

Mystery of Man*

Man is the synthesis of the world of matter and spirit, finiteness and infinity, mortality and eternity, freedom and necessity. Man is both capable of heroism and crime, but is not designed to fail. Man is neither an angel nor a beast, the misfortune is that he who wants to play the angel plays the beast (B. Pascal). An angel never falls. The devil falls so low that he will never get up. Man falls down and rises. To be human is to be responsible but this is also a reason to be unhappy. In spite of this God calls man not only to humility but also to the courage to be and to build the world. Especially through suffering, because it makes man predictable and the world transparent. Suffering is an attempt at human humanity, an attempt at the inner truth of man. Suffering associated with the ethos of birth to the fullness of life is a temple in which God wants to be alone with man. That explains why whatever happens to man he should always rise and move forward, rise and move forward all his life. Therefore, a man who did not feel the taste of his tears will not become a real man. Surrendering to fate, he becomes a human wreck. Man is invited to talk to God from the very beginning. Christ is the explanation of the mystery of man.

Grace Inscribed in the Structure of Man

God's creative presence in man's nature is manifested in the oldest transmissions of the Bible.¹ The first man, Adam, has a life-giving breath of life (cf. Genesis 2, 7). The creation of man is a specific work of God, different from others. God communicates His qualities to the human like a father to a child (cf. Ps 139, 13-15). Man is shaped and woven by God and this shows his inalienable connection with his

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¹ Cf. L. Koehler, *Die Grundstelle der Imago-Dei-Lehre, in: Der Mensch als Bild Gottes*, Darmstadt 1969, 3-9.

creation. At the same time, God knows that we are dust (Psalm 103:14) and that He has brought us out of nothingness through the womb. That is why man calls him “his God” (cf. Ps 22, 10-11). God is a friend, guardian, companion of human life. From the beginning, there has been a relationship between God and man through the dwelling of the Creator in the substance of the soul (cf. ZPM 4, 14)². It is basic and impossible to erase the image of God. From it will come, if man permits, an increasing resemblance to Christ as a source. Living in the substance of the soul lays the foundations for a personal relationship of love and walking sticks. According to the tradition of the Eastern Christianity, man is a body, soul and Holy Spirit. He is the living form and godliness of man. Man’s resistance to his transforming love keeps the person tethered in the matter, concrete and the object³.

The mysterious presence of God in man is expressed by the word “the-lem” shadow. Shadow means that the person to whom it belongs is close, offering help and friendship. That is why Mary was shaded by the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 1, 35). Before God appears in the lux beatifica in clarity the glory of the Saviour hides under the cover of a shadow that provokes a dynamic and organized response to reach the light from the darkness (cf. ZPM 3.13). On the other hand, “man as a shadow passes away” (Ps 39:5-7). It is like a cast shadow and exists in the shadow of a creature that is the shadow of future affairs: These are only shadows of future affairs, and reality belongs to Christ (Colossians 2, 17). By intensifying realization without the Creator, man hurts and becomes unhappy. He becomes a dangerous shadow for himself and his neighbours (cf. Ps 73.20), he is capable of crime.

The Gospel reveals Jesus Christ to us as an image of the Father (2 Colossians 4:4; Colossians 1:15). Jesus reveals the Father and he who wants to know the Father must contemplate the face of Christ. He “came in the body” (cf. 1 J 4, 2-3; 2J 7). It is a “reflection of invisible God” (Colossians 1, 15). He is the new Adam (cf. 1 Cor 15, 45-49). Following Christ is for man – “beings with deficiencies” – ascent sanctitas. Man can become the imago of Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 4, 4; Colossians 1, 15; 1 Corinthians 15, 49; 2 Corinthians 3, 18)⁴. Human beings should be read from a Christological perspective. This can be expressed as follows: Jesus Christ Imago Dei Patrem (cf. 2 Cor 4, 4; Cor 1, 15); Imago Dei absconditus (cf. Ef 1, 3n). 2. Homo religiosus imago Dei. 3. Homo novus imago Filii Dei. (cf. (Romans 8:29; I Cor 15:45-49).

² The following abbreviations refer to the works of St. John of the Cross: ZPM= Living Flame; 1,2,3 D= Ascent of Mount Carmel; 1,2 N= Dark Night; PD= Spiritual Song.

³ Cf. T. Spidlik, I. Gargano, *Duchowość ojców greckich i wschodnich*, translation J. Dembska, Kraków 1997, 11.

⁴ Cf. K. L. Schmidt, *Homo imago Dei im Alten und Neuen Testamentem*, in: *Der Mensch als Bild Gottes*, Darmstadt 1969, 22-23.

St. Augustine god's image was noticed in the triad: mens (memoria), notitia (intelligence), amor (voluntas). Mens is the deepest depth of the soul responsible for contact with God. The bond of authority, the number of which corresponds to the Persons of the Holy Trinity, is love. According to St. Thomas the human body contains 'traces' of (vestigia) of God⁵. Master Eckhart calls the presence of God in the soul: image, likeness, mirror.⁶ The soul is a "spark": there is a power in it that separates all the inferior and unites with God; it is a spark of the soul.⁷ At the same time, man remains torn apart in himself and has two faces. Hence the imperative of transformation⁸. John of Ruusbroec speaks of a likeness to God (christiformis)⁹. In the life of St. John of the Cross God substantively supports the existence of every human being. He is present in his soul (cf. PD 8, 3). The centre of the soul is God, and when it comes to Him according to all possibilities of its essence and according to the strength of its actions and inclinations, it will reach its ultimate and deepest centre, God. In the new man, God dwells by grace and spiritual feeling as the core of mystical life (cf. 2D 5,4).

A man is a person. The definition of a person, Boethius states, as the person is an individual substance of a rational nature, needs to be completed. It should be remembered that the term person was given to us through the theological reflection on the mystery of the Holy Trinity.¹⁰ The Divine Persons remain in mutual devotion to the love of I – You – We. The term "God" for the new man means primarily: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Love is their nature, and only it opens the door to the coexistence of God and man. There is nothing else in the Most Holy Trinity but a Person. The Relation in the inner life of God in the Trinity alone is the Person.¹¹ The first man invited to participate in the deepest life of the Holy Trinity is Mary. The Logos has a mother who gave him the body. Mary's "Fiat" builds a divine and happy anthropology of dialogue and love¹². That is why the term "man" essentially includes the relationship between man and woman in a mutual mystical devotion to each other (K Barth). In incarnation

⁵ Cf. "Sum", I, q. 93, a. 5, 4.

⁶ Cf. J. Tauler, *Kazania*, translated W. Szymona, Poznań 1986, preaching 67 and 47, 381, 297.

⁷ Ibid., *Kazania*, 20a, p. 177.

⁸ Cf. P. P. Ogórek, *Mistrz Jan Eckhart a święty Jan od Krzyża*, Warszawa 1999, 157-164

⁹ Cf. Ruusbroec. *Dzie/n*, t. 1, translated M. Lew-Dylewski, Kraków 2000, 35-36.

¹⁰ Cf. W. Granat, *Osoba ludzka. Próba definicji*, Sandomierz 1961, 7-14.

¹¹ Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Maryja w relacji do Trójcy Przenajświętszej*, in: *Signum Magnum – duchowość maryjna. Homo meditans XXIII*, ed. W. Słomka, A. J. Nowak, J. Misiurek, Lublin 2002, 91.

¹² Cf. A. Nowak, *Maryja jako Signum Magnum*, in: *Signum Magnum – duchowość maryjna*, 157-158.

anthropology, the body is the privileged place of God's experience¹³. In the mind of R Guardini, a person is a layer of characters, individuality, and personality with an inner centre. J. Maritain points to the spirit as an integrating principle of individuality and personality. He speaks of subconsciousness and spiritual unconsciousness¹⁴. E. Mounier defines a person in the context of personal and social activity and development. A person is a call (vocation) to flourish as an incarnate spirit (incarnation), to communion in the community (communion) and transcendence towards God. At the same time, it cannot exist in a "de-sexualised" way; it is not a statue or a static figure. The psyche is shaped by sexuality that demands a precise definition¹⁵. In both men and women, a disorder of self-relationship, anima or animus growth distorts and disrupts mental balance; a basic condition of sexual balance... masculinity of the spirit... is gender acceptance. Mounier states that creating values, desires, aspirations is a human attribute. A person cannot be replicated, is a movement towards something (*etre-vers*), he is not existence in himself and for himself, he is not a lonely, individual, monadic, but open being. "The person only finds himself when he loses himself", "is not even a social unit, but is the peak from which all the paths of the world depart". "We are members of each other" (Romans 12:5) – this way Mounier understands existence (co-existence, German *Mitsein*), *l'existence avec autmi* namely Marcel: *l'etre c'est l'etre avec, l'etre est communion*. The dominant feature of such a being is the divine spark contained in it as a process of dynamic expansion, intensification, and self-sacrifice in resignation from himself. This movement is a real maturation and metamorphosis of the person, i.e., 'mouvement de personnalisation' through 'l'engagement' (Scheler, Marcel, Jaspers). Involvement is not engaging someone in a game, entanglement, but rather a response by providing services and participating in life as a subject. Joining the divine, prolonging the original act of creation, and liberating oneself and giving freedom to others. This effort is not devoid of dramas and dilemmas, it becomes entangled in dramatic situations, despair, tragedy, psychosis, humiliation, and death. A person: can remedy this if he understands what the cause is. Understanding himself and others is a feature of the person, a therapy and allows to distinguish between despair and tragedy: despair is an individualistic feeling. .. It is a passion for negation, it results from emptiness and creates emptiness. Tragedism, on the contrary, is born of excess. A man who closes himself in despair as a result of the difficult grasping

¹³ Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Osobowość sakramentalna*, Lublin 1997, 11.

¹⁴ Cf. J. Maritain, *Pisma filozoficzne*, translated J. Fenrychowa, Kraków 1988, 332, 335, 334, 394, 339.

¹⁵ Cf. E. Mounier, *Co to jest personalizm*, translated A. Krasinski, Kraków 1960, 9.

of the loss of his substance. A committed man enriches himself with the value of tragedy; it is the world in which he engages, it is a broken world... Moreover, whatever the experience of tragedy may be, it is an experience of the fullness and bleeding fullness that brings hope and the beginnings of final reconciliation.¹⁶

This does not imply that Christianity instilled a new Jansenism as an “active pessimism”, but rather a “tragic optimism” as a balance between “gloomy prophetism and the good humour of the sacristy.”¹⁷

The theories of development which treat man as a specific path and transition from image to likeness; from disbelief to faith; from religious man to the new; through baptism; in the ascetic path to holiness, in the final exodus and in the temporal reality through the purifying fire of the test of humanity through disintegration, the deeper and dramatic, the more integrating and divinizing they are, have the greatest value. The painful process of disintegration determines human participation in sanctitas of God. Disintegrating experience is a platform for the causal connection of somatic, mental and spiritual processes. Phenomena such as ageing, health and illness, freshness, fatigue, life and dying, a state of grace and sin fill the soul and give it a special colour. Living and not possessing gives colour to life and the determinant of a person’s development is the ability to change (metanoia). Infinity and endlessness inscribed by the Creator in man is his appeal and cry, divinization of his creation in love and truth.

A Symbol – the Key to Understanding Man

The classic definition of Boethius seems to be discontinuous, incomplete.

The sum of questions about a person seems to grow faster than the sum of answers. Man simply remains a mystery expressed through transcendent symbols¹⁸. A person constantly exceeds the one-level reality in favour of a multi-level and multilateral reality. It is this symbol that makes it easier to cross borders and barriers to cognition and development by opening and closing, darkening and closing, repelling and pulling. It has two faces, combining the sensual, material and spiritual world into one whole. For example, the symbol of faith explains a lot, but also darkens and immerses reason in the darkness of faith. The symbol places the human being on the borderline between immanence and transcendence. Every stage of spiritual life and every cognition is imperfect, makeshift

¹⁶ Cf. Ibid., 15. T. Terlecki, *Krytyka personalistyczna. Egzystencjalizm chrześcijański*, Warszawa 1987, 27-31.

¹⁷ Cf. E. Mounier, *Chrześcijaństwo i pojęcie postępu*, Warszawa 1968, 25.

¹⁸ Cf. P. Ricouer, *Symbolika zła*, Warszawa 2002, 15-25.

and time-consuming. It is a foreshadowing of the reality to come. Now, we see as if in a mirror, unclearly; and then [we will see] yourselves: Now I get to know in part, and then I will get to know as well as I was known (1 Cor 13:12). In the scene of the Annunciation (Lk 2:19), we learn about Mary considering the words of the angel. The Greek text reflects this activity with the word 'symballein'. Mary, therefore, tries to unite God's affairs with human affairs, the whole at the interface between reason and faith. Human development should be understood in the context of symbolic integration and disintegration, pros and cons until we all come together to the unity of faith and full knowledge of the Son of God, to the perfect man, to the measure of eternity according to the fullness of Christ (Ef 4, 13). It is conditioned by the human system of symbolisation.¹⁹ At the source of humanity lies the combination of dispersed elements of the divine-human world in love, finding inner harmony and freedom. The symbol is a synthesis, an expression of all areas of human life.²⁰ The symbol appears here as something that transcends, reaches beyond, strives for fulfilment, it acquires a figurative character and similarities, but never identity²¹. It covers the past, present and future: good and dark sides, heaven (moon and sun) and earth (animal and biological), time (night and day), space (time of struggle and rewards), what is masculine and feminine; love and hatred²². In the Song of Songs, Christ appears as life and light surrounded by symbols, nights, fiancé, garden, smells... Mystics eagerly refer to marital symbolism to express man's maturation until promises hidden in words and symbols reveal their faces. Behold, I will make them come and fall on their faces in front of your feet, and they will know that I have loved you (Ap 3, 9). At the base of the symbol lies its multifacetedness with its derived stages, degrees, planes, multiplying configurations and constellations, in order to possess oneself through successive modifications and transformations in the divine union of love. The symbol has a creative dimension of the transition from one posture to another.

Disorders of neurotic and psychotic development are conditioned by the non-transparency of cognition and the absolutization of mortality. Man, when he avoids the value of a symbol, falls into neurosis²³. The absolutization of the

¹⁹ Cf. E. Cassirer; *O człowieku*, translated A. Staniewska. Warszawa 1971, 66-70.68.

²⁰ Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Symbol, znak, sygnał*, Lublin 2000, 41.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 42-45.

²² Cf. G. Wunderle, *Grundzuge der Religionsphilosophie*, Paderborn 1924, 214-215. A. Vergote. *Psychologie religieuse*, Bruxelles 1966, 46-48.

²³ Cf. H. Hark, *Religiöse Neurosen*, Stuttgart 1984, s. 22-25. Derjenige, bei dem stets alles beim alten bleibt und in dem sich kaum noch etwas bewegt, sollte sich fragen, ob er nicht an einer gestörten Symbol'funktiiion leidet.

symbol, the omission of its multifacetedness, leads to systemic madness, extremism, intolerance, also to pathological disorders. Man then identifies the world with his “mental self”, losing the ability to act intentionally because there is no distance from himself. E. Cassirer states: We can extend and improve the classical definition of man... Instead of describing man as a ‘rationale animal’ we should describe him as a ‘animal symbolicus’²⁴. A. J. Nowak calls such an understanding of the symbol symbolic realism²⁵. In other words, human maturity will be manifested by the ability to integrate the content of truth and the person (even the most distant) through a system of symbolization. The higher the permeability of the symbol, the higher the degree of integration, the more concrete and impermeable, the threatened development. Fear, despair, illness, death, joy can be a necessary stage to overcome, beyond which we will discover peace, joy, freedom and life. Rejection of the symbol as a way of cognition and development for the sake of concretization leads to the absolutization of people, things and values. Therefore, let us “say goodbye to all hopes” whoever only places hope in this life (cf. I Cor 15, 19). Resignation from the hopes of symbolic realism threatens existential boredom, a sister of despair. Man, making a hopeless attempt to fulfill his being by the power of his own will and reason, condemns himself to dwarf and, as a consequence, spiritual death. The fact that despair is possible is the central element here... Central element for metaphysics, which is covered by such a definition of man as proposed by Thomism. What can be inventoried is an opportunity for despair (“I counted it, it is not enough for me”)²⁶. If symbols mean a combination, integration, binding of this diabolos (same core) means division, separation, splitting. Satan is fabricator fragmentorum²⁷. He gives an absolute value to the parts. The consequence of the mystery of the Incarnation is the continuity between the life of man and God (ex-sistence). The rejection of the Incarnation is alienation and a turn to oneself (in-sistence)²⁸. The discontinuity of the divine-human reality is the cause of despair and anxiety, error and fear of existence. The once unstable divine-human continuum implemented in the Incarnation gives bitter fruits. The idea of God replaces His living experience²⁹.

²⁴ E. Cassirer, *Esej o człowieku*, 70.

²⁵ Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Symbol, znak, sygnał*, 53.

²⁶ Cf. G. Marcel, *Być i mieć*, translated D. Eska, Warszawa 2001, 150; 148.

²⁷ Cf. W. Granat, *Bóg Stwórca. Aniołowie – człowiek*, Lublin 1961, 182.

²⁸ Cf. J. Arnaud, *Wcielenie wiary*, translated W. Krzyżaniak, Warsaw 1970, 39-42.

²⁹ Cf. N. Wildiers, *Obraz świata a teologia*, translated J. Doktor, Warszawa 1985, 7-15.

A. Ganoczy, *Stworczy człowiek i Bóg stwórca*, translated P. Pachciarek, Warszawa 1982, 7-23.

M. Gogacz, *Istnieć i poznawać*, Warszawa 1976, 35.

The radical sin of refusing to love God and one's neighbour lies in the desire to remain in a purely human inner and outer environment³⁰. God remains an unrealisable idea, a thought construct³¹. With the "death" of God meanings and signs die.³² God is only a phenomenal figure³³. Human beings are placed between being and nothingness³⁴. Fear (Furcht) dominates and the world into which man is thrown is full of absurdity, nothingness, rebellion. "Life makes no sense, but it cannot have it", "the only way out is to forget", "death in nothingness"³⁵. E. Mounier speaks of Narcissus alienation, extreme alienation, or Heracles alienation "absorption of existence", "limitation to the realm of facts". This "hypnosis of facts" threatens to charm the unspeakable Mystery of God and man and to bring it down to the myth and legend (G. Marcel and L. Hexagonal). It is the Satanic refusal of a rebellious and self-confident individuality, opposing signs, opposing the call to which only Love could sensitize them – provided that this Love could be liberated from the delusions to which it comes down when it gives itself to reflections on itself instead of being realized.³⁶

Christoforming by Revealing the Mystery of Man

A world without Christ becomes a outline without a face that causes depression. Disturbed knowledge of the world causes emotional deficit, identity confusion, ideologization of minds³⁷. The world plunges into a crazy orgiastic dance designed to relieve a strong sense of guilt, into a paralysis of will in a sense of hopelessness, stimulating each other to newer and stronger births, but without worrying about the divine harmony of the staff and love³⁸. Chaos is nothing more than the result of a fundamental sin – disbelief in the Person of Jesus Christ. He remains the only and ultimate source of our knowledge of God and

³⁰ Cf. P. Schooneneberg, *Theologie der Siinde*, Einsiedeln-Zurich-Köln 1966, 104-105.

³¹ Cf. A. Ganoczy, *Stwórczy człowiek i Bóg stwórca*, 77-84.

³² Cf. M. Buber, *Zaćmienie Boga*, Warszawa 1994, 59-60.

³³ Cf. M. Heidegger, *Fenomenologia życia religijnego*, translated G. Sowiński, Kraków 2002, 301-314; cf. *Ibid.*, *Budować, mieszkać, myśleć*, Warszawa 1977, 89; 165-166.

³⁴ Cf. K. Tarnowski, *Bóg fenomenologów*, Tarnów 2000, 81-84; 88-103.

³⁵ Cf. E. Cioran, *Na szczytach rozpacz*, translated I. Kania, Kraków 1992, 84, 150, 153.

³⁶ Cf. G. Marcel, *Homo viator*, Warszawa, 1959, 271. K. Tarnowski states: Heideggerian Ontology is essentially deprived of God, but in such a way that he does not know about this deprivation and does not want to know about it. *Bóg fenomenologów*, 70.

³⁷ Cf. E. H. Erikson, *Dzieciństwo i społeczeństwo*, translated P. Hejmej, Poznań 2000, 275.

³⁸ Cf. G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche*, translated B. Banasiak, Warszawa 2000, 103.

the dignity and values of every human being. He is the Head of the Church (cf. Ef 1, 10, 22; Ef 4, 25; Kol 1, 18), through whom everything has happened and thanks to whom we too are (1 Cor 8:6; cf. Col 1, 17), is way and truth (J 14, 6) and resurrection and life (Jn 11:25); seeing him, we also see the Father (cf. J 14, 9). All treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him (Col 2:3), the Church is his body (cf. Romans 12:5; 1 Cor 6:15; 1 Cor 10:17; 1 Cor 12:12, 27; Ef 1, 23; Ef 2, 16; Ef 4, 4; Col 1, 24; Col 3, 15). He is a form of our freedom because for a Christian there is no self-liberation. Freedom is a gift from Christ: So if the Son liberates you, then you will be truly free (J 8, 36). Liberation is the work of the Holy Spirit who comes from him (cf. 1J 4, 13) by the sacraments and faith. It is she who leads to a personal encounter with Christ. By faith, Christ dwells in our hearts (Eph 3, 17). The only proportional plane of an encounter with Him is faith animated by love (and not religious structures, knowledge, psychological axioms). Only it can embrace the infinity and sublimity of God. The sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are also the source and potential of “sanctification in Christ”. He is an appeal for us to become saints: but become saints in the whole course of your life, following the example of the Saint who called you, because it is written: Be holy because I am holy (1 P 1,15-16). In Christ, there was “given” holiness (cf. J 10, 36) and ‘acquired’ (cf. J 17, 19). That is why the Second Vatican Council speaks of a universal call to holiness (LG 39, 40). The mystery of man is explained in his dynamic crossing of the multi-plane and multi-layered reality of the spiritual biopsychic in relation to the Divine “You”. This strongly stressed thought can be found at Saint John of the Cross and K. Dąbrowskiego and Jozafat Nowak, OFM. St. John of the Cross sees the meaning of the spiritual man’s life in adapting to the “disposition of Christ”, that is to his way of existence, character, temperament, psyche, customs of his tastes and preferences³⁹. Whoever does not like you/ I will not recognize him/her as my/I like you/For the life of my life (Romanca VI, 2). Also, St. Teresa of Ávila encourages the sisters to grow zealously in the knowledge of character (condicion) The Divine Bridegroom and according to the Divine pattern shaped their own personality (Way of Excellence 22, 7)⁴⁰, on the sacramental path (cf. 2D 22, 9; 16). The Carmelite mystic does not diminish the importance of mental life through Christolorization; on the contrary, it is essential and gives value and merit to all external acts and pious

³⁹ F. Ruiz, *Święty Jan od Krzyża. Pisarz – pisma – nauka*, tum. J. E. Bielecki, Kraków 1998, 456.

⁴⁰ Cf. Teresa z Avila Kraków 1987, translated. H. P. Kossowski, 114, que condición tiene, cómo podré contentarle mejor, en que’ le hare’ placer, y estudiar cómo hare mi condición que conforme eon la suyal.

practices. Usually, God leads man to holiness hierarchically from the lowest to the highest matters (cf. 2D 17, 4). This causes spiritual conflicts, contributes to the emergence of strong psychological processes: anxiety, instability, destabilization, oscillation on the verge of hope and despair. It is only when subconsciousness and consciousness, body and spirit are completed in the integration of love in Christ does man achieve a new life. This process takes place through the mediation of a purifying night of senses and spirit, in which rest periods are short and are a precursor to higher integration. The night of purification and unification is a shocking test of humanity. God weakens the soul and exposes it... in order to put on it anew, uncovered and stripped of its old skin (2N 13, 11; ID 5, 7). The faster the dynamic of development, the greater the faith, hope, and love, the greater the degree of union and transformation into Christ. However When you stop over something, you stop striving for everything. In order to avoid any damage that a person could suffer while stopping on the way to God, he should always strive further, to the greatest depth of God.

What levels and states should be exceeded? St. John of the Cross points to a ten-degree scale of love instead of keeping to the beginner, progressive and perfect periods and ways. The path from step to step is connected with the breakdown of the previous one, pain, the apparent absence of God. Each step determines the stage of partial integration, which already contains the beginnings of new, higher and more perfect ways. The first phase is relative peace and spiritual silence, for man sees no vices and obstacles to God. The night of the senses is the first purification. It is followed by periodic integration and stabilisation. A night of spirit enters as an extreme and ruthless purification. Unity and cohesion with God is the fifth stage. The most important of these are transition periods, full of drama and tension. The night is of interest to St. John of the Cross as development potential. Flashes of light and full integration with the Betrothed are only flashes of glory to come. What should we be freed from in order to exceed the higher grades? The Saint lists the goods and values that can block accelerated development: temporal goods, natural (body and soul qualities, e.g. beauty and grace, clear reason and healthy judgement); sensual (falling under the senses); moral (virtues, good deeds); supernatural goods (gift of wisdom and knowledge, faith, grace of healing, gift of miracles, prophecy, recognition of spirits, gift of languages); spiritual (paintings of chapels, places and holy times). The fascination of mind, will, and memory for any value is fixation and paralysis of development.

K. Dąbrowski formulated a theory of development through positive disintegration. In other words, it identifies development with the dynamism of accelerated adolescence passing through crisis, neurosis, nervousness,

psychoneurosis⁴¹. There is a common belief that mental illness makes it impossible to develop, but already K. Jaspers stated that in order to penetrate the mystery of man it is necessary to first find out what are border experiences considered pathological. Dąbrowski captured the link between mental disorders and development. In the face of traditional ways of interpreting nervousness, anxiety, such neuroses as: hysteria, psychastenia, depression, obsession... The theory of positive disintegration is a new orientation⁴². It consists in understanding mental health and spiritual development as a dynamic and creative transcending the lower and achieving higher levels of integration in search of the personal ideal, individual and social essence. Neuroses and psychoneuroses are a developmental dynamism, provided that the person reads them as a code of life. Then he will discover in them a hierarchy of values and hidden dynamics: object-subject; “third factor”, a high degree of self-awareness and empathy, the dynamics of self-development and self-psychotherapy. The ‘third factor’ is the synthesis of all autonomous and authentic factors⁴³. Theologically, we can interpret it as a factor of the staff acting in a human being. The formation of personality depends on the process of positive disintegration, on the accepted ideal, on the level of the disposition and management centre (“third factor”). So there are

⁴¹ Dąbrowski Kazimierz (1902-80), psychiatrist and psychologist; initiator of the mental hygiene movement in Poland, creator of the theory of positive disintegration, according to which the condition for the development of the personality is the disintegration of the primary structure of the psyche, an individual, leading – through internal conflicts, searches and acts of choice – to the integration of the psyche at a higher level; in this context, many mental disorders, especially neurotic type. Dąbrowski treated it not as a disease, but as a manifestation of a positive developmental crisis, linking mental health not with adaptation, but with development and its dynamics.

⁴² K. Dąbrowski, *Dezintegracja pozytywna*. Warszawa 1979, 19. Heraclitus already speaks of repetitive transformations and contradictory processes of change. The terms integration, disintegration were already used by Descartes. Theory of K. Dąbrowski is analogous to the development of a child or society (C. Levi -Strauss). It is not new, but it inscribes new content into old concepts. I. Caruso strongly emphasizes development (progressive personalization) as to get to the higher organized forms through countless experiences. Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Homo religious*, Lublin 2003, 127; S. Arieti. Cf. T. Koberzycki, *Filozofia osobowości*, Warszawa 2001, 213.

⁴³ K. Dąbrowski, *Dezintegracja pozytywna*, 42. S. A. Kierkegaard called the mysterious “third factor” a “subjective individual experience”, Heidegger – Dasein, A. Schopenhauer – “what one is”, J. P. Sartre – “being for yourself”, J. Moreno – “an expressive, creative and spontaneous basis”. Cited: H. Romanowska-Łakomy, *Niektóre problemy psychoterapii*, in: „Zdrowie psychiczne”. Warszawa 1980, no. 4, 36.

“healthy neuroses” and “healing heresy”⁴⁴. Nervousness is not sin. However, it is always connected with life’s heresy, with mistakes, violates the rules of ethics and metaphysics (I Caruso). Dąbrowski creates a five-stage model of multi-level, multi-dimensional and hierarchical development. The transition from one to the other involves the experience of relaxation and disintegration, anxiety, depression, obsessions combined with an increasing capacity for empathy, reflection, and integration at a higher level. The starting point is primary integration based on drive consciousness (narrowed sensitivity, responsibility, egocentrism, lack of guilt). Its sound is negative. Second, third and fourth levels are disintegrating phenomena: negative and positive. The second level is one-level disintegration (ambivalence, ambitions, conflicts, beginnings of creative thinking). The third is multi-level spontaneous disintegration (ambivalence, guilt, sin consciousness, slow and conscious shaping of personality). The fourth level is multi-level disintegration organized and systematized (object-object differentiation, autonomy, healthy self-activity I and you). The fifth level is secondary integration, i.e. finding one’s own identity, love relations, responsibility on the “self” line, reintegration, giving a life full of meaning. Man then, on the altar of love and self-sacrifice, burns everything equally: sickness and suffering, joy and ecstasy.⁴⁵

The term “Christoformization” by A. Jozalat Nowak fully reflects the mystery of man understood as a dynamic process of “planting roots in Christ”⁴⁶. Maturation in Christ is the realization through the formation of a sacramental personality. Its essential content is the dialectic of death and resurrection, disintegration and reintegration by the sacramental grace of Christ in the Holy Church. The determinant of all actions is the living Christ⁴⁷. He gives a person the direction, meaning and purpose of personal and social life. Man achieves the existential essence of his own life in Christ, who opens up temporal and eschatological perspectives for man. Dialogue and love become the normal way to God and man. All self relationships are characterized by maturity, autonomy, authenticity, awareness, servant understanding of power, acceptance of responsibility, attitude of dialogue⁴⁸. Man keeps a distance from himself and freedom

⁴⁴ Cf. T. Kobierzycki, *Filozofia osobowości*, 215.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 212.

⁴⁶ Cf. *Kościół święty porządkiem łaski i kryterium normy*, in: *Kościół – na upadek i na powstanie wielu*. Homo meditans XVII, ed. J. Misiurek, A. J. Nowak, W. Słomka, Lublin 1996, 118.

⁴⁷ Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Osobowość sakramentalna*, Lublin 1997, 81.

⁴⁸ Ibid., *Dojrzałość chrześcijańska wyrazem wolności wewnętrznej*, in: *Dojrzałość chrześcijańska*, Lublin 1994, ed. A. J. Nowak, W. Słomka, 204-211.

from the bonds of human systems, groups, from matter. It has a brighter and more effective perception of reality. He is free from all despair and hopelessness (cf. Mt 13:5-9)⁴⁹.

The path to the full development of personality is based on a realistic symbolism of abandoning and reconnecting that which has been abandoned at an ever higher level of the personal ideal. Because it is Christ, the multiplicity of symbolic disintegration and integration is simply infinite: how many things can be discovered in Christ, who is like a huge mine and multiple layers of treasures, in which, no matter how deep they are, there will be no end to them. In every corner of these mysteries one can encounter here and there new deposits of new riches, as St. Paul points out, saying that all the treasures of wisdom are hidden in Christ (Col 2:3) (PD 37:4). The essence of christoforming is to free oneself from lower structures towards a higher one. There is a transition from heteronomy to autonomy, from passivity to activity, from a one-level reality to a multi-level reality (symbolic realism). Through the wilderness of fears and hopes, ambivalence and crises⁵⁰. Finally, Christianity has a paschal dimension, a transition from the religious to the sacramental plane, from exuberant individualism to communion of persons, from collectivism to the ecclesial sphere, from an attitude of “having” to “being”, from a heteronomic conscience to a sacramental conscience, from an attitude of alms giving to loving Christ in every human being, from seeking a sense of life in the hierarchy of values to finding it in Christ, with which the mystical integration that makes one’s head spinning crowns the work⁵¹.

Conclusion

So much depends on the concept of human nature. It determines the meaning and purpose of life. It determines what we should do, what we should stop doing, what we should fight for. The fundamental question is: Is there a “true” or “inborn” nature of man? Alternatively, maybe there is none. Perhaps man is a stream of economic, cultural and driving factors? If a society has created us, it is only society that determines our development. Today, the dangerous view that there are no objective values but only subjective concepts that find inhuman

⁴⁹ Ibid., 86.

⁵⁰ Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Psychologiczny aspekt nadziei*, in: *Nadzieja w postawie ludzkiej Homo meditans VII*, ed. Słomka, Lublin 1992, pp. 82-83

⁵¹ Cf. A. J. Nowak, *Kościół święty porządkiem łaski i kryterium normy*, 120-127.

embodiment in social life is overcome. Only a coherent and dynamic human project, including the vision of the world, nature and condition of man with his transcendental openness to eternity and grace and a recipe for its perfection and development solves the problem of the mystery of a person. Thus, neither the Platonic rule of reason, nor the economic base of human nature, nor the Freudian unconscious structure of human nature, or Sartre's radical freedom reveals the truth about the man but the Person – Jesus Christ.

The mystery of the human being really only becomes clear in the Mystery of the Incarnate Word (KDK 22). Man is destined for complete "divinization" by God in glory (cf. KKK 398) St. Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguorum liber*: PG 91, 1156 C. What is at stake is the dignity of the human person whose development has been entrusted to man by God and of which we are debtors. No thought system, the most comprehensive shots, or any religion can gain true knowledge about man. The search for answers within reason and religion is insurmountable. The knowledge of man comes from outside with Revelation. A special intimacy with the Father, Son and Spirit is the richness of faith and its gift. St. Athanasius of Alexandria states: It is through the Spirit that we share in God. Through participation in the Spirit, we become participants of the Divine nature... That is why those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinized. In practice, we find that it is impossible to see two spheres in man: body and soul, because both have been called to participate in God's life. Nothing stands in the way of a person realizing a project of life based on Jesus Christ, and if he does not do so, he expresses the ignorance of his fact and mystery. In the theological language, we call this mystery "Christoforming". (A. J. Nowak). For God's will is your sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3, cf. Ef 1,4).

The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and model of all perfection, proclaimed to his disciples any state, altogether and each one individually, the holiness of life, of which he himself is the culprit and accomplisher: "Be perfect, then, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). (LG 40). To attain this perfection, the faithful should turn their strength obtained according to the measure of the gift of Christ, so that they may follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to the pattern which He Himself is for them (*ibid.*). The individual and historical realization of conforming to the Model will be a purifying "spiritual night" (St. John of the Cross) called in psychological language "positive disintegration". (K. Dąbrowski).

Christ urged continuous development and maturation, partial dying and resurrection, transcending symbolic integration towards mystical union with Him. If a person refuses, he sinks into darkness and despair, when he opens up, infinite horizons of happiness and fulfillment shine away from him.