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The Relational Personalism of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI¹

Abstract: Joseph Ratzinger's relational personalism consists in surpassing the singular in the concept of person. The existence of a person points to another person, somebody else, for a person is someone in relation to another person. Joseph Ratzinger sees two important periods in the formation of the concept of person in theology. The first period is the transition from substance to subsistence. The second one is the transition from subsistence to relation, so that the person is not only selfhood but relational selfhood. For Ratzinger, Theodor Steinbüchel's (1888–1949) book *The Breakthrough in Thinking (Der Umbruch des Denkens, Regensburg 1936)* was important in introducing him to personalist thinking. Benedict XVI opposes an individualistic understanding of salvation by emphasising the category of relationship (*Spe salvi*, no. 27). Relational personalism in social theology is the golden bridge between individualism and collectivism. According to Joseph Ratzinger, the creation of man in the image and likeness of God means that the human person as a subsistence in relationship is constituted in relation to God and fellow human beings.

Keywords: Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI, person, relation, relational personalism

Introduction

According to Joseph Ratzinger, the *person* in the absolute singular does not exist. Since the Absolute is a person, it is not an absolute singular. What does not and cannot have a *relation* could not be a person. Thus, surpassing the singular number is necessarily

¹ Translated from Polish by Maciej Górnicki.

contained in the concept of person.² Therefore, God is one, the only one, but He is not alone (Pope Damasus, *Creed*; St Hilary, *De Trinitate*), hence God is a communion of Persons – the Trinity.

The *relational personalism* of Joseph Ratzinger consists in surpassing the singular in the concept of person. The existence of a person points to another person, relative person, for a person is someone in relation to another person. On the basis of the relational understanding of the person, human reason is able to sense and express that there is not only one person in God, but only faith reveals that God is a Trinity, a communion of three divine Persons – Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

Benedict XVI believes that the main problem of the contemporary civilization is “a ‘weak’ vision of the person.”³ A “reductive vision of the person” (*Caritas in veritate*, no. 29) addresses the individual dimension of the person, but does not address the relational dimension of the person; it addresses the economic development of the person, but does not address its the moral development. A *weak vision of the person* addresses the rights of the person but does not address the duties of the person.

1. The Concept of Person – Subsistence in Relation

Joseph Ratzinger recognises two important periods in the formation of the *concept of person* in theology. The first period is a passage from substance to subsistence, i.e. from the static and essential understanding, almost a reistic one, to the dynamic and existential understanding where salvation comes in history.

The second period is a passage from subsistence to relations, so that a person is not only a subsistence but a relational subsistence. This concept was most fully realised in St Augustine’s concept

² See Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 128 (*Wprowadzenie*, 184). Cf. Bezañon, *Bóg nie jest samotny*.

³ Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*.

of the Divine Person in the Holy Trinity as Subsistent Relation or Relational Subsistence (*De Trinitate: relationes subsistentes*).⁴

In the Greek understanding, substance meant a being next to another, whereas Revelation shows that in God Persons are relations, references (*relationes subsistentes*). Therefore, Ratzinger observes that person in the theological sense is not on the essential, substantial plane, but on the existential plane.⁵ For substance refers to the structure of being as independent in its essentiality, while subsistence constitutes independence in existence.⁶ In ancient philosophy, the category of existence (*subsistentia*) was not recognised as an object of philosophy, for in the ancient epoch philosophy was confined exclusively to the essential (*essentia*), i.e. substantial level. Moreover, ancient philosophy did not take up the dimension of history, whereas the Living God revealed Himself in the history of salvation. Thus, the Persons in God are Subsistent Relationships, *Hypostases*, which do not exist on the level of substance – for the substance is on its own – but on the level of relation, of mutual reference. The Trinity, which is the communion of the Divine Persons in the one Divine Nature, is itself a reference, a relation of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and can therefore create relational entities, that is, persons. Furthermore, according to Ratzinger, God’s relational Reality allows Him to enter into relations with created persons, while human persons as relational creatures – subjects in relation – can relate to God, enter into a personal relationship with God (faith, hope, love).⁷ The relationality of the human person also makes it possible for him/her to relate to his/her fellow human beings (the ecclesial and social dimension of man).

In the Gospel of St John, Christ states: “As the Father has life in himself, so he also gave it to the Son: to have life in himself” (John 5:26). Life in oneself means *subsistence*, or selfhood, self-existence.

⁴ Cf. Ratzinger, “Personverständnis.” Cf. also Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, esp. ch. 4: “Chalcedonian Personalism: Its Emergence and Shape” (95–129), where the author discusses the influence of Ratzinger’s personalism on the concept of person.

⁵ Ratzinger, “Znaczenie osoby,” 43.

⁶ Cf. Bartnik, *Personalizm*.

⁷ See Ratzinger – Seewald, *Bóg i świat*, 89.

Then Christ, who “called God his Father, making himself equal to God” (John 5:18), says: “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30), “the Father is in me and I am in the Father” (John 10:38), “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” (John 14:11). “I in the Father and the Father in me” expresses the *relation* of the Persons, that is, reference. In this way Jesus Christ revealed the mystery of the *person* as *subsistence* and *relation*, states Joseph Ratzinger.⁸

2. The Influence of Theodor Steinbüchel on Joseph Ratzinger’s Personalism

In his book *Salt of the Earth*, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger confessed that there was a lively atmosphere at the seminary in Freising, which he entered with his brother Georg in 1945. The philosophy and theology students of the time were captivated by the great spiritual uplift after the Second World War: “People returned from a war in which not a few had participated for a long six years, generally felt a spiritual and literary hunger, and reflected on questions that were linked to their recent experiences.”⁹ Those who studied in Munich (and Joseph Ratzinger was a student at the University of Munich) were familiarised with the works of Heidegger and Jaspers thanks to the influence of Theodor Steinbüchel, who had previously taught philosophy and moral theology there. Joseph Ratzinger was particularly fascinated by personalism. “I was vividly interested in Heidegger and Jaspers, moreover in personalism as a whole. Steinbüchel wrote a book on the Turn of Thought (*Der Umbruch des Denkens*), in which he convincingly showed the transition from the dominant neo-Kantian philosophy to personalist thinking. For me, this was crucial reading. From the very beginning, I was also interested in – one might say: as a counterweight to Thomas Aquinas – precisely St Augustine.”¹⁰

Theodor Steinbüchel was born in 1888 in Cologne, where he was ordained a priest in 1913. He was a pastoral worker and university

⁸ Ratzinger, “Znaczenie osoby,” 39–42.

⁹ Ratzinger – Seewald, *Sól ziemi*, 50.

¹⁰ Ratzinger – Seewald, *Sól ziemi*, 51.

lecturer, and from 1935 to 1939 he was a professor at the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich until it was closed down by the Nazi authorities. After a forced two-year break, in 1941, he took up lecturing at the University of Tübingen, where he worked until his death in 1949.¹¹ He dealt with moral theology, Catholic social teaching and philosophy, and was well versed in contemporary philosophical trends. Taking up questions of the Church's social teaching, for example, he knew well the thought of Karl Marx. The book mentioned by Joseph Ratzinger, *Der Umbruch des Denkens* – which is the fruit of his keen interest in the personalist philosophy of dialogue – was published in 1936.¹²

Joseph Ratzinger also recounted his philosophical and theological studies at the Seminary in Friesland in his autobiography *My Life [Aus meinen Leben: Erinnerungen 1927–1977]*. From November 1945, about one hundred and twenty seminarians studied there. The prefect was the theologian Alfred Läßle, who had just been released from English captivity and who later became famous, among other things, as the author of the fundamental work *Von der Exegese zur Katechese*.¹³ Already before the war, he had begun writing a dissertation in theology in Munich on the concept of conscience in Cardinal Newman under the direction of the professor of moral theology Theodor Steinbüchel. His presence as prefect and lecturer provided an important stimulus to the seminarians' academic development thanks to his interesting knowledge of the history of philosophy and his particular predilection for disputation. Joseph Ratzinger himself described this period in this way:

I read the two volumes of Steinbüchel's philosophical foundations of moral theology that have appeared in the new edition, and found there first of all an excellent introduction to the thinking of Heidegger and Jaspers, as well as philosophers such as Nietzsche, Klages and Bergson. Even more important for me was Steinbüchel's book *The Breakthrough in Thinking (Der Umbruch*

¹¹ See Lienkamp, *Theodor Steinbüchel*, 3–36.

¹² See Steinbüchel, *Der Umbruch des Denkens*.

¹³ Polish ed. Läßle, *Od egzegezy do katechezy*.

des Denkens): about how, in physics, one finds a retreat from the mechanical image of the world and a turn towards openness to the unknown – including the known Unknown, that is, to God – and in philosophy, a return to metaphysics, which had been considered impossible since Kant, because it undertakes tasks that the human mind cannot perform. Steinbüchel, who began his studies with Hegel and socialism, analysed in the above mentioned book the turn to personalism triggered by Ferdinand Ebner, which also became for him [Steinbüchel] the cause of a change of spiritual path. The encounter with personalism, which later gained a great new persuasive force from the great Jewish thinker Martin Buber, became an important spiritual experience for me. I associated this personalism involuntarily with the thought of Augustine, who in his *Confessions* approached me, as it were, with all his human passion and depth.¹⁴

In his biography of Benedict XVI, Peter Seewald, in a chapter entitled “A Breakthrough in thinking,” which refers to Theodor Steinbüchel’s book, points out that Joseph Ratzinger held Martin Buber in high esteem because, through his dialogical personalism, Buber facilitated a dialogue with the “you” of the other man, and ultimately a dialogue with the Personal God.¹⁵ According to Martin Buber, from an anthropological point of view, the human being does not remain in isolation, but exists in the totality of the relations between one and the other, and thus only the mutual interaction makes it possible to sufficiently grasp humanity.¹⁶ In October 1957 in Jerusalem, Buber wrote that defining God as a Person is essential for anyone who considers God as the one who, in creative, revealing and saving acts, enters into a direct relationship with human beings, enabling us to enter into a direct relationship with Him. God enters into a direct relationship with us as an absolute Person. This relational foundation and meaning of our existence gradually constitute a mutuality that can only exist between persons.

¹⁴ Ratzinger, *Moje życie*, 50–51.

¹⁵ See Seewald, *Benedykt XVI*, 183.

¹⁶ See Buber, *Ja i Ty*, 150.

God's speech to human beings permeates everything that happens in the life of every human person and in the world around us, that is, all biographical and historical activity, making it a message for man.¹⁷

In his recently published book *Only the Truth: My Life with Benedict XVI*, Archbishop Georg Gänswein notes that Ratzinger's personalism was a *personalism of dialogue*:

Karol Wojtyła was a philosopher by education, while Joseph Ratzinger was a theologian (the cardinal once told me that John Paul II revealed to him that he felt more proficient in philosophy than in the theological sciences). Putting it in a simplified way, one could say that while Wojtyła tended towards philosophical inquiry and intellectual exploration, Ratzinger preferred theological clarity and interpretive rigour. Nevertheless, it was obvious to everyone that the two complemented each other. Professor Alfred Läßle, a lecturer at the seminary in Freising, made an interesting synthesis at one time: 'The common philosophical and theological basis for them was personalism, which animated thought and hope in Poland for a future freedom that was a political and cultural alternative to Soviet-Marxist domination. The personalism of dialogue became the foundation of the understanding which the Polish pope and the German prefect steadily built up: man is not something, but an «I» which, in dialogue, perceives the other person as a divine «you»'.¹⁸

This account by Archbishop Georg Gänswein confirms what Tracey Rowland has previously noted and analysed:

Whereas Ratzinger has examined St Augustine's contribution to the notion of the person and what in contemporary terms is called the self and its interiority, Wojtyła developed Thomist philosophical anthropology in the direction of mid-twentieth-century French personalism. Again we can see in the works of the two

¹⁷ Cf. Buber, *Ja i Ty*, 123–124.

¹⁸ Gänswein – Gaeta, *Tylko Prawda*, 39–40. On the understanding of the person in the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła, see Hołub, *Understanding the Person*.

pontiffs a dovetailing of two agendas: in general terms both were interested in Christian personalism, but Wojtyła was working on the Aquinas–Mounier–Scheler line, and Ratzinger on the Augustine–Newman–Przywara–Guardini line.¹⁹

An equally noteworthy line in the development of Joseph Ratzinger's theological thought was presented by Umberto Casale of the Faculty of Theology in Turin, who prepared the anthology: Joseph Ratzinger, *Fede, ragione, verità e amore. La teologia di Joseph Ratzinger* (with an introduction by Cardinal Camillo Ruini). The first part of the anthology presents Joseph Ratzinger's theology and contains fundamental theology, dogmatic theology (Christology and pneumatology, ecclesiology, eschatology), liturgy, moral theology, ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. The second part of the anthology presents Benedict XVI's teaching as contained in his homilies and speeches and in the encyclicals *Deus Caritas est* and *Spe salvi*. In the introduction, Umberto Casale wrote that the study of the works of Theodor Steinbüchel (1888–1949), revealing the philosophical presuppositions of theology, enabled Ratzinger, during his formative years, to come into contact with thinkers dealing with relational personalism (*personalismo relazionale*)²⁰ – Ferdinand Ebner (1882–1931) and especially Martin Buber (1878–1965).²¹ These studies enabled him to discover St Augustine (354–430), especially through his reading of the *Confessions*. He also knew and valued the personalism of John Henry Newman (1801–1890).²²

Regarding Newman, John F. Crosby notes that the cardinal's motto: *Cor ad cor loquitur* (The heart speaks to the heart) expresses the meeting of persons. Personalist philosophers like Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel have explored the ancient theme of the "social nature" of man in terms of interpersonal relations, intersubjectivity,

¹⁹ Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith*, 24 (*Wiara Ratzingera*, 50). Cf. Kowalczyk, *Nurty Personalizmu*.

²⁰ Ratzinger, *Fede, ragione, verità*, 11.

²¹ Cf. Langemeyer, *Der dialogische Personalismus*. Cf. also Patterson, *Chalcedonian Personalism*, 74–80.

²² See Gacka, "Od Newmana." Cf. Klocker, "The Personal God."

shame, reciprocity, co-experiencing, empathy, sympathy.²³ This also concerns John Newman's personalism, in which we find these themes important to Joseph Ratzinger.

3. The Relational Personalism in Theology

Joseph Ratzinger uses relational personalism in biblical theology, fundamental theology, dogmatic theology, moral theology, liturgical theology, social theology, ecumenical theology and theology of religion.

In the encyclical *Spe salvi*, dedicated to Christian hope, Benedict XVI opposes an individualistic understanding of salvation by emphasising the category of *relation*. "Life in its true sense is not something we have exclusively in or from ourselves: it is a relationship. And life in its totality is a relationship with him who is the source of life. If we are in relation with him who does not die, who is Life itself and Love itself, then we are in life. Then we 'live'" (*Spe salvi*, no. 27). The Holy Father goes on to state that a relationship with Christ is nevertheless a relationship with the "the one who gave himself as a ransom for all (cf. 1 Tim 2:6). Being in communion with Jesus Christ draws us into his 'being for all'; it makes it our own way of being. He commits us to live for others, but only through communion with him does it become possible truly to be there for others, for the whole" (*Spe salvi*, no. 28).

According to Joseph Ratzinger, the relational dimension of the human person constitutes the deepest foundation of social life. For God did not create man as a solitary entity, but willed that man should be a social being.²⁴ Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Luke 10:25–37) reveals, according to Benedict XVI, a concept of "neighbour" which acquires a universal dimension while remaining concrete. Whoever needs me, and I can help him, is my "neighbour." In spite of the expansion of people, this is not limited to expressing general and abstract love. Jesus identifies himself with concrete persons in need: the hungry, the thirsty, strangers (sojourners),

²³ Crosby, *The Personalism of John Henry Newman*, 75.

²⁴ Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Libertatis conscientia*, no. 32.

the naked, the sick, prisoners – “as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (Matt 25:40). Love of God and love of neighbour merge into one, that is, in the least of these we meet Jesus and in Jesus we meet God (see *Deus caritas est*, no. 15).

This is because love is a personal relation: the love towards God and towards one’s neighbour. The love of neighbour consists precisely in the fact that I also love another man in God and together with God. Such love can be realised only when its starting point is an intimate encounter with God, for God’s love is poured into man’s heart through the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5:5). Then I look at my neighbour through the eyes of Jesus. The First Letter of St John (cf. also *Deus caritas est*, no. 18) speaks emphatically about the cooperation between the love of God and love of one’s neighbour. Profound, personal participation in the neighbour’s need and suffering becomes self-giving, personal relationship, so I am present in the gift as a person (cf. *Deus caritas est*, no. 34). Thus Christian love – Jesus’ love, Good Samaritan’s love – is the heart of a person who sees every man and the entire man.

Relational personalism in social theology is the golden bridge between *individualism*, which has become petrified in the West in capitalism or liberalism, and *collectivism*, which has become petrified in the East in communism or socialism. The social teaching of the Church opposes all forms of social or political individualism and opposes all forms of collectivism. According to the Instruction *Libertatis conscientia*, the soteriological dimension of liberation cannot be reduced to the social-ethical dimension which is its consequence.²⁵ Restoring to man true freedom, the full liberation accomplished by Christ assigns man a comprehensive task – Christian praxis, which is the realisation of the great *commandment of love*. This commandment is the *supreme principle of Christian social morality*.

Joseph Ratzinger states that the structure of Christianity and man’s salvation is profoundly *personalistic*: it concerns the Divine Persons in relation to human persons and it concerns human persons in relation to the Divine Persons.

²⁵ See ch. III of that Instruction, entitled “Liberation and Christian Freedom,” no. 43–60.

In biblical theology, *person* is significant in understanding God and understanding the covenant. *Numen personale* means that the God of the Bible is the God of men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Where there is man, there is God. God has become Man. It is always about the God of human beings, the God who has a Face, the God who has a Name, who can be called upon, who enters into a relationship with man – the Personal God. The Personal God is Someone to whom one can *pray*, address supplications to Him, call upon Him by Name and obey Him, that is, do His will and bless Him, praise Him.

Covenant is related to the understanding of the person as a relationship both at the level of creation and at the level of salvation. According to Ratzinger, covenant is a relational concept. God makes a covenant, that is, He enters into a relationship with specific human persons and with His whole people.²⁶

While concluding a covenant with Israel, God revealed his Name in order to enter into a relationship with Israel. According to Ratzinger, a concept wants to know the essence of reality as it is in itself, while the Name does not so much ask about the essence of reality as it touches existence and wants to call upon the one we know by name; it establishes a close, living relationship. When God reveals His Name, it is not so much that He expresses His essence as that He gives Himself to people, allows Himself to be called, becomes close, enters into our existence, becomes present to us. In Jesus Christ, God became Man, entered into coexistence with us forever, became one of us (*Emmanuel*). God has genuinely become the One who can be called by the *Name Jesus*, the true, living Name of God.²⁷

In his book *The God of Jesus Christ (Der Gott Jesu Christi)*, Joseph Ratzinger asks what it means that God has a name. The Bavarian theologian notes that in the Old Testament, God, in front of Moses, gives Himself the Name “Yahweh,” which He explains with the formula “I am who I am” (Exod 3:14). God reveals His Name in the burning bush.

²⁶ See Gacka, *Znaczenie osoby w teologii*, 325.

²⁷ See Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 155 (*Wprowadzenie*, 134–136).

What, then, does ‘the name of God’ mean? Perhaps it is easiest to grasp what this entails if we look at its opposite. The Revelation of John speaks of the adversary of God, the ‘beast.’ This beast, the power opposed to God, has no name, but a number. The seer tells us: ‘Its number is six hundred and sixty-six’ (13:18). It is a number, and it makes men numbers. We who lived through the world of the concentration camp know what that means. The terror of that world is rooted in the fact that it obliterates men’s faces. It obliterates their history. It makes man a number, an exchangeable cog in one big machine. He is his function – nothing more. Today, we must fear that the concentration camp was only a prelude and that the universal law of the machine may impose the structure of the concentration camp on the world as a whole. For when functions are all that exist, man, too, is nothing more than a function. The machines that he himself has constructed now impose their own law on him: he must be made readable for the computer, and this can be achieved only when he is translated into numbers. Everything else in man becomes irrelevant. Whatever is not a function is – nothing. The beast is a number, and makes men numbers.²⁸

Emphasising the profoundly personalistic character of Christianity and salvation, J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI states that, in biblical terms, God has a name and calls by name, He is a Person and seeks a person, He has a face and seeks our faces, He has a heart and seeks our hearts:

For Him we are not a function in the machinery of the world. The name means the possibility of a call, it signifies communion. That is why Christ is the true Moses, the fulfilment of the revelation of the name. He does not bring a new word as a name. He does more than that: He is Himself the face of God; He is Himself the name of God, the possibility of addressing God as ‘You,’ as a Person, as a heart. His own name, Jesus, puts an end to the enigmatic name of the burning bush; now it becomes apparent that God has not yet uttered everything to the end, but has temporarily

²⁸ Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 33–34 (*Bóg Jezusa Chrystusa*, 20–21).

interrupted His speech [as if He were holding His breath]. For the name Jesus contains the word ‘Yahweh’ in its Hebrew form and adds something more to it: God saves. ‘I am who I am’ now means: I am He who saves you. His being is salvation.²⁹

Therefore, according to J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, the *human person* is a subject in relation to God and fellow human beings. This implies that the likeness of God in the human person is not only revealed through the human nature of the flesh and spirit, i.e. capable of rationality and freedom, but the man’s likeness to God is revealed above all by virtue of the *capacity* characteristic of the person *for relationship* with the Creator and creation, i.e. the capacity for relation with other persons, which makes possible the communion of persons, which makes possible the realisation of community (family, nation, Church). According to Ratzinger, the God of the Greek and Roman philosophers, God whose absolute eternity and inaccessibility ruled out mutual reference, a relation to the temporally changeable and in the process of becoming, manifested Himself through Revelation, in the history of salvation, as a God who enters into personal relations, has reference to man.³⁰ So, Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI’s relational personalism emphasises the originality of Judeo-Christian Revelation and the understanding of faith as a personal relationship. Furthermore, he points out that a correct understanding of the person is possible through reason and Revelation.

The influence of Newman (conscience as man’s personal relationship with God) and Buber (the importance of dialogue) shaped Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI’s relational personalism, but the breakthrough came with the discovery of Steinbüchel (the shift to personalist thinking). It can be said that Joseph Ratzinger’s relational personalism is ontological and constitutes the basis in his theology and the key in the teaching of Benedict XVI. Relational personalism is the fruit of the anthropology and theology revealed by God in the history of salvation.

²⁹ Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 34 (*Bóg Jezusa Chrystusa*, 21). Cf. Szymik, *Theologia benedicta*, I, 202.

³⁰ See Ratzinger, *Wprowadzenie*, 145.

Conclusion

Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's conception of theology is related to the Person of Jesus Christ: "Christianity is in the first place an Event, a Person. And thus in the Person we discover the richness of what is contained."³¹ The Person unites reason and faith, metaphysics and history; therefore, the theology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI presents a coherent theological system (St Irenaeus, St Augustine) and takes up theology in the service of truth. "Christ called himself the Truth" (Tertullian).

Benedict XVI believes that in the present age of globalisation, when the entire humanity has become much more interactive, there is a need to undertake a "deeper critical evaluation of the category of *relation*" (*Caritas in veritate*, no. 53), so that the greater closeness of persons and peoples is transformed into a true communion of persons and peoples. This means a task, writes the Holy Father, that cannot be undertaken by the social sciences alone, insofar as the contribution of disciplines such as metaphysics and theology is needed if man's transcendent dignity is to be properly understood (*Caritas in veritate*, no. 53). According to Benedict XVI, it is necessary to be constantly committed to promoting a personalistic and communitarian cultural direction, that is, relational, planetary integration process, open to transcendence.

To summarise, according to Joseph Ratzinger, the creation of man in the image and likeness of God means that a *human being* as *subsistence in relation* is constituted to God and to other people. The image of God does not only signify rationality and freedom, which has been emphasised so far, but similarity to the *Personal God* means that relations to God and relations to other people ontologically constitute the structure of human beings as *relational creatures*. In other words, a human being cannot live without relations to God and to other people (cf. Luke 10:27–28).

³¹ Benedict XVI, Address, 13 May 2005, responses.

Personalizm relacyjny Josepha Ratzingera/Benedykta XVI

Abstrakt: Personalizm relacyjny Josepha Ratzingera polega na przekroczeniu liczby pojedynczej w pojęciu osoby. Istnienie osoby wskazuje na drugą osobę, inną osobę, bowiem osoba jest kimś w relacji z drugą osobą. Joseph Ratzinger dostrzegł dwa ważne okresy w kształtowaniu się pojęcia osoby w teologii. Pierwszy okres to przejście od substancji do subsystemy. Drugi okres to przejście od subsystemy do relacji – zatem osoba to nie tylko samoistość, ale samoistość relacyjna. Dla Ratzingera ważną była książka Theodora Steinbüchela (1888–1949) *Przełom w myśleniu (Der Umbruch des Denkens)*, Regensburg 1936), która wprowadziła go w myślenie personalistyczne. Benedykt XVI przeciwstawia się indywidualistycznie pojmowanemu *zbawieniu*, podkreślając kategorię relacji (*Spe salvi*, nr 27). Personalizm relacyjny w teologii społecznej stanowi złoty most pomiędzy indywidualizmem a kolektywizmem. Według Josepha Ratzingera stworzenie człowieka na obraz i podobieństwo Boga oznacza, że osoba ludzka jako subsystema w relacji jest ukonstytuowana w relacji do Boga i bliźnich.

Słowa kluczowe: Joseph Ratzinger, Benedykt XVI, osoba, personalizm relacyjny, relacja

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