



PEDAGOGICZNE

2023, 13, 1: 369–380

p-ISSN 2083-6325; e-ISSN 2449-7142

DOI <http://doi.org/10.21697/fp.2023.1.25>

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-ND 4.0 International) license • <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0>



BEATA KRAJEWSKA¹

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland

ORCID 0000 0001 7671 258X

Received: 27.01.2023; revised: 3.03.2023; accepted: 8.03.2023

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH REGARDING THE EXISTENCE OF BABY HATCHES AS PLACES OF CHILD CARE

AKTYWNOŚĆ KOŚCIOŁA KATOLICKIEGO W ZAKRESIE ISTNIENIA OKIEN ŻYCIA JAKO MIEJSC OPIEKI NAD DZIEĆMI

Streszczenie: Wszelkie działania wobec dziecka powinna przenikać odpowiedzialność rodziców, troska o dobro dziecka, o jak najlepsze zaspokojenie jego potrzeb, o jakość opieki. Powinno to być elementem naturalnego środowiska wychowawczego jakim jest rodzina, ale także innych miejsc opieki nad dzieckiem, które mają na czas jakiś zastąpić rodziców w procesie wychowania, bądź ratują życie i zdrowie dziecka, otwierając możliwość jak najlepszej pieczy zastępczej. Chodzi więc o tworzenie i istnienie miejsc opieki nad dzieckiem, w czym partycypuje Kościół katolicki, który w całym swoim rozbudowanym instrumentarium wsparcia i pomocy udziela ich także dzieciom. W systemie opieki nad dzieckiem szczególna rola przypada oknom życia. Celem niniejszego opracowania jest ukazanie ich roli, ale w szczególności poprzez wpisanie jej w aktywność społeczną oraz aktywność Kościoła katolickiego, jako że to on jest przede wszystkim organizatorem takich miejsc oraz podmiotem je prowadzącym, co nie wyklucza podejmowania się przez inne podmioty aktywności w tym zakresie. Spojrzenie na okna życia przez pryzmat działalności Kościoła katolickiego jest głównym obszarem rozważań niniejszego tekstu, a poszerzone zostało o treści ukazujące wymiar tej aktywności, mianowicie dane statystyczne opieki nad dziećmi w oknach życia oraz pozytywne ich oceny, jak też zarzuty czy słowa krytyki wobec nich.

Słowa kluczowe: okna życia, dane statystyczne dotyczące opieki nad dziećmi w oknach życia, podstawy aktywności Kościoła katolickiego w zakresie okien życia, pozytywna ocena i krytyka okien życia

Abstract: All actions towards children should be marked with parental responsibility, concern for the good of children and best fulfilment of their needs and quality of custody. It ought to be

¹ **Beata Krajewska**, dr.; Faculty of Education at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. E-mail address: b.krajewska@uksw.edu.pl.

a part of the natural upbringing environment which family is but also of other guardianship sites supposed to temporarily substitute for parents in the upbringing process or save life and limb of children, enabling possibility of the best foster care. Therefore the intention is establishing and functioning of child care sites, in which the Catholic Church participates, aiding also children with its developed range of support implementations. In the child care system baby hatches accrue a special role. The purpose of this essay is revealing their role especially placing it amongst social activities and activities of the Catholic Church, for the reason of it being the foremost organiser and operator of said sites, which does not preclude undertaking such actions by other entities. Regarding baby hatches as part of the Catholic Church's activity is the main subject of this deliberation, expanded with content revealing the extent of this work, namely statistic data concerning child care at baby hatches and their advantages, as well as objections and criticism towards them.

Keywords: baby hatches, statistic data concerning child care at baby hatches, basic activities of the Catholic Church concerning baby hatches, positive assessment and criticism of baby hatches

Introduction

The family's mission is child care which entails fulfilment of an array of needs, immanently related to childhood. Attention to child development in every aspect is necessary, including gaining life experience relevant to their functioning in the future. Therefore it is desirable to establish a home providing sense of security, peace, friendship, values, emotional bonds, held together by parental sense of responsibility for child upbringing and general welfare of children which serves as a guide to actions taken.

All actions towards children should stem from willingness to best fulfil their needs and provide best care. It concerns the natural upbringing environment's activity which families constitute; however also other child care places, including those intended to substitute for parental child raising process or serve as a place that saves children from mortal danger, offering best available foster care. The case concerns establishment and existence of such sites, more widely also activities of institutions and subjects in this regard. Undoubtedly a remarkable spot among those is the Catholic Church's, which in its developed range of implements of support and help provides also to those children in various aspects and forms, established by tradition and answering current social needs and stems from various activities of said community.

In the child care system a special role is given to baby hatches as institutions of "short-term and total child care, primarily newborn care, whose parents, especially single ones, cannot or are unwilling to establish custody and thus responsibly and anonymously relinquish them there, free of legal responsibility. As a result, children usually are adopted to compensate for care deficits" (Krajewska 2015, p.229). The purpose of this elaboration is to demonstrate their role as such,

but primarily putting it in the context of social and charity of the Catholic Church that is the primary establishing body and manager of such entities, which does not preclude such undertakings by other entities. The functioning of baby hatches often raises controversy or is outright negated, the cause of this view is likely to be the perception of the “Church being behind” said effort, its actions in general being contested in a wider view, however in the case of baby hatches this is entirely unjustified. In consequence, the purpose of this essay is viewing baby hatches through the scope of the Catholic Church’s activity as the largest Christian denomination, being largely relevant in the Polish society for the reason of most citizens declaring adherence to this faith, the Church’s role in society in Poland being remarkably significant and including aiding the state in fulfilment of many goals important from social and individual perspective. One of these fields is child care, supporting those in need and families, which also includes opening and running baby hatches.

Baby hatch child care in the view of statistic data

The oldest preserved baby hatch was established in 1198 at Holy Spirit Hospital in Rome. The first Polish baby hatch was opened in 2006 in Kraków. In antiquity child abandonment was a frequent phenomenon, however without places to safely leave them. Only in the middle ages saw the existence of “foundling houses”, institutions and hospitals aiming to save abandoned children. It was then that „foundling circles”, „reels”, „stone shells”, „brephotrophia” became places where abandoned children were left and cared for. Modernity brought the development of child care places for the abandoned and dissolution of the “foundling houses”. Modern times see the development of places to safely leave children to limit the phenomenon of their abandonment, also organising various forms of care for unwanted children and children whose parents are unable to or unwilling to care for (Krajewska 2021, p. 81-82), among which baby hatches play an important but not the only role, for the reason of the possibility of leaving children in so-called life cradles in existence in some hospitals, as well as directly in hospitals after childbirth.

Beginning in 2006, the subsequent years brought the establishment of many baby hatches. In 2006 one was created, 2 in 2007, 2 in 2008, 34 in 2009, 7 in 2010, 3 in 2011, 6 in 2012, one in 2013, 4 in 2014 (Krajewska 2015, p. 97). One was established in 2015 in Sopot (<https://caritas.pl/blog/2015/10/30/okna-zycia-w-polsce>). The same year, following the incident in Ostrów Wielkopolski, where a mother left her infant on a pillow in a street, one baby hatch was established in that town (<https://caritas.pl/blog/2017/02/03/ostrow-wielkopolski-noworodek-oknie-zycia>). In 2016 a baby hatch was established in the Żary military hospital. In 2017 a baby hatch in Głogów was founded in the commune hospital (<https://caritaszg.pl/nasze-akcje/okno-zycia>). The recent cases demonstrate that not only Church agents engage in establishment of baby hatches and the idea of their existence finds confirmation in activities

of other subjects, however the foremost role falls to the Catholic Church in this field, whether through its institutions or grassroots initiatives.

The case of opening another baby hatch should also be seen in this spirit. In 2018, a baby hatch was created in Lubawa on the initiative of „St. Joseph Association”. The baby hatch in Lubawskie is the only one in the diocese of Toruń and one of the few in Poland that operates in a private house. The creation of this baby hatch is related to the desire to help those in need, which was expressed in volunteer work undertaken by Magdalena Pankowska, who has been involved in charity for many years. Together with her husband Jarosław, she wanted to create a place where lonely, poor or simply individuals in a difficult situation would find help. For this purpose, they bought an old tenement, which they renovated and opened the baby hatch in it (<https://diecezja-torun.pl/Articles/View/2150/w-lubawie-ootwor-okno-zycia>). Thus, 65 baby hatches have been opened in Poland, and 64 of them are functioning.

There exists one known case of a baby hatch closure, having transpired in Suwałki. As recalled by the rector of the St Alexander parish, Kazimierz Gryboś, the problem concerned the location of the hatch that was not very well planned, at a crossroads in the vicinity of a nightclub. Virtually every night an alarm was sounded and the biggest problem was constant opening of the hatch by random people, leaving empty bottles and trash there and even vandalizing its pane. In addition, no child was left in the hatch. The closure of said hatch occurred in 2018. It is worth pointing out that in the Ełk diocese additional two baby hatches operate – in Ełk and Giżyck, which is important in the case of someone from said areas had the need to leave a child in a baby hatch (Topornicka).

Through the period beginning in 2006, meaning the moment of the first baby hatch's establishment, till the end of 2014, 114 children were left in baby hatches, which was determined during the previous research on baby hatches (Krajewska 2015, p. 131). During the following years, exploring Internet resources in particular, for the reason of that space enabling more efficient search for information concerning children left in baby hatches, it was determined that such situations have also occurred. Namely in 2015, children were left in baby hatches in Pabianice, Poznań, Sandomierz, Włocławek, Kraków, Kalisz, Tarnów, Warsaw and Zielona Góra. In 2016 it took place in Koszalin, Wrocław, Łódź, Bielsko-Biała, Piotrków Trybunalski and in 2017 in Ostrów Wielkopolski, Wrocław, Radom, Ostrzeszów and Olsztyn. In 2018 baby hatches received children in Sosnowiec, Gdańsk, Warsaw, Tarnów and Wieluń. In 2019 it occurred in Gliwice, Włocławek, Rzeszów, Białystok, Szczecin, Kutno and Świdnica. In 2020 children were left in baby hatches in Warsaw, Legionów, Bielsko-Biała, Radom, Wrocław, Bydgoszcz, Sosnowiec, Włocławek, Łódź and Białystok. The number of children who “went through” baby hatches is thus not small, being 155 (Krajewska 2021, p. 87). Further research demonstrates more cases of leaving children in baby hatches, namely in 2020 in Łódź, in 2021 in Piotrków Trybunalski, Wieluń, Częstochowa (2 children), Sosnowiec, Koszalin, Ostrów Wielkopolski, Kutno, two children in 2022 in Warsaw, Kielce, Wrocław. It

all constitutes 13 little lives and generally 168 children found shelter in baby hatches so far in our country.

The basics of the Catholic Church's activity regarding establishment of baby hatches and their oversight

Caritas oversees baby hatches, though not exclusively, since baby hatches working independently of that institution exist. Caritas is a catholic charity organisation. Caritas Poland is a charity organisation of the Polish Bishops' Conference coordinating the work of diocese and archdiocese Caritas. The main activity of this institution is providing diverse aid to those in need, especially running institutions for various categories of pupils, organising support concerning protecting maternity, rest and recreation for youth, aiding those stricken by natural disasters remaining in difficult situations (Kamiński 2012, p. 9). In a broad perspective the aim of Caritas is giving more proof of love by the Church community, in forms adjusted to times and needs, in a perspective of holistic personal development, social justice and peace, turning particular attention to individuals and groups continuing to face great difficulties (Caritas 2000, p. 119-120).

Baby hatches are an expression of specific tutelary activities of the Catholic Church. The Church has always undertaken a great number of diverse works for serving children, having great manpower and means potential, to build beneficial environment that born children face (Balicki 1999, s. 287). It is important for infants and later on.

The charity of the Church encompasses the entire scope of actions taken by Christians, to help the needy. The development of the charity work is related to undertaking of social welfare tasks, participating in the social developments through, for example, establishing and running schools, preparation for marriage, give-aways of basic life necessities, aiding the bereaved, participation in the care and upbringing of the youth. All forms of charity undertakings contribute to Christian solidarity perfectly able to answer changing human needs (Działalność 2000, p. 183-185).

In the light of the Catholic Church teachings suffering of children obliges Christians to participate in the betterment of their fate, caring for conceived life, supporting single mothers (Przygoda 2004, p. 195-196). Baby hatches compliment this idea somewhat, protecting life of born children. Ewa Jarosz Draws attention to Catholic Church's activities reflecting the view of protection children from harm being an important field of state and social organisations' work, from 20th century on turning into their duty (Jarosz, p. 10,15). It lasts and becomes empowered trying to answer the contemporary needs of individuals and families in the mesh of problems, deficits and limitations.

Aiding children and families is realised primarily through state policy through specialised institutions, however such activities are supported by various

organisations and associations, including church ones (Meissner-Łozińska 2006, s. 87). Its important because of the Catholic Church resources and strength for such undertakings as well as enormous experience in this field. Counting on the trust of those its offer is presented to, adhering to Christian norms of activity directed towards the others, especially ones in need.

The Catholic Church's efforts in this field, including Caritas's activities, shouldn't be perceived as competing with public agents' activities in regard to aiding the needy, but complementary ones, enriching the help on offer since the number of the ones in need as well as the range of their deficits are so wide that there is enough room for all subjects ready to act. Justly pointed out by Tadeusz Kamiński was the fact that other aid agents do not constitute badly perceived competition for Caritas which should not be treated as a threat on the market of aid services. Hence the seemingly obvious Pope Benedict XVI's appeal to those responsible for charity of the Church concerning cooperation with similar subjects in meeting various needs. More can be done working together thus, which is undoubtedly a practical gain of cooperation, however the quality of charity service is also significant as pointed out by pope Benedict XVI, which means those providing aid being able to do what is right, in a right way, since aid ought to be effective and bring no harm (Kamiński 2012, s. 143).

In the context of more and more commonly realised tutelary difficulties and rising needs in that regard in Poland, the immense capabilities of Christianity in this field cannot be overlooked, to further understand problems being of interest in tutelary pedagogy. The tutelary commitment of Christianity is obvious and stems from the Catholic Church's teaching, wherein it is very broadly understood, namely through various actions undertaken by Christians and Church institutions for the good of individuals and groups who cannot provide for themselves (Jusiak 2001, p. 63, 73). An obvious need of such sort is the child care one, especially when it leads to safeguarding their most important right, which is the right to live, upon which safeguarding of other rights in the spirit of broadly understood good of children. Therefore the involvement of the Catholic Church through Caritas-run baby hatches is realisation of its teachings and expression of aiding one's fellow men in special moments of their lives, which is in case of children, life's beginning and in case of parents, especially mothers, in the moment of becoming parents when in their view they want to or need to relinquish this gift (Krajewska 2015, p. 114).

The activity of the Catholic Church concerning charity and tutelage is anchored in its relation to the state. Article 25, Section 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland dated 2nd of April 1997 states (Jornal of Laws, 1997, Issue 78, Section 483 with later amendments) "the relations between the state and churches and religious associations are formed upon the tenets of respect for their autonomy and independence in their own scope as well as cooperation for the good of man and the common good". Section 4 of this article provides that "relations between the Republic of Poland and the Catholic Church are defined in an international

agreement with the Holy See". Said agreement is the concordat between the Holy See and the Republic of Poland, signed in Warsaw on the 28th of July, 1993 (Jornal of Laws, 1998, Issue 51, Section 318), which in Article 21, Section 1 states, among other matters, that appropriate Church institutions have the right to run, each according to its nature, missionary activities, charity and tutelage, with Article 22, Section 1 of this legal act provides that such activities "undertaken by legal persons of the Church, is legally equal to activities serving similar purposes run by state institutions". Also the bill from 17th of May, 1989, concerning relations of the state and the Catholic Church in the Republic of Poland (which is Jornal of Laws, 2019, Section 1347) in Article 38, Section 1, states that "legal persons of the Church have the right to conduct charity and care activities appropriate for each of them", and Section 2 of this article points out Caritas Poland and diocese Caritas as particularly proper in regard to their management, while Article 39 lists some of the forms of this Church activity, in particular orphanages and others in need of aid, while their roster is not an exhaustive list and does not close the path for other forms of organising and providing aid. In consequence the competences of the Catholic Church that are legally safeguarded include also charity and tutelary activity in the form of baby hatches.

Anyhow, the state ought to be interested in cooperation with the Catholic Church in this field, since it supplements the state family policy, which, as indicated by Stanisław Kawula, should be aimed at solving particularly difficult family problems, supporting the families in dire need of aid, which in the period of social changes is particularly visible, resulting in various tutelary needs (Kawula 2008, p. 43-44). In consequence, the state ought to at least permit the existence of baby hatches, which is currently done. As demonstrated in my previous published material concerning baby hatches, they are an expression of state's failure to provide actual child and family support, however with the most developed support system of this kind cases of child abandonment can occur (Krajewska 2012, p.37). As written by Ewa Kantowicz, proper social policy of the state should promote development of a network social and state institutions, government and non-government, which in the scopes of their activity are willing and able to provide aid (Kantowicz 2000, p. 5). Also Barbara Kromolicka points out that social institutions ought to be organised by states as well as non-government and private sectors, because only such a solutions provides universality of state action in regard to aid and care for its citizens. In a broader perspective, good social laws, well-functioning institutions of tutelage and informal social customs regarding care make up a sensible system (Kromolicka 2007, p. 69,72). Said system is co-formed by baby hatches, which can be criticised but cannot go unnoticed. They are places of care for children, admittedly short-term care, but nevertheless, they fit into its system, which is complex, changes depending on social conditions, but in which the Catholic Church has been trying to participate for centuries.

Between positive assessment and criticism of baby hatches

Baby hatches are assessed both positively, and accusations or criticism are formulated against them. These doubts are noticed by Dorota Ruszkiewicz, who asks the following questions: Do baby hatches make it easier for mothers to abandon children? Will the awareness of the existence of a safe place where a newborn baby can be left anonymously and without any consequences cause that a woman may lack initiative to cope with a new situation, which is the birth of a child, and to look for some way to live together with the child? The author, answering them herself, states that everything in life has its advantages and disadvantages, but in the case of baby hatches, the former prevail, although she considers reflection on these questions to be fully justified (Ruszkiewicz 2008, p. 33).

A positive and, at the same time, comprehensive assessment of these entities is expressed by Waldemar Żurek – judge, former press officer of the District Court in Kraków. Namely, he believes that baby hatches are a very good initiative, because not all women give birth to children in hospitals, many of them hide their pregnancy even from their loved ones. At the same time, he notices that social ostracism towards mothers who leave children or even internal mental barriers of childbirth often resulted in tragedies and deaths of unwanted, abandoned children. Baby hatches save such little ones, give them a chance, fill a gap in the system that could not be filled in any other way so far. Waldemar Żurek does not share the opinion that the baby hatches are conducive to mothers' overly easy decisions to leave children, that they promote a lack of responsibility, and at the same time emphasises that people who make such accusations against them have different awareness, coming from a better life than that of women deciding to leave the child. These women are in a difficult life situation, they give up children because they cannot cope with such a situation on their own, because the environment and the care system have failed them. In his opinion, baby hatches are the last resort, so it is worth promoting their idea, even for one saved life (Homan 2011, p. 4).

The Committee on the Rights of the Child at the United Nations, which in 2012 suggested the introduction of a ban on the existence of baby hatches as preventing the identification of children left in them, is of a different opinion. At that time, the Polish Catholic Church and representatives of Church organizations protested against this idea. In particular, Paweł Kęska – the then press spokesman for Caritas Polska, pointed out that the operation of the baby hatches is related to the drama and debility of individual people, and also pointed out that such situations will probably happen regardless of the political or even economic context, as evidenced by the fact that baby hatches function in Germany, and the priority is the right to life and the protection of this life. Thus, he emphasized that the right to life of a child is more important than the right to information about one's own origin. Attempts to liquidate baby hatches were also opposed by Marek Michalak – the then Ombudsman for Children (Choduń 2013, p. 22). He expressed his concern about

such a postulate in an address to the Minister of National Education in December 31, 2012 in reference to the recommendations of the Committee on Children's Rights addressed to the Czech Republic in 2011 and to Austria in 2012, in which the Committee postulates replacing the possibility of anonymously leaving a child in baby hatches existing in these countries, with a system that allows giving birth to a child in a hospital and leaving it there while maintaining the mother's anonymity. At the same time, the Ombudsman for Children emphasized that he was of the opinion that in view of the conflict of the natural right to life of every child guaranteed by Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child with another law, the former should be given priority, which also applies to the conflict with the child's right to know his parents and be under their care expressed in Article 7 of the Convention and the child's right to preserve his or her identity, referred to in Article 8 of the Convention. According to Marek Michalak, the introduction of the idea of abandoning baby hatches may lead to a dangerous situation for many newborn children, in which their mothers, fearing various difficulties, will leave them in places that do not guarantee the children's survival or decide to have illegal abortions. As a consequence, the Ombudsman for Children asked the Minister of National Education to provide information whether the Ministry of National Education, as the competent authority for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is working to eliminate the functioning of baby hatches in our country. On January 9, 2013, the Minister of National Education replied that such work was not carried out (Letter of the Ombudsman for Children).

As for the criticism of baby hatches, it is primarily argued that they prevent the children left there from knowing their origin. However, it seems that to a large extent this criticism is also made because it is the Catholic Church that initiates the establishment of baby hatches.

According to Paweł Czaplicki and Zina KroczeK-Sawicka, a controversial aspect of the operation of baby hatches is the lack of legal regulation of the circle of entities allowed to run them. Practice shows, however, that at present the sites are run either by religious orders or by orphanages and there are no objections to their activities. Therefore, the argument about the harmful impact of the lack of legal regulations regulating the circle of entities allowed to run baby hatches seems inappropriate. If the Polish legislator ever decided to introduce legal regulations in the field of baby hatches, the issue of entities allowed to run such points should be their important part. The argument for leaving the „baby hatches” in the social space is also their efficient operation, despite the lack of detailed legal procedures. These authors also discuss the duration of the adoption procedure for a child left in a baby hatch, the reversibility of this decision, the anonymity of relinquishment, the intensification of out-of-hospital birth phenomenon, the reduction in the number of newborn homicides (Czaplicki, KroczeK-Sawicka 2017, pp. 40-43).

Assessments that criticise baby hatches mainly because they are created and function on the initiative of the Catholic Church are unjust, and Marta

Sudnik-Paluch is right, stating that even being a critic of the Church, one should admit at least once that it does something right, because thanks to the baby hatch initiative, small children find homes. She argues that the Church does not promote baby hatches as the best solution, but only as an alternative (Sudnik-Paluch). Katarzyna Woynarowska also rightly points out that baby hatches do no harm to anyone, on the contrary – they give a chance for life, and their success in the form of the number of children saved is supposed to be, in the eyes of opponents of baby hatches, alleged proof of their low social effectiveness (Woynarowska 2013, p. 42). It is also the case that baby hatches satisfy this human action that St. John Paul II writes in the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*: „Exactly such a deep love for every human being gave rise to an extremely rich history of charity, which has developed over the centuries and thanks to which numerous structures serving life appeared in the life of the Church and society. They arouse the admiration of any observer without prejudice. Each Christian community, imbued with a lively sense of responsibility, should write subsequent pages of this history through various pastoral and social activities. In this spirit, life should be discreetly and effectively accompanied” (Encyclicals of the Holy Father John Paul II). It is precisely about the lack of prejudice against the baby hatches, and if not about admiration for their existence, then at least about accepting them by rationally perceiving their role in child care.

The existence of baby hatches is in line with the broader perspective of St. John Paul II. Namely, the Holy Father believed that a child is a fully valuable person, because it is a gift from God, and, consequently, in his teaching, he always stood on the side of conceived children, those at risk of abortion, the sick, malnourished, deprived of family warmth, victims of violence, and abandoned children. (Wojtecki 2008, pp. 17-18). Therefore, also due to respect for John Paul II and his teachings, the existence of baby hatches should be appreciated as places of care for children left in them, which is one of the possible choices different to abandoning them.

Regardless of the religious motives regarding the assessment of baby hatches, it must be recognized that they meet moral standards, because helping another person, especially a helpless child, has an exclusively positive dimension in this context.

Summary

The widening areas of deprivation are a challenge to the state, society, but also for Catholic organizations and, more broadly, for the Catholic Church. It undertakes numerous activities aimed at providing help, support, care and many other goods for people in need, who for any reason are in a crisis, difficult situation, requiring a helping hand. One of them is taking action for the benefit of the youngest children and their parents also in the most difficult situations, when the latter, especially

mothers, must or want to make a decision to give up parenthood. Then baby hatches remain open as subjects of short-term care for the youngest children and are a special expression of the Catholic Church's concern for them.

They are not entities that are not needed, because they are not so much desirable as they are the only and major help in very difficult situations, but, as it turns out, one needs to be their apologist, for which every opportunity is a good one when one is able to write about them either in a general or specific context concerning them. Reflection on the relations between Christianity, society and the state may include the topic of baby hatches as connecting these three areas, because on the one hand they are fully compliant with the standards of Christianity, on the other hand they respond to social needs when some individuals want to or have to make a decision about leaving a child in a baby hatch, and thanks to them others can come to their aid, and on the third, they are a real entity in a state that has a duty to care for all its citizens, and children in particular, in which, in turn, they are supported by other entities, including non-governmental ones and thus also the Catholic Church.

Bibliography

- Balicki, J. (1999). *Dziecko w kręgu zainteresowania Kościoła w okresie przemian systemowych w Polsce*. W: Balcerzak-Paradowska B. (red.). *Sytuacja dzieci w Polsce w okresie przemian*. Warszawa: IPiSS.
- Caritas w Polsce*. (2000). W: *Encyklopedia chrześcijaństwa*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Jedność.
- Choduń M. (2013). *Okno z widokiem*. „Tygodnik Powszechny”, nr 36.
- Czaplicki, P., Kroczyk-Sawicka, Z. (2017) *Prawne aspekty funkcjonowania okien życia*. „Białostockie Studia Prawnicze”, nr 2.
- Działalność dobroczynna Kościoła*. (2000). W: *Encyklopedia chrześcijaństwa*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Jedność.
- Encykliki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II*. (2002). Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak.
- Homan A. (2011). *Kacperku, przepraszam Cię*. „Gość Krakowski”, nr 11.
- Jarosz E. (2008). *Międzynarodowe standardy przeciwdziałania krzywdzeniu dzieci*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak.
- Jusiak R. (2001). *Inspiracja chrześcijańska w pedagogice opiekuńczej*. W: Olubiński A. (red.). *Tożsamość oraz dylematy pedagogiki opiekuńczej*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit.
- Kamiński T. (2012). *Caritas i polityka. Podmioty wyznaniowe w systemie pomocy społecznej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW.
- Kantowicz E. (2000). *Praca socjalna a ochrona dziecka w rodzinie*. Praca Socjalna, nr 3.
- Kawula S. (2008). *Rodzinne konteksty polskiej polityki społecznej*. W: Marzec-Holka K., Rutkowska A., Joachimowska M. (red.). *Praca socjalna i polityka społeczna – obszary współdziałania wobec wykluczenia społecznego*. Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo UKW.
- Krajewska B. (2012). *Dzieci w oknie życia*. „Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze”, nr 2.
- Krajewska B. (2012). *Okna życia. Idea, kontrowersje, doświadczenia*. „Fides et Ratio”, nr 1.

- Krajewska B. (2015). *Okna życia w systemie opieki nad dziećmi*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego.
- Kromolicka B. (2007). *Kultura socjalna jako wyznacznik demokratycznego społeczeństwa opiekuńczego*. W: Piątek K., Karwacki A. (red.). *Aktywna polityka społeczna z perspektywy Europy socjalnej*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Akapit.
- Meissner – Łozińska J. (2006). *Instytucje i organizacje wspierające dziecko i rodzinę*. W: Gruca – Miąsik U. (red.). *Pomoc, opieka, wsparcie dziecka i rodziny*. Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego.
- Przygoda W. (2004). *Posługa charytatywna Kościoła w Polsce. Studium teologiczno – pastoralne*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Ruszkiewicz D. (2008). *Aktualność średniowiecznej instytucji kołowrotka we współczesnym systemie opieki nad dzieckiem*. W: Walc W., Szluz B., Marczykowska I. (red.). *Opieka i pomoc społeczna wobec wyzwań współczesności*. Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego.
- Wojtecki D. (2008). *Dziecko w nauczaniu Papieża Jana Pawła II*. W: Ozorowski E., Horodeński R. (red.). *Dziecko – etyka – ekonomia*, Białystok: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej.
- Woynarowska K. (2013). *Obrońmy okna życia!*. „Niedziela”, nr 14.
- Konkordat między Stolicą Apostolską a Rzeczpospolitą Polską z dnia 28 lipca 1993 r. (Dz. U. z 1998 r. Nr 51, poz. 318.).
- Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 r. (Dz. U. z 1997 r. Nr 78, poz. 483 z późn. zm.).
- Ustawa z dnia 17 maja 1989 r. o stosunku państwa do Kościoła katolickiego w Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (t.j. D.U. z 2019 r. poz. 1347.).
- <https://caritas.pl/blog/2015/10/30/okna-zycia-w-polsce/> (data dostępu 10.11.2022.).
- <https://caritas.pl/blog/2017/02/03/ostrow-wielkopolski-noworodek-oknie-zycia/> (data dostępu 10.11.2022.).
- <https://caritaszg.pl/nasze-akcje/okno-zycia/> (data dostępu 10.11.2022.).
- <https://diecezja-torun.pl/Artykuly/View/2150/w-lubawie-otworzono-okno-zycia> (data dostępu 10.11.2022.).
- Topornicka A., *W Suwałkach nie funkcjonuje już okno życia*, <https://www.radio.bialystok.pl/wiadomosci/index/id/158012> (data dostępu 10.11.2022.).
- Wystąpienie Rzecznika Praw Dziecka do Minister Edukacji Narodowej w sprawie tzw. okien życia*, <http://brpd.gov.pl/aktualnosci-wystapienia-generalne/rzecznik-w-sprawietzw-okien-zycia> (data dostępu 18.11. 2022).
- Sudnik-Paluch M., *A właśnie, że chciane*, <http://katowice.gosc.pl/doc/1462371.A-wlasnie-ze-chciane> (data dostępu 18.11.2022.).