ended, and the "revolt against the West" had begun. Huntington contrasted religions (which in his theory were the foundation of identity in essentially every civilization he distinguished) with ideologies produced by the West [1998: 70]. He considered liberalism to be one such ideology, which - after its victory first over fascism, then communism - in Francis Fukuyama's view had no more competition: "only liberal democracy is unencumbered by fundamental flaws, internal contradictions and a deficiency of rationality, that is, what led past regimes to inevitable collapse" [1996: 9]. However, it seems that in his vision, this author did not properly emphasize identity, and in it, the role of religion.

Although the classics emphasize that there is no single strain of liberalism - "there are many, sometimes quite loosely connected" - common to all variants seems to be "modern in character - the concept of man and society" [Gray 1994: 9]. Liberalism is individualistic, egalitarian, universalistic and melioristic, that is,

self-regulating and self-improving [ibid.: 8]. Thirty years after the decreed "end of history," however, it becomes clear that such a understanding of man and society, which is the foundation for both liberal democracy and the global liberal order, has not withstood the test of time. Patrick J. Deneen, reflecting on "why liberalism has failed," explains that liberalism's core value of individual autonomy creates structures that consequently lead to a sense of loss of freedom in many citizens. "Populist reactions" thus become a grassroots response to problems in the political and economic spheres, which, contrary to what liberals believe, are characterized by a "revived democratic impulse" [Deneen 2021: 13]. Pappin, on the other hand, stresses that "liberalism has become an ideology on the wane" - it cannot clearly articulate what the common good is, nor is it "able to inspire the loyalty and shared sacrifice that nation-states require to function" [Pappin 2020].

It is not difficult to see that today, freedom, identity, and the truth about oneself, which has a transcendent dimension, are again at the center of human endeavor. John Paul II's warning is alive: "In a situation in which there is no ultimate truth to guide and give direction to political activity, it is easy to instrumentalize ideas and beliefs for the purposes of power. History teaches that democracy without values is easily transformed into overt or camouflaged totalitarianism" [John Paul II 1991: No. 46].

However, there is also another approach. The same Fukuyama links the modern collapse of liberalism to the scarcity of equality and the fact that neither national-ism nor religion has disappeared as forces in world politics. According to him, modern liberal democracies have not fully resolved the problem of thymos - that part of the human soul that struggles for recognition, which manifests itself especially in nationalism and defense of religion pushed out of the mainstream [2018: 9]. According to this author, not less, but more liberalism in the world, the recognition of more human rights and their enforcement by the West (in pursuit of greater equality) could be the remedy for the observed crisis. It is worth wondering where in this liberal order of values, which exposes freedom and equality of people, the brotherhood called for by Pope Francis, among others, is lost.

All the authors from Poland and abroad whose articles we publish in the first part of the issue recognize the transformations taking place in the liberal social order under the influence of various factors. Their considerations focus on specific countries, regions or the global order. First, we present the considerations of two researchers of the developing Bristol school of multiculturalism in the UK. Thomas

Sealy addresses the problem of managing cultural pluralism in Western Europe, particularly the inclusion of minorities who, because of their conservative, often illiberal values, are seen as a threat to the social order. Tariq Modood notes the need to rethink political secularism. In his view, multiculturalism undermines the liberal consensus and raises religious questions in a world where religion has been marginalized. It therefore forces a rethinking of secularism. It turns out that liberal tolerance, limited to equal treatment, is not enough to fully recognize and integrate citizens of different groups - there must be a recognition of the importance of differences, including the role of religion in building their identities. In both texts, religious identity appears as a challenge and task for post-liberalism, which, according to the authors, at least in the UK, is gradually taking on a post-secular face. It resounds clearly from Moodod's article that multiculturalism understood in this way, which incidentally requires active state action, means enriching, not impoverishing, national culture.

Jane Adolphe's article examines the question of the Holy See's attitude to the "global reset," a metaphor used by World Economic Forum President Klaus Schwab in the face of the COVID-19 epidemic and its aftermath. In his publications, Schwab assesses the resulting situation as a convenient moment to implement a new approach to managing societies, similar to an approach adopted by the Chinese government. In his view, the "fourth industrial revolution" is changing "who we are as human beings, through digital, physical and biological systems." As the author notes, the Holy See, through the mouths of its representatives (e.g., Cardinal Turkson), expresses acceptance of the idea of a "global reset," hoping to overcome social injustices in the world. However, there are also other Catholic voices concerned about such a turn of events (e.g., Cardinals Zen and Müller), seeing it as a simple road to dehumanization and totalitarianism. Properly read, Catholic social teaching can become an antidote to these problems.

The changes in the European region are addressed in the following three texts. Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse seeks an answer to the question of whether the offensive of left-wing currents in the EU, clearly visible in the second decade of the 21st century, i.e. in a period of deep post-liberal revaluations, can contribute to the healing of the European project, betraying signs of exhaustion. As the author notes, "it was the sphere of culture, or more precisely of narratives and ideologies, that was supposed to change social attitudes in such a way as to introduce uniform and universally accepted ideas," which Gramsci referred to as "cultural

hegemony." At the same time, this was to lead to the push back of "fascist ideas," that is, appealing, in his view, to patriotism, national identity and community. Under such conditions, it is much easier to build a community of transnational scope. Activity growing out of these premises has been observed in the activities of the European Parliament and other EU institutions, which, according to the author, is an expression of the leftist style of putting universal principles above national law. The author recognizes the limitations of this approach and its consequences, including depriving the EU of its civilizational foundations or destroying rationalism and the authority of science. This, in turn, may have contributed to increasing voter interest in right-wing formations. It also meant lowering the level of democracy in European institutions.

The identity of the nations of Central Europe and the importance of religion and history in its construction are the subject of Radoslaw Zenderowski's reflections. Citing empirical research, the author points to cultural and worldview differences between Central Europe and its Western edge. He refers, among other things, to the myth of *antemurale christianitatis* or "the forerunner of European culture" and the role of religious institutions in the construction of their own identity by most Central European nations. Religion, according to the author, remains "the most prominent value" that distinguishes the region from Western Europe. Among other things, he introduces the concept of victimism, characteristic of the region, in which "it is about a specific kind of compensation for lost self-respect, resulting from some spectacular national defeat." The author emphasizes what Western scholars often forget, that Central Europe has developed its own identity, which, although not supranational, has a common "grammar" that often manifests itself in the relationship between national identity and religion (the sacralization of *ethnos* versus the ethnicization of religion).

Nicholas Morieson writes about Hungary's post-liberal "Christian democracy" and its impact on American conservatives in his text. He draws attention to the numerous visits of Americans to Hungary, their admiration for the Fidesz party, which seemed to have achieved the impossible, that is, "stopping the elites of their nation from taking over the state and driving conservatives out of the public sphere." According to conservative Americans, the success was the consolidation of "Christian culture" and "post-liberal thought" in Hungary. Extending it to the American political reality, however, Morieson argues, proved too much of a challenge, although the influence of post-liberals in the Republican Party between 2016 and 2022 grew significantly. It is in this milieu that the most serious

criticism of liberalism occurs, which conservatives believe has opened the way for democracy-threatening leftist movements to achieve political success.

The last article in this section of the issue deals with secularization and religious identity in Nigeria - one of Africa's largest and most religious countries. We thus leave the Western research perspective, which the author, Benson Igboin, finds misleading when studying Africa. Colonialism and missionary religions brought their own secularization thought to the continent, but an objectified Africa has not had the opportunity to join the debate over it. Religion in Nigeria remains a key element of identity politics, and the complex provisions of the Nigerian constitution regarding the secular status of the state add to internal instability as they are interpreted differently. In Africa, religion has not moved into the private sphere and continues to be an important factor in politics, leading to conflicts and casualties that could be avoided. Neither Western secularization nor the "obsessive religiosity" of Africans is serving the continent's development. Igboin notes that a creative balance is needed between these extremes, and that "the decolonizing perspective of secularization requires more detailed research and application."

Complementing the considerations of the authors in the first part of the issue is an article by Wolfgang Palaver, in which the author sees an opportunity to reconcile cosmopolitanism with "open patriotism," the foreshadowing of which he sees in the current of Catholicism initiated by Jacques Maritain, among others. He stresses that open patriotism, unlike nationalism, "does not exclude intra-social pluralism, nor does it impose ethnic or religious unity." The task of religious communities, in this context, is "to become the necessary glue between localism and global solidarity."

Irena Popiuk-Rysinskaya writes about selected issues related to Europe's religious diversity and the post-war integration process. She points out that initially "feder-alization" was seen as a Catholic idea and contested by countries with Protestant majorities. Gradually, however, as the process of secularization developed, the religious factor lost its importance. Still, it is possible to see the influence of religion on attitudes regarding, among other things, the depth and extent of integration, as the author discusses in her article, referring to the research of Brent F. Nelsen and James L. Guth, among others.

In the following text, Maria Szymborska draws attention to the peculiar tension that arises among contemporary thinkers who, on the one hand, recognize the

need for spirituality in social life and deplore its disappearance, and, on the other hand, fear any influence of religion on political life. Using the example of Mark Lilia's work titled Powerless God, the author shows that negative conclusions for religion are drawn, however - firstly - on the basis of ideology, confused with religion, and secondly - "with disregard for the actual teaching of the Catholic Church on the autonomy of political life." In her opinion, "the cited perspective also ignores the fact that the primary area of conflict between good and evil is the human conscience and approach to truth."

W. Julian Korab-Karpovich writes about spiritual political leadership, which concerns the art of governing the state taking into account "the full and comprehensive personal development of man," his self-realization, which reaches its highest development in holiness, or union with God. This approach "promotes social harmony, which results from interaction between different groups within society" From this approach comes a practical demand. According to the author, "the leaders of the European Union and individual European countries should abandon the modernist trend of secularization and participate in the development of Christian civilization, uniting the humanity of the whole world on an ethical level, and always keep in mind the highest universal values and the ultimate goal of human life."

Michał Gierycz returns to the category of fraternity in his text analyzing its political dimension in Francis' encyclical Fratelli tutti. The author, first, tries to capture the essence of fraternity as presented in the encyclical. Second, he recognizes the importance of the political dimension in the Pope's proposal. Third, he shows the challenges that arise in the context of the proposed framing of fraternity in the perspective of the Church's social teaching. And finally, he analyzes the possible source of these challenges, "by showing the tension between the Fratelli tutti's proposed understanding of fraternity and the Catholic tradition's specific understanding of fraternity."

Adelaide Madera reflects on the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the relationship between religious communities and the state. She points out that cooperation between these actors can contribute to the implementation of new ways of functioning, whereby all social actors make joint commitments to common goals, with a view to building a more sustainable future.

Hessam Habibi Doroh analyzes the role of Sunnis in the 2021 presidential elections in Shiite Iran. According to him, religious actors and institutions were mobilizing

factors in the political campaign. Interestingly, the Sunni elites in 2021, in the name of pragmatism, were able to reach a political agreement with the Shiite elites, thus ignoring the demands of ordinary Sunnis to solve the problem of inequality. However, according to the author, this shift in Sunni loyalty should be understood as a political compromise rather than an epochal paradigm shift in Iranian politics.

In their article, Tomasz Jarosz and Emmanuel Komba show the impact of the religious factor (faith-based organizations, FBO) on development in African countries using the example of a Catholic school in Morogoro, Tanzania. The set development goal motivates the members of the FBO to influence their secular partners, which leads to the achievement of concrete results (state exam results). The impact of the religious entity is being constantly influenced by impulses emerging from within the spiritual realm.

Finally, Michał Klakus discusses the circumstances of the would-be meeting between Charles de Gaulle and Primate Stefan Wyszynski during the French President's visit to Poland in 1967.De Gaulle, as a representative of the Western bloc, although pursuing his own vision of international politics, was very keen on this event. He saw the Primate as the spiritual leader of the nation he had come to visit despite the Iron Curtain, which had been drawn up for more than 20 years. However, the importance of the meeting was also recognized by the authorities in Warsaw, who ultimately prevented it, demonstrating the importance of the Church in the People's Republic of Poland and the concerns that the totalitarian authorities had about it.

The articles offer the reader a picture of religion intertwined with politics. This will remain an important component of individual and group identity in the post-liberal world as well, although its impact on social relations may be different than during the time of the triumph of liberalism. There are many indications of an increase in the importance of this factor as a source of identity, as religion challenges liberalism, but also of reevaluations and changes in post-liberal religious traditions themselves. Many of the challenges, it seems, will come from areas outside Western Europe and the roles and functions attributed to religion there. We invite you to read on, from which emerges an interesting picture of these relationships in local, regional and global, contemporary and somewhat more historical terms. We also encourage discussion in the pages of our journal, as the problem addressed remains a cognitive and practical issue that certainly requires further in-depth study. Fruitful reading!

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