

## *From the Editors*

The current issue of our journal is dedicated to the legacy of the thought of John Paul II. It is addressed by authors from Europe and the Americas. In almost all the articles, a John Paul II's attitude to the doctrine of human rights is given special emphasis. The introductory text by Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller takes up the question of the responsibility of the Popes to protect and promote human dignity, which is the foundation of the entire doctrine of human rights. In secular language, we speak of the inherent human dignity. In religious language, about man as the bearer of the *imago Dei* – the image of God. Cardinal Willem Jacobus Eijk addresses the transformation that the concept of human rights is undergoing in a secular society. Man's subjectivity and the inviolability of his dignity are no longer linked to a reference to the Transcendent Authority. Pius XII, in a 1947 letter to President Harry S. Truman, pointed out that the absence of reference to God in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights meant that these rights would be subject to reinterpretation over time and, at the same time, would be treated as a special kind of agreed-upon international positive law, the content of which, however, remains within the competence of the states-parties. Archbishop Zbignevs Stankevičs points out that in a secular society like Latvia's, interreligious cooperation to promote human rights, especially family rights, is still possible. It turns out that in a post-communist reality, it is possible to think about the family and its rights across denominational and religious divides.

Aleksander Stępkowski addresses the question of the compatibility of human rights theory with the Christian vision of morality. It might seem that the Pope of Human Rights, as John Paul II has sometimes been called, has finally settled this question. However, analysing his teaching in more detail, we discover that his support for the doctrine of human rights – as in the conciliar constitution *Gaudium et spes* – is not absolute, but conditional. Indeed, in the contemporary public debate we are confronted with a multiplicity of ways of understanding human rights, and they are not always compatible with Christian anthropology. The texts by Bogdan Szlachta and Piotr Mazurkiewicz refer to the liberal interpretation of human rights. They point out that this is generally an atheistic view of these rights, while at the same time appealing to an anthropology that differs from Christianity on some important points. In addition, the liberal interpretation of the doctrine often leads to the proliferation of human rights and their internationalization, i.e. treating them as the fruit of an international agreement. In this context, it is worth reading Javier Borrego Borrego's text on the selectivity in the treatment of human rights in the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights. This is particularly evident in such sensitive areas as the right to life, marriage and family, freedom of religion, and freedom of conscience. Max Silva Abbott addresses a similar evolution in the interpretation of human rights taking place in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

The other authors of the current issue of the journal analyse specific human rights that are strongly present in the teachings of John Paul II. These include the right to life and the question of abortion (Nicolas Bauer, Jorge Nicolás Lafferriere), the rights of local cultural communities (María Inés Franck), the relationship between environmental protection and respect for human dignity (Rosani da Cunha Gomes), the culture of respect for human dignity and the possibility of building universal brotherhood and peace (Ján Figel). In addition, the reader will find an article by Stanisław Fel, Jarosław Kozak and Marek Wodawski analysing the dilemmas of Polish immigrants in the UK in the face of Brexit and the return from emigration.

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