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**Collectanea Theologica  
in Dialogue with Benedict XVI:  
A Word from the Editor-in-Chief**

The present issue of the Polish scholarly journal *Collectanea Theologica* is devoted to the theological legacy of the late Pope Benedict XVI. The articles published in this issue mainly originate from the scholarly conference “Benedict XVI: Dialogue – Truth – Freedom – Worship,” which was organized on 25th April 2023 by the Faculty of Theology at Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. The conference was intended to be a posthumous tribute of not just one theological Faculty but of Polish theologians in general to the great Pope. The theologians who participated in the conference work in various academic milieus in Poland. Their papers refer to various aspects of the teaching of Benedict XVI which seem to be of crucial importance for theology and Church life in our times. A special guest, Cardinal Gerhard Ludwig Müller, a successor of Joseph Ratzinger in office as the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as well as a doctor honoris causa of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, presented a kind of theological introduction to the legacy of the great Pope.

There is no place here to present a summary of the most important aspects of the teaching of Benedict XVI. Although the theology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI was the object of numerous publications in *Collectanea Theologica*, he himself never published in this journal. However, he has had an important but not widely

known influence upon its development. On 3rd December 2005, in his address to the second group of Polish bishops on their visit *ad limina Apostolorum*, Pope Benedict XVI said, “Considering the enormous needs on the part of the universal Church, I ask you to encourage your priests to do their missionary service or pastoral work in countries where clergy are scarce. It seems that today this is a special task and, in a certain sense, also a duty of the Church in Poland.”

From a theological point of view, this appeal to a special task and duty of the Church in Poland should be understood not only in missionary terms but also in theological ones. Not only Polish priests but also Polish theology should be much more active and much more recognizable in the universal Church. Not long ago, Poland was considered a “weißer Fleck” [blank spot] on the theological map of Europe and the world. Not because of its inactivity but because of its language. It was widely known that many interesting things happened in the Church in Poland, but almost nobody knew what it in fact was. Alas, many people in the West despised and at times still despise Polish religiosity as very traditionalistic, which is certainly not the case. The well-thought and not minimalist-devastating liturgical movement after the Second Vatican Council has deeply shaped Polish Catholic spirituality. Consequently, in contrast to the situation in France and in other countries, most Polish Catholics do not feel the need to return to the Tridentine Mass, advocated by Benedict XVI as a remedy to various modern liturgical abuses and neglections, although they also feel deeply hurt by them.

Nowadays, the situation of Poland in Europe has greatly changed. Most young people in Poland speak English quite well and travel abroad. Therefore, in response to the appeal of Benedict XVI for more visible presence of Polish clergy and, as a consequence, Polish way of understanding and living the Christian faith, the theological journal *Collectanea Theologica* has returned to the policy, which was promoted already in its programmatic address in the year 1931, so long before the Second World War, of publishing universally relevant articles, written by Polish theologians, in languages that are more widely understood in the world, so now, in practice, in English, and thus contributing to the growth of the universal Church [cf. CT 12/1 (1931) 3].

As can be seen from the articles which are published in this issue, the main points of theological concern in Polish theology are not the social questions of church structures and offices, participation of lay people in them, participation of women in them, etc., but the issue of the relevance of faith *per se*, and its impact on the life of persons, families, church communities, and the society as a whole. In this respect, although Poland's Catholic spirituality is much more Franciscan and Jesuit than that of Ratzinger's predominantly Benedictine Bavaria, the Polish and Benedict's ways of understanding the crucial aspects of Christian faith clearly coincide. The most important question for Benedict XVI and for Polish theologians is the question of God, and the ways of meeting Him in Christ and His Church as well as in our lives. May this deeply relational, sacramental but also mystical, dimension of faith grow both in Poland and in the Church worldwide.