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## **The Ontic Foundations of Peace in the Perspective of Pope Benedict XVI<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** Peace belongs to the fundamental values of human life, and it is also the foundation of civilisation-building. An analysis of history leads to the conclusion that it is not possible to speak of a time or period of absolute peace. A definition claiming that peace is the absence of war and violence is also incomplete. It is therefore worth asking the question about the essence and nature of peace as well as the reality of its occurrence. Turning to the teachings of Pope Benedict XVI, we find a coherent conception of the pursuit of peace on the foundations of truth, love, justice, freedom and reconciliation. The Pope points out that these values are rooted in human nature. This makes the discussion on peace multidimensional, so that it cannot be confined within a narrow confessionalism.

**Keywords:** Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI, development of civilisation, human onticity, personalism, peace, spirituality

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### **Introduction**

The current situation in national and international relations confronts us once again with the question of peace. Even a cursory observation of world history reveals that there have been no moments of complete balance in the past. One can only speak of varying degrees of escalation of threats to peace. In particular, this problem takes on significance in the questions concerning the Russian–Ukrainian war, in which the very dignity of the human being, as well as all rights derived from this fact, seem to have been questioned. In view of this, an extremely important problem arises

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concerning the very nature of peace and also its actual existence. There is also no shortage of opinions stating that both the concept and the reality of peace are deeply theoretical and even utopian in nature. The opposite position, deeply rooted in ontic-anthropological and religious motivations, makes it possible to state that peace is possible and is actually a vocation of both the individual man and the human community. Therefore, an analysis of the ontic foundations of peace requires a clarification of what peace is in its essence, what its internal and external nature is. The next step is to demonstrate its foundations resulting from the ontic structure of man as an individual as well as his social nature. In order not to remain solely on the level of theoretical analysis, it is therefore necessary to indicate the realism of peace aspirations in the diversity of life spaces of contemporary man. Without doubt, an excellent source for the analysis of this problem, which definitely goes beyond the field of theology, is the work of Pope Benedict XVI. His teaching, which starts from a theological foundation, finds its reflection in the social sciences, sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics and also political science. Above all, it is about demonstrating that peace is not a “product” of social, religious or political systems, but arises from human nature. It is therefore both the basis of human life and the fruit of human spiritual, intellectual, personal and communal maturity.

### **1. The Essence and Nature of Peace**

Catherine M. Kelleher and Rachel A. Epstein, referring to the end of the “Cold War” period (1947–1991), which was accompanied by an arms race, economic as well as political rivalry, state that these are changes that have a global character. They affect the nature of how we understand peace and security.<sup>2</sup> However, there are still very serious discrepancies in understanding and also defining peace.<sup>3</sup> This divergence exists between the positive and negative sense, and the founder of peace studies, J. Galtung, states that we recognise it by

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kelleher – Epstein, “The Challenge of Peace,” 239–240.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Piwowarski, “Pokój jako wartość,” 6–8.

its absence. He refers to the law and order in man of the so-called “old idea” and tries to demonstrate its obsolescence due to the possibility of introducing such a state by force. Alongside such an attempt, there is an understanding of peace in a negative way, i.e. based on the absence of violence. He also proposes a third concept, arguing that there is a third concept of peace which is less clearly defined. This is peace as a synonym for all other good things in the world community, particularly cooperation and integration between human groups, with less emphasis on the absence of violence.<sup>4</sup> So he places emphasis on the promotion of the good. Outlining the historical aspects, he singles out the ways in which this understanding has been shaped.<sup>5</sup> This one-sidedness in defining peace has been pointed out by J. Kądziała. Analysing the thought of K. Kaiser and J. Galtung, he notes that very often we are dealing with emphasising only a certain factor and aspect of peace. It is therefore a mistake to generalise and focus contemporary research on exposing the conditions of non-violent coexistence of humanity.<sup>6</sup> In ethics, it is defined as a state of coexistence between states based on mutual recognition of an established state of possession and the possibility of interaction in the sphere of social and private life.<sup>7</sup> It should be stressed that this definition practically points to a “non-aggression pact” respecting the status quo, resulting from a naturalistic understanding of order.

As J.A. Dwyer states, in attempting to define peace, we are dealing with a multifaceted and multidimensional value.<sup>8</sup> However, the starting point for theological analyses must be the concept itself, since there is a very serious difference between the Hebrew *šalôm* (שלום), the Greek *eirēnē* (εἰρήνη) and the Latin *pax* associated with the Roman empire.<sup>9</sup> In this context, W.M. Swartley notes that the Hebrew word means the character of the life of people among themselves based on a covenant with God.<sup>10</sup> The meaning of the Greek

<sup>4</sup> Galtung, *Theories of peace*, 12–17. See Piwowarski, “Pokój jako wartość,” 9.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Galtung, *Theories of peace*, 8–11. See Piwowarski, “Pokój jako wartość,” 9.

<sup>6</sup> Kondziela, *Badania nad pokojem*, 47; Tatar, *Duchowość pokoju*, 25–26.

<sup>7</sup> Ślipko, *Zarys etyki*, II, 359; Kietliński, “Problematyka moralna,” 165.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Dwyer, “Peace,” 748.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Homerski, “Idea pokoju,” 13–16.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Swartley, *Covenant of peace*, 27–30.

word reflects peace of a socio-political nature.<sup>11</sup> A different meaning is given by Philo of Alexandria, who links it to peace of the soul or the struggle against temptations and lusts.<sup>12</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI refers to this terminology in his teaching. Undoubtedly, his analysis concerning peace, as the Pope – the head of the Catholic Church – has its deep roots in the theology developed by him as Cardinal J. Ratzinger.<sup>13</sup> Reaching to the biblical terminological foundations, he states that peace cannot be understood as “a tranquil life,” “nor can its definition be reduced to the mere absence of war.”<sup>14</sup> He states: “According to its Hebrew etymology, peace means being complete and intact, restored to wholeness. It is the state of those who live in harmony with God and with themselves, with others and with nature.”<sup>15</sup> So, as can be seen, biblical terminology emphasises above all the nature of relationships having a threefold dimension, i.e. with God in relation to oneself and also in relation to the surrounding world. As he points out in his document, this state is first of all deeply spiritual and then finds its reflection in external reality.<sup>16</sup>

In his attempt to define peace, pope Benedict XVI stresses a double foundation, that is – a biblical and an ontic-anthropological one. Reaching for the biblical foundations, he emphasizes above all its identification with Jesus Christ, which is pointed out by St Paul – Αὐτὸς γάρ ἐστιν ἡ εἰρήνη ἡμῶν – “For He is our peace” (Eph 2:14), and also in Him full reconciliation is possible ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ “to bring all things together again in Christ” (Eph 1:10; cf. 2 Cor 5:18–20).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Swartley, *Covenant of peace*, 35–40.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Szewc, “Pokój Chrystusa,” 25.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Bachanek, “Rozumienie pokoju,” 27–39. Cf. Pogoda-Kołodziejak, “Rola Kościoła,” 81–92.

<sup>14</sup> Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 9. Cf. Kietliński, “Problematyka moralna,” 165.

<sup>15</sup> Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 9.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 102. See also Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 20: “Christ re-established humanity in the Father’s love. Reconciliation thus springs from this love; it is born of the Father’s initiative in restoring his

As Benedict XVI observes, a correct definition of peace and the definition of its nature, which has a biblical basis, requires the consideration of truth with its organic connection to love,<sup>18</sup> justice<sup>19</sup> and freedom.<sup>20</sup> However, an analysis of the Pope's teaching shows that the relationship of truth to love and justice is of crucial importance to him. In his message for the World Day of Peace 2006, he states very clearly: "'In truth, peace' – expresses the conviction that wherever and whenever men and women are enlightened by the splendour of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace."<sup>21</sup> Referring to the conciliar teaching of the Church contained in *Gaudium et spes*, he poses a very important question, from the point of view of definition, concerning "the truth of peace." At the same time, he makes it clear that its proper understanding cannot be restricted to the absence of armed conflict, but must be grasped as "the fruit of an order which has been planted in human society by its divine Founder."<sup>22</sup> For this reason, relying on St Augustine's assertion that it is *tranquillitas ordinis*, he states that at

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relationship with humanity, a relationship broken by human sin. [...] Thus, the experience of reconciliation establishes communion on two levels: communion between God and humanity; and – since the experience of reconciliation also makes us (as a reconciled humanity) 'ambassadors of reconciliation' – communion among men."

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 1: "Love – *caritas* – is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth."

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 26: "Christ does not propose a revolution of a social or political kind, but a revolution of love, brought about by his complete self-giving through his death on the Cross and his resurrection. The Beatitudes are built upon on this revolution of love (cf. Matt 5:3–10). They provide a new horizon of justice, inaugurated in the paschal mystery, through which we can become just and can build a better world. God's justice, revealed to us in the Beatitudes, raises the lowly and humbles those who exalt themselves. It will be perfected, it is true, in the kingdom of God which is to be fully realized at the end of time. But God's justice is already manifest here and now, wherever the poor are consoled and admitted to the banquet of life."

<sup>20</sup> Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 55; Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 3.

its core there is a creative order and harmony.<sup>23</sup> Beside this argument, the Pope emphasises the Truth embodied in Jesus Christ and points out that peace has a Christocentric and thus personified character.<sup>24</sup> For peace to be fully and properly defined and to determine its nature, it is necessary, according to Benedict XVI, to take into account that alongside the Truth that God is, there must be a properly discerned truth about man. This fundamental relationship is the foundation for understanding the other values crucial to peace, such as justice,<sup>25</sup> freedom, solidarity.<sup>26</sup>

On this path of encountering God, who is Truth, and in this light of the truth about man, the nature of peace as a gift and at the same time a task is revealed.<sup>27</sup> This means that the nature of peace, which is a gift received by man, contains potentiality and dynamism. As the Pope states, it is a feature of the action of God, who has called the world into existence in harmony and order, but man's interactions with Him cause the dynamism of its development. On this path, as the analysis of Benedict XVI's teaching reveals, man's choices of good are made, based on his freedom as well as respect for the freedom of others.<sup>28</sup> In this way, the Pope arrives at the following view and definition of peace: "Peace is a gift of God and at the same time a task which is never fully completed. A society reconciled with God is closer to peace, which is not the mere absence of war or the result of military or economic supremacy, much less deceptive ploys or clever manipulation. Rather, peace is the result of a process of purification and of cultural, moral and spiritual elevation involving

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 15: "if peace is to be authentic and lasting, it must be built on the bedrock of the truth about God and the truth about man. This truth alone can create a sensitivity to justice and openness to love and solidarity, while encouraging everyone to work for a truly free and harmonious human family. The foundations of authentic peace rest on the truth about God and man."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 3; Piwowarski, "Pokój jako wartość," 11.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 4; Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 5; Piwowarski, "Pokój jako wartość," 10–11.

each individual and people, a process in which human dignity is fully respected.”<sup>29</sup> Undoubtedly, this attempt mirrors the definition contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.<sup>30</sup>

However, the Pope points out that a proper understanding of freedom must include responsibility. Therefore, it must be said that peace in its nature contains it and at the same time also expresses it.<sup>31</sup> While still a cardinal, J. Ratzinger very clearly emphasises the crucial importance of freedom in human relations. However, he departs from understanding it in terms of “the boundary of my freedom is the boundary of your freedom.” This, according to him, is un-evangelical and un-Christian, and encapsulated in legalism. In essence, we are then dealing with a “non-aggression pact” or a very shallow tolerance. He therefore postulates that a “shared freedom” is appropriate. By this he means the interpenetration and mutual encounter of freedom(s).<sup>32</sup> It brings with it a loving attitude of sacrifice for the sake of the other. This reveals human self-determination based on the agape love of devotion and sacrifice.

According to Benedict XVI, justice is organically inscribed in the nature of peace. It is multidimensional and concerns particular aspects of human life. He notes that it does not derive from a certain human convention and is not based solely on positive law, but on the identity of man and his dignity. As he notes, it is necessary to view the human being integrally and thus to guard against a conventional conception of justice.<sup>33</sup> It is reflected in the perception of injustice, conflicts, human possessiveness, poverty, reductionist drives

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<sup>29</sup> Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 15. See also Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. CCC 2304: “Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is ‘the tranquillity of order.’ Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity.”

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Ratzinger, *Bóg wiary i Bóg filozofów*, 439. Cf. Piwowarski, “Pokój jako wartość,” 11.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 4.

of civilization knowledge and construction.<sup>34</sup> In a special way, this problem will be reflected in the following section of the study on man himself and his ontic status having an impact on the understanding of the foundations of peace.

Synthesising Benedict XVI's very extensive and content-rich teaching on the definition of peace, it must be said that it reflects and expands on Pope John XXIII's fundamental definition in the encyclical *Pacem in terris*<sup>35</sup> and builds on the heritage of the thought and attitude of St John Paul II.<sup>36</sup> It can be said to be a kind of synthesis of the teaching of the Catholic Church and the Popes. It has a somewhat descriptive character, yet it contains the essence in all simplicity: "Peace concerns the human person as a whole, and it involves complete commitment. It is peace with God through a life lived according to his will. It is interior peace with oneself, and exterior peace with our neighbours and all creation [...] Peace is an order enlivened and integrated by love, in such a way that we feel the needs of others as our own, share our goods with others and work throughout the world for greater communion in spiritual values. It is an order achieved in freedom, that is, in a way consistent with the dignity of persons who, by their very nature as rational beings, take responsibility for their own actions."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 24–27; Piwowarski, "Pokój jako wartość," 11–12.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. John XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, no. 86–129. John XXIII sets out the essential pillars of peace, which include truth, justice, love and freedom.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, no. 17; John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 23–25; John Paul II, *To serve peace, respect freedom*; John Paul II, *Dialogue for peace, a challenge for our time*; John Paul II, *To build peace, respect minorities*; John Paul II, *From the justice of each comes peace for all*; John Paul II, *Pacem in terris: a permanent commitment*; John Paul II, *An ever timely commitment: teaching peace*.

<sup>37</sup> Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 3. Cf. Kietliński, "Problematyka moralna," 165.



## 2. Peaceful Nature of Man

St Thomas Aquinas, an unquestionable authority, based on St Augustine, as well as the teaching of Dionysius, claims that peace in the human experience is the “concordance of hearts” (*con-cordia*),<sup>38</sup> i.e., inner harmony and order, which affects the entirety of human nature.<sup>39</sup>

In analysing the problem of peace, as Pope John XXIII points out in his encyclical, the starting point is the human person: “But the Creator of the world has imprinted on the inner being of man the order revealed to man by his conscience; and his conscience insists on its preservation [...] All creatures reflect the infinite wisdom of God. It reflects this all the more clearly the higher it stands on the scale of perfection.”<sup>40</sup> These words imply that peace is a gift connected with the nature of man, which man receives independently of himself and is therefore not its disposer. At the same time, this means that this gift must be developed. For this reason, the discussion of it cannot be limited to the realm of religion, even though it occupies a key place within it. Reaching out to the onticity of the human being broadens the audience to include those who do not identify with any religiosity, while at the same time the desire for peace is deeply rooted in their humanity. It should be noted that the way in which peace is understood and built will depend on the axiology that a person adopts, by which it becomes a certain principle of his/her life.<sup>41</sup> Thomas Merton points out this fact unequivocally: “The fact is, however, that we cannot face this moral question as free and rational

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* q. 29, a. 1, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* q. 29, a. 2, ad 1. “The unity achieved by peace concerns not only the mental or rational or sensual pursuits, which it reconciles, but also the natural pursuits (desires). This is why Dionysius claims that ‘peace is the cause of concordance and harmony with nature’; concordance here means the unity of desires arising from cognition, and harmony with nature means the unity of natural desires.”

<sup>40</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem in terris*, no. 4. Cf. Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 7: “There is a need to renounce that false peace promised by the idols of this world along with the dangers which accompany it, that false peace which dulls consciences, which leads to self-absorption, to a withered existence lived in indifference.”

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Kowalczyk, *Zarys filozofii człowieka*, 147–160.

human beings until we are prepared to accept that our freedom and reasonableness matter.”<sup>42</sup>

The historical study of the nature of peace and the various concepts makes it very clear that at the centre there is the human person.<sup>43</sup> In this context, it is worth recalling Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who explicitly states that abandoning the realism of the idea of peace is contrary to the nature of man. Emphasising its universality, he notes that it is a consequence of human development, especially of human consciousness. The whole “economy of nature” strives for harmonious-peaceful unification. Referring to the source of peace, he states: “[...] mankind not only has the possibility of maintaining peace, but even – by virtue of its structure – must one day necessarily enter into a state of peace.”<sup>44</sup> The Jesuit – a paleoanthropologist – points out the role of the biological dimension in this process: “[...] true peace, the only peace possible from a biological point of view – is not so much the cessation of wars or their opposite, but rather their natural sublimation.”<sup>45</sup> This way of seeing and understanding stems

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<sup>42</sup> Merton, *Pokój w erze postchrześcijańskiej*, 79.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki*, II, 355–358. In the panorama of views on peace presented, we can see that this was a problem for ancient philosophy, whose representatives on this issue are the Stoics. Cicero argued that the settlement of disagreements by force was characteristic of the animal world. The medieval period is characterised by a focus on the issue of “just war” and a concentration on the action of the Church. The law of *treuga Dei* (God’s truce) is known from this period. The time of the Renaissance is characterised by pacifist tendencies, especially in Europe, based on the institution of truce. In the 18th century, the approach of I. Kant deserves emphasis, and on the territory of Poland prominent ones were: S. Leszczyński, S. Staszic, K. Skrzetuski. The second half of the 19th century was influenced by the thinking of K. Marx and F. Engels, pointing to the idea of a classless society. Studies of the problem of peace emphasise the influence of Teilhard de Chardin, outlining the dialectic of the cosmos striving for Unity. The work of Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI deserves to be highlighted. The development of three groups of theories: empirical, normative and praxeological, is not without significance for contemporary peace concepts. The emergence of institutions such as the League of Nations and later the United Nations, the International Tribunal in The Hague, FAO, UNESCO and movements such as non-violence have had a significant impact.

<sup>44</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, *Człowiek*, I, 232.

<sup>45</sup> Teilhard de Chardin, *Człowiek*, I, 234.

from his vision of the world in relation to Christ the Omega, which is the source and at the same time brings together the multiplicity.<sup>46</sup>

The teaching of Pope Benedict XVI fits in this sequence of theological and philosophical analyses concerning the ontic-anthropological foundations of peace. His words, which unequivocally indicate that this ontic dimension of the human being is directed towards peace-building, deserve being emphasised: “All the same, the many different efforts at peace-making which abound in our world testify to mankind’s innate vocation to peace. In every person the desire for peace is an essential aspiration which coincides in a certain way with the desire for a full, happy and successful human life. In other words, the desire for peace corresponds to a fundamental moral principle, namely, the duty and right to an integral social and communitarian development, which is part of God’s plan for mankind. Man is made for the peace which is God’s gift.”<sup>47</sup>

In these words, the Pope therefore posits a very clear thesis that at the core there is a natural law containing fundamental human rights.<sup>48</sup> It is the foundation of peaceful dialogue not only in the inter-religious and inter-faith space, but also allows for a platform of understanding to be found with the non-religious and non-believers.<sup>49</sup>

Analysing the very rich legacy of Benedict XVI, we find that the foundation of his teaching is truth in close connection with love. Drawing on the theology of St Augustine, he points out that peace is “[...] the result of an order planned and willed by the love of God, peace has an intrinsic and invincible truth of its own, and corresponds to an irrepressible yearning and hope dwelling within us.”<sup>50</sup> It is the Truth, which is God, that reveals the truth about man.

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Teilhard de Chardin, *Człowiek*, I, 124–127.

<sup>47</sup> Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 1.

<sup>48</sup> See Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 12: “A true and stable peace presupposes respect for human rights. Yet if these rights are grounded on a weak conception of the person, how can they fail to be themselves weakened? Here we can see how profoundly a relativistic conception of the person is insufficient, when it comes to justifying and defending his rights”. Cf. also Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 3.

Benedict XVI states: “The foundations of authentic peace rest on the truth about God and man.”<sup>51</sup> The pursuit of this truth is a function of human reason, but it remains organically linked to the love of it as good. The good, in turn, is the object of the human volitional sphere. The desire for peace is therefore not the result of human rationality, but results from the ontic pursuit of the good. This connection rooted in human nature expresses the desire to experience wholeness, that is, pure agape love containing the ideal of truth.<sup>52</sup> This is the fundamental communion-forming element and thus reveals the deepest ground of communality.<sup>53</sup> It is in truth that the Pope sees the natural and also obvious foundation of peace. He states unequivocally: “[...] wherever and whenever men and women are enlightened by the splendour of truth, they naturally set out on the path of peace.”<sup>54</sup> This means that the pursuit of peace cannot be narrowed down to confessional, particularistic and political issues. Undoubtedly, as the Pope’s teaching implies, the opposite of these aspirations and therefore of anti-peace attitudes and actions is division, lying, the manipulative use of truth and the dictatorship of relativism, which is a particular form of questioning the truth.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 15.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 25.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 7, 79. Francis, *Lumen fidei*, no. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 5: “We need but think of the events of the past century, when aberrant ideological and political systems wilfully twisted the truth and brought about the exploitation and murder of an appalling number of men and women, wiping out entire families and communities. After experiences like these, how can we fail to be seriously concerned about lies in our own time, lies which are the framework for menacing scenarios of death in many parts of the world. Any authentic search for peace must begin with the realization that the problem of truth and untruth is the concern of every man and woman; it is decisive for the peaceful future of our planet”; Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 9: “Nowadays, the truth of peace continues to be dramatically compromised and rejected by terrorism, whose criminal threats and attacks leave the world in a state of fear and insecurity”; Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 10: “Looked at closely, nihilism and the fundamentalism of which we are speaking share an erroneous relationship to truth: the nihilist denies the very existence of truth, while the fundamentalist claims to be able to impose it by force.” Cf. also Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 2.

An analysis of the teaching on peace referring to the truth of God, who in Jesus Christ is Peace itself (cf. Eph 2:14), confronts us with the question of man. As mentioned, the Pope emphasises that man is called to exist in harmony with his own nature and also in harmony with the surrounding world.<sup>56</sup> This fact is marked by the words: “I am convinced that respect for the person promotes peace and that, in building peace, the foundations are laid for an authentic integral humanism.”<sup>57</sup> The fact of *creatio*, i.e. man’s originating from the initiative of God, points to the dignity of the human being, as well as to the fundamental difference resulting from this in relation to other creatures. As is clear from the message for the World Day of Peace 2007, we can identify elements that play a key role in defining this dignity. These include: a) the capacity to know oneself; b) mastery over oneself; c) self-giving as the capacity to give oneself freely; d) building community with others; e) the capacity for covenant with the Creator.<sup>58</sup> The Pope lists the elements in this order, but from the point of view of the hierarchy of truth, goodness and love, it is the capacity for covenant with the Creator that should be placed first.

The truth concerning man’s origin and nature resonates in his consciousness and also in his self-awareness. As Benedict XVI states, this results in all humanity being discovered as an inalienable gift that demands respect at every stage of its development and in every state of its existence. This statement corresponds with the teaching of Karol Wojtyła contained in his work *The Acting Person*.<sup>59</sup> The second vector of man’s life is an awareness of a task. Man’s life, in its entire religious, cultural, economic or political context, has its orientation. In this context, the truth concerning peace postulated by the Pope becomes evident, since “peace is both gift and task,” and

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 11: “Many of our contemporaries actually deny the existence of a specific human nature and thus open the door to the most extravagant interpretations of what essentially constitutes a human being. Here too clarity is necessary: a ‘weak’ vision of the person, which would leave room for every conception, even the most bizarre, only apparently favours peace.”

<sup>57</sup> Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 2.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 30–31.

“the transcendent grammar,” finds its place in man’s conscience.<sup>60</sup> In this respect, too, one sees a complete agreement with the teaching of Karol Wojtyła speaking of the consciousness that reveals itself in the act.<sup>61</sup>

A very important role in the analysis of the nature of man, in which the idea of peace is rooted, is played by the fundamental value of justice, originating from truth.<sup>62</sup> Benedict XVI points out that this is what characterises biblical figures such as Samuel and David. Justice in connection with faith revealing truth leads to peace-building.<sup>63</sup> This relationship, the Pope states, makes peace not merely the result of human convention, of political and social endeavours. At the same time, he points out that a proper understanding of justice demands an appeal to human identity. An integral view of human life is the antidote to anthropocentrism, in which giving a central place to man leads to ignoring the Creator.<sup>64</sup> A proper knowledge and appreciation of truth rejects a relativism that denies justice or narrows it down to human particularism. The special point of reference, according to Benedict XVI, is Jesus Christ – the fullness of Truth, “Who is himself justice and peace.”<sup>65</sup> The whole mystery of Christ’s life, especially the Incarnation and Redemption, as the Pope notes, is proof that peace is the fruit of the Messianic gift. In Jesus Christ we experience the truth of a just humanism open to transcendence.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, 77. The author made a very fundamental distinction in this respect, distinguishing between “conscious acting” and “consciousness of acting.”

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 6. Referring to St Augustine, who stresses that it is in the nature of man to be oriented towards truth (*Quid enim fortius desiderat anima quam veritatem?*), the Pope states: “Man is a being who bears within his heart a thirst for the infinite, a thirst for truth – a truth which is not partial but capable of explaining life’s meaning – since he was created in the image and likeness of God. The grateful recognition that life is an inestimable gift, then, leads to the discovery of one’s own profound dignity and the inviolability of every single person”: Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Francis, *Lumen fidei*, no. 51.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 6.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 2.

Beside truth, the value that particularly impacts the ontic nature of human nature is freedom.<sup>67</sup> In essence, it is the capacity to choose between acting and not acting and, consequently, between choosing good or evil.<sup>68</sup> This capacity to choose relates directly to the capacity to know and to decide on that basis. It should be fundamentally distinguished from arbitrariness resulting from anti-human egoism. Freedom directly affects the nature of experiencing one's identity and relationality in relation to the other person as well as the wider environment. Peace-building relations built on freedom are regulated by "the juridic norm," which stems from "moral norms grounded in nature itself."<sup>69</sup>

Man's life is characterised by religiosity. It too stems from his nature. As Antoni J. Nowak claims, it has a genotypical character.<sup>70</sup> The freedom to accept and to profess it is one of man's fundamental rights, which belong to him and cannot be the result of pressure from an external authority.<sup>71</sup> In his message for the World Day of Peace 2011, Pope Benedict XVI stated: "Religious freedom expresses what is unique about the human person, for it allows us to direct our personal and social life to God, in whose light the identity, meaning and purpose of the person are fully understood,"<sup>72</sup> while in the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, analysing the meaning of the revealing word of God, he states that no religion can be a source of discord or war, since by doing so it would, as it were, deny its deepest nature.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, he unequivocally stresses that what follows from it is a natural tendency to build peace on the basis of justice.<sup>74</sup> In this context, his words deserve special mention: "When a certain notion of God is at the origin of criminal acts, it is a sign that that

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Ślipko, *Zarys etyki*, I, 153–154.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 12.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Nowak, *Osoba fakt i tajemnica*, 178–186; Tatar, "Świętość ontyczna," 449–468.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 4; Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 5.

<sup>72</sup> Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 102.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 103.

notion has already become an ideology.”<sup>75</sup> Equally dangerous are the two attitudes that the Pope rejects, i.e. religious fundamentalism and laicism, which should be understood as secularism. He notes that in both cases there is a misreading of the person of man and the Person of God.<sup>76</sup>

When analysing the structure of man, he highlights an aspect of human life which is in conflict with his ontic unity. On the religious grounds, this is sin, which introduces disharmony in man’s individual and social life and conflict with the created world around him.<sup>77</sup> At the root of its anti-peaceful impact is original sin, the nature of which is reflected in every actual sin.<sup>78</sup> Religiosity as a path to union with God rejects sin and thus introduces a natural as well as a supernatural spiritual and moral order.<sup>79</sup> For this reason, it must be said that religiosity refers to the individual dimension of human life and experience, but at the same time has a broad communal scope. It must therefore be concluded that a certain privatisation of religiosity on the part of man indicates a lack of understanding of its essence. Similar in character are all attempts to limit it in the communal-social dimension. The pope includes the following direct sins among those that are clearly anti-peace: egoism, offences against life (abortion,

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<sup>75</sup> Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 10.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 8. Some terminological clarification needs to be made regarding the terms “lay” and “secular(ist).” Very often the mistake is made of treating these two terms synonymously. The correct term to be used in this context is “secularism.”

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, no. 14.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. CCC 397, 398. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I-a II-ae, q. 77, a. 4; Garrigou-Lagrange, *Trzy okresy*, 258.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 3. Cf. also Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 5: “It could be said that among the fundamental rights and freedoms rooted in the dignity of the person, religious freedom enjoys a special status. When religious freedom is acknowledged, the dignity of the human person is respected at its root, and the *ethos* and institutions of peoples are strengthened. On the other hand, whenever religious freedom is denied, and attempts are made to hinder people from professing their religion or faith and living accordingly, human dignity is offended, with a resulting threat to justice and peace, which are grounded in that right social order established in the light of Supreme Truth and Supreme Goodness.”



euthanasia), violence, greed, lust for power and domination, intolerance, hatred and the construction of unjust structures (political violence – terrorism, economic and social violence, class inequality), consumerism, utilitarianism.<sup>80</sup>

Together with perceiving man as a unique creative-individual act of God, it should be noted that he is a communal-social being. The relationality of man results from his nature.<sup>81</sup> For this reason it is necessary, as Benedict XVI notes, to see peace as an expression of mankind-wide solidarity.<sup>82</sup> Since man is the fruit of the communion of the Persons of the Trinity, it is therefore the prototype and ideal of communion that transcends the natural order.<sup>83</sup> This truth forms the basis for a communion anthropology which finds its fullness in Jesus Christ.<sup>84</sup> On the basis of this truth, Benedict XVI refers to the teaching of St John Paul II in his Letter to the Church and to the Church's mission. Based on this truth, Benedict XVI refers to the teaching of St John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (no. 40) and points to the following dimensions of human communion: a) sharing joys and sorrows; b) satisfying longings; c) authentic and profound friendship; d) recognising the other as good and accepting him as a gift of God and therefore as “minister” of his grace; e) growing in communion, especially in the face of challenges; f) rejecting egoism, rivalry, the instrumental treatment of man on the way to one's own achievements, distrust and jealousy.<sup>85</sup>

Emphasising the communal-social nature of human nature in the context of peace, the Pope from Bavaria points to the fundamental natural community, that is the family, which will be one of the essential elements of the next paragraph.

Justifying the relational nature of man and its orientation towards community life, the Pope points out its universal value and refers

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<sup>80</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3–4.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Granat, *Personalizm*, 545; Šlipko, *Zarys etyki*, I, 15–116.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 21.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 24.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 34.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 35.

to Article 16/3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>86</sup> This communitarianism is inscribed in human nature and, at the same time, demands proper respect for this right because of the inalienable dignity of every human being. In this way, we can speak of the all-human communitarianism in which the desire and aspiration for peace is rooted.

An analysis of man's peace-building nature also demands noting his relationship to the created world. Pope Benedict XVI refers to this fact as the "ecology of peace."<sup>87</sup> Referring to his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, he states that the totality of creation is a good which God has shared with everyone regardless of time, latitude or culture.<sup>88</sup> Drawing on the rich contributions of Popes: Leo XIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, he notes unequivocally that peace develops on the foundation of an ontic order between Creator and creation because it is built on "a plan of love and truth."<sup>89</sup> The appropriating action of man attempting to separate the created world from its Creator creates a risk of a dangerous ecological ideologism which takes the form of a pantheistic religion incorporating "ecocentrism and biocentrism."<sup>90</sup> It must be said that in Benedict XVI's approach, we encounter a very clear distancing from the uncritical acceptance of ecological determinism. Respect for the environment and respect for its value cannot at the same time imply a supra-human value.<sup>91</sup> Referring to John Paul II and his teaching in the Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, his successor states that due to the nature of the gift, man must respect the surrounding world precisely in these terms. For this reason, he emphasises the importance of an ecology of nature, which is directly dependent on "human ecology" and "social ecology."<sup>92</sup> Appropriation

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 4. United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, article 16, p. 3. states unambiguously: "The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State."

<sup>87</sup> Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 8.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace*, no. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace*, no. 6.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace*, no. 13.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 7.

<sup>92</sup> Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 8.

of the surrounding world and misunderstanding the words of God's command (cf. Gen 1:28), makes man's peace, shattered by the sin of pride, find its reflection in the natural world. The sin of anti-ecologism thus consists in the selfish use of a gift that does not come from or belong to man. It thus gives birth to dramatic social, economic and anti-peace effects in national and international relations.<sup>93</sup>

The communal nature of man and his living in harmony with the world around him has impact, in the Pope's view, on the way the economy is viewed. It is a very important element that has value in combination with spiritual and ethical principles.<sup>94</sup> Among the human rights of a peaceful and creative nature are also the rights to own, develop and live in decent conditions. The Pope notes that this problem is not confined to material poverty. It arises from two other categories of poverty, namely moral poverty and spiritual poverty.<sup>95</sup> The dignity of man is thus violated by depreciating his person, marginalising him or introducing a kind of dictatorship for the apparent good of man. It should be noted that any kind of manipulation or social experimentation which relegates the human being to the background bears the stamp of a Marxist dialectic which leads to superficial freedom and peace. As Benedict XVI notes, it is humanity that is the wealth, and all action must be directed towards its good in every area.<sup>96</sup>

### 3. Ontic Spaces for the Development of Peace

Real peace is reflected in specific spaces of human life and development. It must be said that the essential area for the development

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 9.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 9.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Fighting Poverty to Build Peace*, no. 1–2.

<sup>96</sup> Following John Paul II's words included in *Centesimus annus* (no. 58), Benedict XVI states: "One of the most important ways of building peace is through a form of globalization directed towards the interests of the whole human family. In order to govern globalization, however, there needs to be a strong sense of global solidarity between rich and poor countries, as well as within individual countries, including affluent ones": Benedict XVI, *Fighting Poverty to Build Peace*, no. 8.

of this inalienable gift, according to John Paul II, is man himself.<sup>97</sup> This truth was the subject of the previous section. It has also been pointed out that man does not live as a nomad, but is a relational being. In this way, the individual character of man's peace as inner harmony is reflected in his being for others. This self-transcending of man liberates him from narrow and deadly egocentrism and also utilitarianism, but at the same time demands respect for the peaceful nature of the other and the environment in which they exist.

A study of the documents of Pope Benedict XVI makes it very clear that the family is the first formative and educative environment for peace. As stated above, it is the most natural and primary community in relation to the other communities and societies in which man lives and develops. It is in the family that he not only comes into the world and experiences his first contact with the environment, but, above all, it is in the family that he begins the process of cognition and evaluation of the surrounding reality.<sup>98</sup> It is also important to emphasise, following John Paul II, its communion-creative character based on communion with God: "Christian marriage and the Christian family build up the Church: for in the family the human person is not only brought into being and progressively introduced by means of education into the human community, but by means of the rebirth of baptism and education in the faith the child is also introduced into God's family, which is the Church."<sup>99</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI, in his documents and also in his addresses on the occasion of the World Day of Peace, points very clearly to marriage and the family and their importance for peaceful education and formation. He gives it a special place in the Apostolic Exhortation *Africae munus*, in which he refers to his message for World Peace Day 2008,<sup>100</sup> stating: "The family is the best setting for learning and applying the culture of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation. In a healthy family life we experience some of the fundamental ele-

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<sup>97</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Peace: A Gift of God Entrusted to Us!*, no. 4; Koral, "Koncepcja pokoju," 195–206.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Sozańska, "Rodzina jako środowisko," 40–51.

<sup>99</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 15.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 3.

ments of peace: justice and love between brothers and sisters, the role of authority expressed by parents, loving concern for the members who are weaker because of youth, sickness or old age, mutual help in the necessities of life, readiness to accept others and, if necessary, to forgive them. For this reason, the family is the first and indispensable teacher of peace.”<sup>101</sup> He stipulates, however, in his 2008 message for the World Day of Peace, referring to the teaching of John Paul II, that he means a “natural family,” i.e. one that is built on the foundation of the union between a man and a woman.<sup>102</sup> It is, in his view, the natural community, being at the basis of a peaceful social order.<sup>103</sup> He emphasises its fundamental importance, referring to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council: “The family is the first school in which we are trained in justice and peace.”<sup>104</sup>

Taking the ontic order as a guideline for this study, it is necessary to point to the entire human family called to peaceful coexistence. This order, of which Pope Benedict XVI speaks in relation to the family, finds its transposition to the whole of mankind. It is therefore both the subject and the object of building an order and harmony that allows the entire humanity to coexist peacefully. The Pope very clearly points out the essential element, which is the order resulting from the will of God and which is His gift, as indicated in its definition. The human response to this peaceful initiative of the Creator has its significance.<sup>105</sup> The building and development of civilisation must be based on essential foundations,

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<sup>101</sup> Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 43.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 2. The Pope notes in no. 6: “Here, however, we cannot forget that the family comes into being from the responsible and definitive ‘yes’ of a man and a woman, and it continues to live from the conscious ‘yes’ of the children who gradually join it. The family community, in order to prosper, needs the generous consent of all its members.”

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 2. Benedict XVI, in pointing out this nature and role of the family, refers to the social teaching of the Church contained in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 211.

<sup>104</sup> Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 2. Cf. Vaticanum II, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 48.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 3. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 7; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 3.

among which the Pope includes love, truth, justice and peace.<sup>106</sup> Based on these, a peaceful and creative dialogue including reconciliation based on Gospel values is possible.<sup>107</sup> However, as he points out emphatically, it is necessary on the part of man to recognise the essential significance of the equality of all people deriving “from their common transcendental dignity,” for it is “inscribed in that natural ‘grammar,’ which is deducible from the divine plan of creation.”<sup>108</sup> Thus, this fundamental truth is at the heart of human rights, which cannot be formulated in isolation from the original design of the Creator. This very significant statement particularly counters all tendencies that attempt to absolutise man’s self-determination of himself and humanity.

While emphasising the nature and character of the whole mankind, Benedict XVI also points to very concrete causes of the lack of peace. The fundamental cause that underlies all the others is the sin of man at the beginning of human existence, which is reflected in the sins present in human history.<sup>109</sup> The Pope emphasises that a particular feature of sin is lying, which has an anti-peace nature. It comes from the “father of lies” (John 8:44) and is reflected in man’s entry into dialogue with him.<sup>110</sup> It is a questioning of God’s love and also of His justice. In this way, man strives for self-determination and tries to subject the world around him to it. By negating God, man takes for himself the position of a self-creator.<sup>111</sup> Another cause, which remains in close relationship with the questioning of love, is relativism in the knowledge and reception of truth, and

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<sup>106</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 54–55.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 102; Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 21.

<sup>108</sup> Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 6.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, no. 14; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 3.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, no. 14: “Consistently with this view, sin is understood by the Fathers as the destruction of the unity of the human race, as fragmentation and division. Babel, the place where languages were confused, the place of separation, is seen to be an expression of what sin fundamentally is.”

consequently in the moral life.<sup>112</sup> Man, as the Pope notes, pretends to be the creator of truth and its interpreter. Thus, he remains a reference point for himself. These false foundations find their application in the understanding and use of freedom and justice.<sup>113</sup> The self-creation and absolutisation of freedom lead to attitudes of hedonism, consumerism,<sup>114</sup> technocracy neglecting human dignity and worth.<sup>115</sup> Reductionist tendencies towards human dignity give rise to the ideologisation of some aspects of human life<sup>116</sup> (extreme rationalism, naturalism, environmentalism, economism, manipulative pauperisation, egocentric individualism). This race built on egoistic tendencies gives rise to national, international and global conflicts.<sup>117</sup> The rejection of authentic and objective truth, love and freedom leads to terrorism, nihilism and ideological fanaticism.<sup>118</sup>

Another ontic space for the development of peace is human religiosity. As Antoni J. Nowak points out, we can speak of its genotypical, phenotypical and personalistic dimension.<sup>119</sup> Without a doubt, we can state that the reference to God belongs to the nature of man and has a direct influence on the axiology that he uses. Thus, man's religiosity is at the basis of a peaceful order within himself and also in relation

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 52: "Truth, and the love which it reveals, cannot be produced: they can only be received as a gift. Their ultimate source is not, and cannot be, mankind, but only God, who is himself Truth and Love. This principle is extremely important for society and for development, since neither can be a purely human product; the vocation to development on the part of individuals and peoples is not based simply on human choice, but is an intrinsic part of a plan that is prior to us and constitutes for all of us a duty to be freely accepted. That which is prior to us and constitutes us – subsistent Love and Truth – shows us what goodness is, and in what our true happiness consists. It shows us the road to true development." Cf. also Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 26–28; Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 25

<sup>114</sup> Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 51.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 71; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 4.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 10.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 102.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 9–10; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 1.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Nowak, *Osoba fakt*, 178–203.

to the surrounding reality.<sup>120</sup> In this context, Benedict XVI states: “Other cultures and religions teach brotherhood and peace and are therefore of enormous importance to integral human development.”<sup>121</sup> And in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, he observes: “Religions can join one another in service to the common good and contribute to the development of each person and the building of society.”<sup>122</sup> For him, this does not imply indifferentism or religious and denominational syncretism. From his words follows a very deep awareness of the dangers of a misunderstanding of interreligious dialogue and a distorted ecumenism.<sup>123</sup> However, he observes and emphasises the crucial element of truth and love in human religious experience. Pointing to the nature of the Catholic Church, he points out that she cannot abandon peace-oriented dialogue. Doctrinal differences must be taken into account, but at the same time a very deep desire must not be abandoned: “May Jews, Christians and Muslims rediscover one of God’s desires, that of the unity and harmony of the human family. May Jews, Christians and Muslims find in *other believers* brothers and sisters to be respected and loved, and in this way, beginning in their own lands, give the beautiful witness of serenity and concord between the children of Abraham.”<sup>124</sup> An extremely important element of this peaceful dialogue is monotheism, which, in the Pope’s view, has a special expression in the relationship between Christians and Jews. Nor can the rather tragic past, which calls for understanding and healing, be overlooked in silence.<sup>125</sup> Equally essential to the peace process are the elements that link Christians and Muslims. There are also incompatibilities that have led and still lead to anti-peace attitudes and actions.<sup>126</sup> For this reason, the Pope

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<sup>120</sup> The Pope, analysing modern times in this context, poses a rather rhetorical question: “Are we not perhaps seeing once again, in the light of current history, that no positive world order can prosper where souls are overgrown?”: Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, no. 15.

<sup>121</sup> Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 55.

<sup>122</sup> Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 28.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 4.

<sup>124</sup> Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 19.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 22.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 23.



strongly emphasises the importance of religious freedom, which is built on mutual respect.<sup>127</sup> These two factors make it possible to have an inter-religious dialogue that takes into account the key elements in each of the main monotheistic religions that can be its foundation. Stressing the unique importance of religious freedom, he dedicated the entirety of his message for the World Day of Peace in 2011 to it, entitled *Religious freedom, the path to peace*, pointing out that this freedom reveals the specificity of the human person, who finds his or her own identity and at the same time the value of the other human being in reference to God. This, in turn, must be considered a fundamental value containing an axiology that influences moral characteristics in the process of peaceful development of human civilisation and culture.<sup>128</sup> Secularism and fundamentalism is the opposite of the meaning and role of religiosity. The former treats religiosity as a completely private phenomenon, while the latter tendency strives for the absolute appropriation of truth and thus instrumentalises religion.<sup>129</sup> To this catalogue of phenomena opposed to peace on religious grounds, the Pope also adds nihilism, which rejects the existence of truth.<sup>130</sup> Benedict emphatically defines the place and task of religion: “Here I wish to affirm once more that religion can never justify intolerance or war. We cannot kill in God’s name!”<sup>131</sup>

Ecumenism is another, equally important element of the peace-creating process. It should be noted that events such as the Great Eastern Schism (1054) or the Reformation (1517) gave rise to divisions among Christians, which the Second Vatican Council called a scandal to the world,<sup>132</sup> while John Paul II called them “sins committed against the Church’s unity”<sup>133</sup> demanding a “purification of memory.”<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 4, 16; Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 15; Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 3, 6.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 29.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 10.

<sup>131</sup> Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 102.

<sup>132</sup> Vaticanum II, *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 1.

<sup>133</sup> John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, no. 34.

<sup>134</sup> John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, no. 6. The Polish Pope was very clear about the role of the Catholic Church in this process. Indeed, “the Church is not

Benedict XVI calls the process of divisions in Christianity a “scandal” because it contradicts the will expressed by Jesus Christ in the Arch-priest Prayer (cf. John 17:21).<sup>135</sup> The pursuit of peace, therefore, is a communion process, that is, the building of interpersonal unity based on *communio* with God.<sup>136</sup>

This problem also found its reflection in the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI. First of all, truth is the paradigm of proper ecumenism. It makes ecumenism not merely a theoretical or diplomatic discourse.<sup>137</sup> He therefore disagrees with the consensual ecumenism model, but also rejects Konrad Raisner’s approach claiming that a new vision of ecumenism must take into account the social and historical context and a certain alignment of the Church as a harmonising factor.<sup>138</sup> Particularly strong accents of the Pope’s theology resounded in the *Africae Munus* exhortation because of the specificity of the coexistence of Christians of different faiths on this continent. The Word of God is a very significant starting point for peaceful ecumenical dialogue, since “Sacred Scriptures provide for the work of dialogue an instrument of the highest value in the mighty hand of God for the attainment of that unity which the Saviour holds out to all.”<sup>139</sup> Equally important is striving for Eucharistic communion, which, however, is not possible at this time.<sup>140</sup> In the aforementioned paradigm of truth, in his view, there is a need to return to the sources

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a reality closed in on herself. Rather, she is permanently open to missionary and ecumenical endeavour, for she is sent to the world to announce and witness, to make present and spread the mystery of communion which is essential to her, and to gather all people and all things into Christ, so as to be for all an inseparable ‘sacrament of unity’”: John Paul II, *Ut unum sint*, no. 5.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 89.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Tatar, *Duchowość pokoju*, 551; Tatar, *Elementy duchowości ekumenicznej*, 69–81.

<sup>137</sup> The Cardinal states very unequivocally, emphasising the place of truth in the words: “It is not consensus that is the basis of truth, but truth that is the basis of consensus”: Ratzinger, *Kościół – pielgrzymująca wspólnota*, 235. Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 6, 15.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Ratzinger, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów*, 686–690.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Vaticanum II, *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 21.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 89; Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 11.

of the Church, to pray together, to bear clear witness and to take apostolic activities.<sup>141</sup>

For obvious reasons, Benedict XVI addresses the Catholic Church in particular, pointing to her nature and vocation of peace-building. By the will of Jesus Christ, believers, whose spiritual development is not detached from the reality of the world, are to build the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of peace (cf. Matt 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16). The Second Vatican Council states that it is “is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.”<sup>142</sup> The pope, consistent in his theology, emphasises the Church’s teaching on her nature understood as *κοινωνία*<sup>143</sup> and her mission to proclaim the truth, develop love and build justice respecting the dignity and freedom of every human being.<sup>144</sup> He notes that she must take into account the process of civilisational development, but that at the core is the fundamental principle of the primacy of the good, which is the dignity of man given to him by God.<sup>145</sup> The Pope therefore unequivocally states that: “Certainly, the restoration of justice, reconciliation and forgiveness are the conditions for building true peace. The recognition of this fact leads to a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God’s image and likeness.”<sup>146</sup> This process is necessary both within the Catholic Church and in its external – apostolic – activity. In this way, the mission of the Church in proclaiming the Gospel both *ad intra* and *ad extra* is realised. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, the Pope very clearly

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<sup>141</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Ecclesia in Medio Oriente*, no. 11–18.

<sup>142</sup> Vaticanum II, *Lumen gentium*, no. 1. Cf. Jagodziński, *Eklezjalne kształty komunii*, 20–22.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Ratzinger, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów*, 283–304. Cf. also Vaticanum II, *Lumen gentium*, no. 4, 8, 13–15, 18, 21, 24–25; Vaticanum II, *Dei verbum*, no. 10; Vaticanum II, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 32; Vaticanum II, *Unitatis redintegratio*, no. 2–4, 14–15, 17–19, 22; CCC 759–769; Tatar, *Duchowość pokoju*, 184–246.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 26–29; Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 1.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 72–74.

<sup>146</sup> Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 89.

emphasises the peace-building role of the word of God. He notes, referring to the words of St Paul in 2 Cor 5:18–20 (cf. Eph 1:10), that today, in an age of relativising secularism, it is necessary to rediscover God's word and its reconciling role.<sup>147</sup>

The analysis of Benedict XVI's teaching makes it possible to conclude that the peaceful centre of the Church and the world is the Eucharist: "The union with Christ brought about by the Eucharist also brings a newness to our social relations: this sacramental 'mysticism' is social in character. Indeed, union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, his own."<sup>148</sup> It is Christ who is peace (cf. Eph 2:14), because he unites deity and humanity in himself, and is thus the way to reconciliation and peace between people.<sup>149</sup> Expanding on this, the Pope points to the Eucharist as the sacrament of the real and actual presence of Christ in his flesh and blood. This means that a supernatural blood circulation is thus created in believers.<sup>150</sup>

The Church's peace-making mission is an attitude of mercy that brings peace, reconciliation and justice.<sup>151</sup> This means that she cannot remain indifferent to the situation of man and the world in every field and sphere of human life. Her influence on economic, social, political life comes from building a civilisation based on Gospel values.<sup>152</sup> On this path, a spirituality of communion develops, which is rooted in union with God and shapes culture, accepting the multidimensionality of the traditions and customs of the different parts of the world.<sup>153</sup> As the Pope notes, the pursuit

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<sup>147</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 102; Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 89. The Pope states further: "All who partake of the Eucharist must commit themselves to peacemaking in our world scarred by violence and war, and today in particular, by terrorism, economic corruption and sexual exploitation": Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 89.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 39.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 41.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 3, 21; Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 16.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 19, 22.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 34–36.

of such a transformation of the environment calls for the education and formation of human beings, for which parents, educational and training institutions, political and social leaders and the media are responsible.<sup>154</sup> It must lead to truth, respect for each person and the world around them, freedom under natural law and justice.<sup>155</sup> This is only possible in cooperation with God. He points out: “It is not ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom, the guarantor of what is really good and true.”<sup>156</sup> A pedagogy of peace that is in harmony with a pedagogy of forgiveness, reflecting spiritual life and moral values, is therefore necessary.<sup>157</sup> A widely promoted “tolerance,” which takes very ambiguous forms and introduces a state of stagnation and indifference towards deviations, degenerations, deviations and unequivocally anti-peace attitudes, is therefore not enough.

All the analyses made so far, pointing to spaces for the development of peace and based on ontic foundations, lead to the conclusion that these include the building of a culture and civilisation of peace understood in a broad sense. As Pope Benedict XVI notes, both man as an individual and his social, family and religious life have a direct influence on the shape of a culture built in truth, love, justice, reconciliation and forgiveness.<sup>158</sup> The starting point, therefore, for the development of a culture leading to peace is reference to God and the order resulting from His will.<sup>159</sup>

These foundations also lead to a proper understanding of man’s relationship to ecology read in a creative and evangelical key.<sup>160</sup> Extremely significant in this context is the Pope’s affirmation that, in

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<sup>154</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 2.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3–4.

<sup>156</sup> Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 6.

<sup>157</sup> Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 7.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 1. Cf. also Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, no. 89; Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 3–4; Francis, *Lumen fidei*, no. 51.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 2, 10.

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 50–51; Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 108; Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 79; Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 2; Benedict XVI, *If You Want to Cultivate Peace*, no. 13.

addition to an ecology of nature, one must speak of a “human ecology” and also a “social” ecology.<sup>161</sup> These have a decisive influence on the way of developing an economy which places human value first, instead of the arms race.<sup>162</sup> The whole technicisation of human life must also be subordinated to this superior goal.<sup>163</sup> This truth restrains selfish and terrorist tendencies granting themselves the rights to dominate, create their own truth and build their own culture on it.<sup>164</sup> This provides the basis for the Pope’s assertion that the way to build a culture of peace leads through the fight against poverty, violence, terrorism, the promotion of anti-human and thus anti-peace systems.<sup>165</sup>

According to the Pope, the building of a new culture must be based on two principles, i.e. the reconciliation of man with God and the reconciliation of people with one another,<sup>166</sup> and the key to this is to live on the foundation of the evangelical beatitudes<sup>167</sup> and in submission to the action of the Holy Spirit. It is the Third Person of the Trinity who continues the work of Jesus Christ.<sup>168</sup> In this context, the pope’s statement in the document for Africa is extremely significant, and in fact it applies to the whole world: “Hence a sustained commitment is needed so as to promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence.”<sup>169</sup> In this way, he points out that one may accept “the globalisation of solidarity” that does not lead

<sup>161</sup> Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 8.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 67; Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 81–83; Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 9–10.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, no. 71–74; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 4.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 1–2, 5.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 9; Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 8–13.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 20; Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 15.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 26–27.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 37: “Nonetheless, we must always remember that the Holy Spirit is the true agent of inculturation, presiding in a fruitful way at the dialogue between the word of God, revealed in Christ, and the deepest questions which arise among the multitude of human beings and cultures.”

<sup>169</sup> Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 86.

to an enslaving and manipulative unification, but seeks the good of humanity.<sup>170</sup>

According to the Pope, it is precisely these goals that all international organisations must serve, taking into account fundamental human rights, as well as social life of a national, international and global nature.<sup>171</sup> The whole process of education and formation of future generations must serve this purpose. It must be based on permanent values of a timeless and universal nature derived from the truth about God (truth, love, freedom, justice).<sup>172</sup> All actions must therefore be based on respect for man, his rights, but above all on dialogue leading to reconciliation and rejecting hatred, prejudices and phobias.<sup>173</sup>

## Conclusion

Peace belongs to the fundamental values in the human life of every time and every epoch. At the same time, it must be stated, on the basis of simple experience, that in the history of mankind it is impossible to point to a period in which it absolutely prevalent. It can be said that war breeds another, escalates violence, exploitation, poverty, persecution. The absence of war and violence is therefore a state of peace. This means that there is a very serious problem in defining it and an even greater problem in achieving it. This fact is made clear to us not only by the war and the concentration camps, the gulags, which were founded on the inhuman philosophy, politics of the 20th century, but also by the events of the 21st century that we are witnessing. This raises the crucial question of the possibility of peace and, at the same time, whether it is not a utopia, an illusion without the possibility of realisation.

An excellent answer can be found in the very widely developed and forward-looking theology of Pope Benedict XVI. His thought is

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<sup>170</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Africae munus*, no. 86; Benedict XVI, *In Truth, Peace*, no. 10.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *The Human Person*, no. 12–15; Benedict XVI, *The Human Family*, no. 15; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 3.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Educating Young People*, no. 3–6; Benedict XVI, *Blessed Are the Peacemakers*, no. 6.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace*, no. 13.

the fruit of a multi-faceted theology developed by Joseph Ratzinger's in his role of a professor. The detachment from supernatural reality and at the same time the promotion of a relativistic man-made axiology does not give rise to a peace-building perspective. The Pope makes it very clear that man, his person, dignity and greatness are at the centre, but that this all stems from being rooted in God the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. He therefore points out that the ontic psycho-physical-spiritual structure of man is by nature directed towards peace. It must be based on fundamental principles such as truth, love, justice, reconciliation arising from man's "supernatural genetics." Reference to God, who has realised these values in Jesus Christ, is the fundamental vocation of the believer. Therefore, as Benedict XVI postulates, religiosity cannot be a place of anti-peace conflict, but is the real building of the kingdom of peace.

### Ontyczne podstawy pokoju w ujęciu papieża Benedykta XVI

**Abstrakt:** Pokój należy do fundamentalnych wartości życia ludzkiego, a także jest fundamentem budowania cywilizacji. Analiza historii prowadzi do stwierdzenia, że nie można mówić o czasie czy też okresie absolutnego pokoju. Niepełna jest także definicja twierdząca, że pokój to brak wojny i przemocy. Warto zatem zadać sobie pytanie o istotę i naturę pokoju a także realność jego zaistnienia. Sięgając do nauczania papieża Benedykta XVI, odnajdujemy spójną koncepcję dążenia do pokoju na fundamentach prawdy, miłości, sprawiedliwości, wolności i pojednania. Papież wskazuje, że te wartości zakorzenione są w naturze człowieka. To sprawia, że dyskusja na temat pokoju staje się wielowymiarowa i nie może być zamknięta w ciasnej konfesyjności.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Joseph Ratzinger, Benedykt XVI, duchowość, ontyczność człowieka, personalizm, pokój, rozwój cywilizacji

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