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PLANNING THE PASTORAL ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH

The purpose of this article is to present the issue of pastoral planning¹. Houtart and Goddijn identified five necessary conditions for planning pastoral activities: 1) knowledge of the world in which the pastoral activity is carried out, along with knowledge of the concrete relations that occur between the Church and the world (socio-religious stage); 2) theological reflection on the Church's mission in a concrete world; 3) the laying out of a program of pastoral activities, with an indication of the essential points of pastoral orientation, based on the results of the individual inquiries; 4) the elaboration of a plan of pastoral activities with a strict definition of the stages of their implementation and the division of responsibilities; 5) periodic revision of the plan².

The elements of the pastoral action plan outlined above indicate the wide range of possibilities for collaboration among the various agents. On the other hand, based on daily experience, it can be said that in traditional pastoral ministry it is the priest who not only fulfills his priestly duties, but literally has to do everything, think of everything, and be everywhere. Meanwhile, the pastor should open his mind to the light of God's plans, which guide his activities and sustain the apostolic effectiveness³.

¹ J. Przybyłowski, *Koordynacja działań w duszpasterstwie*, „Warszawskie Studia Pastoralne” no. 18 (2002), pp. 201-214.

² F. Houtart, W. Goddijn, *Duszpasterstwo całościowe i planowanie duszpasterskie*, „Concilium: Międzynarodowy Przegląd Teologiczny” 1-10 (1965-1966), p. 176.

³ A. Ballestrero, *Vieni e seguimi*, Casale Monferrato 1991, p. 45.

In pastoral practice, however, the basic principle of planned activity should be the assignment of responsibility to those involved in carrying out specific tasks, and the inclusion of as many people as possible to carry it out. The second important prerequisite for the planned pastoral activity is the value of diagnostic studies, created with the participation of specialists in social sciences (especially sociologists and psychologists) and specialists-theologians (especially pastoralists). A reliable assessment of reality leads to the identification of key problems faced by contemporary man in the Church and in the world.

To solve the most urgent problems „tactical”-detailed plans are needed, in which the most important are the managerial decisions concerning the means, ways and time of action. However, the most pastorally valuable plans are „strategic” (general) which take into account the fundamental goals of the whole Church’s activity (orthodoxy and ecclesial orthopraxy), on which the direction of fulfilling the pastoral mission of the universal Church and the local churches depends.

1. Evangelical realism in pastoral activity

Evangelical realism plays a very important role in the planning (general and specific) of pastoral activity. In this case, it means that pastoral activity, although it concerns the current problems of the life of the Church and her members, yet its „fruitfulness” is related to the near or distant future, because all the manifestations of the ecclesial mission are „investments for the future” only in different degrees. Hence, in pastoral activity, the „today and tomorrow” of concrete undertakings are planned, but their effects remain a matter of the nearer or farther time perspective of the existence of the Church and of the life of each member of the ecclesial community individually⁴.

⁴ According to the Magisterium, the Church will enter the Kingdom only through the final Passover, in which she will follow her Lord in His Death and His Resurrection. *The Kingdom will therefore be fulfilled, not by the historical triumph of the Church according to a gradual development, but by the victory of God over the final unleashing*

Evangelical realism is related to two time perspectives. This can be analyzed using the example of the Gospel description of the young man's encounter with Christ⁵. It is significant that a young man who follows the requirements of the Decalogue in his life comes to Christ on his own initiative. For many pastors this is the „ideal” for the realization of which all pastoral means are engaged. For a person's life according to God's law is the epitome of Christian holiness. Meanwhile, a young person comes with a serious question: *Good Teacher, what must I do to attain eternal life?* So he is not satisfied with living according to God's law; he needs something more, or perhaps just reassurance that this is sufficient. Jesus' final answer is *Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.* This condition saddened the young man because he was rich and could not give up his possessions.

Here we are dealing with two time perspectives. The young man receives not one but two offers from Jesus: treasure in heaven and to follow him. Between them there is one condition: get rid of the possessions and the young man's reaction—he grieved. „Treasure in heaven” is the farthest time perspective, one might say an impassable (conclusive) perspective, and thus static. Following Jesus, on the other hand, is dynamic and concerns the present and immediate future. At this stage in the development of the life of faith and personal holiness, neither one nor the other of Jesus' proposals is a sufficient argument for the young man to take action to achieve eternal life.

This young man, although not prepared to „possess treasure in heaven” or to follow Jesus, nevertheless cannot be left „alone.” Here is revealed the power of evangelical realism, which makes it possible to present this ultimate goal in such a way that its realization „today and tomorrow” satisfies the idealism of a man whose faith is still being

of evil, which will cause His Bride to descend from heaven. The triumph of God over the rebellion of evil will take the form of the Last Judgment after the last cosmic upheaval of this world, which is passing away. Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego, Poznań 1994, 677.

⁵ Mt 19:16-22.

formed and concretized, and whose holiness is not yet sufficiently embodied.

In pastoral activity, therefore, one cannot assume that the subjects are mature and motivated people. Even if they are those who regularly fulfill their religious duties and try to observe God's law in their daily lives, their situation is still very difficult because they have two time perspectives before them: treasure in heaven and following Jesus. Both are conditioned by requirements that one must grow and mature to fulfill.

Therefore, very often Christians react to the Church's requirements for them like the young man in the Gospel: they leave sad. Under no circumstances can these people be left alone. For to be sad does not mean to give up maturity of faith and holiness of life. They need authentic pastoral care, for they are the main subjects of the Church's pastoral action. The mature in faith and the saints live with the desire to attain eternal life and follow Jesus as their Guide in faith. On the other hand, „ordinary” or perhaps „common” Christians very often live in the darkness of „sorrow” and really need the presence of the Church and expect pastoral ministry.

For this reason, pastoral activity should be characterised by individuality, uniqueness, „the perfection of the moment”. This young man, just like any other „ordinary” Christian, will more than once experience moments of elation and doubt, joy and sorrow. However, these are „momentary” experiences which only partially influence the consolidation of the most important moral-existential values. This is because the experiential element plays a large role in shaping the individual Christian's life of faith and personal holiness, but this is only a personal temporal perspective. Pastoral action, on the other hand, which has a communal character, should be based on evangelical realism, whose furthest perspective is the „treasure in heaven”-the basis for evaluating the past and the source of hope for „today and tomorrow”.

The spiritual problems of the contemporary Christian are connected with his own „experiences”, both joyful and painful. But these problems grow and become intrusive when one is confronted

with the negative experiences of others, including pastors, who live in sadness and are pessimistic about their „yesterday, today and tomorrow.” In the lives of such people, the „treasure in heaven” has not become a source of hope and optimism for life. For modern man, they are not witnesses of faith.

The young man, though he leaves Christ saddened, does not scare others away, because the reason for his sadness is his current situation („for he had many possessions”), which he will have to deal with alone. So he accepts Christ’s words with sadness (this is his experience), but the prospect of „treasure in heaven” can already become a permanent part of his further development.

In contrast, it is Jesus’ proposal to the young man to „follow him” that should be the primary dimension of Gospel realism. „Treasure in heaven” symbolizes an ideal also shown to contemporary Christians as the basic temporal perspective for a life of holiness. However, this ideal cannot be limited to the requirement of fidelity to God’s law.

A closer perspective is that of „following Jesus”, and this should be the primary goal of all pastoral activity. Even if something „grieves” a person, that is, hinders his growth in holiness at this stage of life, it does not affect his life of faith, the immediate perspective of which is to follow Jesus. Pastoral action should therefore guide and support the spiritual development of the person, for whom „following Jesus” is possible even in moments of „grief”. In the present, which belongs to man, only a relationship with Christ will satisfy his basic spiritual needs. In contrast, the prospect of eternal life is the seed of faith, the fruit of which will be the eternal happiness of being with Jesus (a treasure in heaven)⁶.

⁶ The fundamental purpose of pastoral ministry stems from the essence of evangelization. R. Cantalamessa, showing the basic goal of evangelization, states that to evangelize means *to begin from the beginning. This beginning-is: “Jesus is Lord”*. *This is the first kerygma, a proclamation that had existed before the Gospels were written. Jesus died for our sins, rose again for our justification. Jesus is Lord. This is the seed from which all the Gospels developed. We must sow the seed again. Jesus is Lord.* R. Cantalamessa, *Wsluchani w Duchu Świętego*, Kraków 1994, p. 119.

The words of Christ, who is the „Guarantor” of the truthfulness of all God’s promises, addressed to the young man, open to modern man the ultimate perspective of his life. So if even „yesterday, today, and tomorrow” are not a reason for optimism in life, the „treasure in heaven,” the seemingly farthest perspective on life, will forever remain a source of hope that is already being fulfilled. This is pointed out by John Paul II, who wrote to the youth: „There is hope in you, because you belong to the future and at the same time the future belongs to you. And hope is always linked to the future, it is an expectation of ,future goods. As a „Christian” virtue, it is connected with the expectation of those eternal goods which God has promised to man in Jesus Christ. At the same time, this hope, as a „Christian” and „human” virtue, is based on the expectation of goods which man will produce by making use of the talents which Providence has given him. In this sense, the future belongs to you, young people, just as it once belonged to the adult generation-and in turn, with them, has become the present. Adults are primarily responsible for this present, for its many shapes and profiles. You are responsible for what will someday become the present with you, but is now still the future. When we say that the future belongs to you, we are thinking in terms of human transience, which is always a transience into the future⁷.

Evangelical realism is thus based on the farthest perspective of eternal life associated with hope, but its driving force is the perspective of following Jesus in the way of faith. This is the most important challenge for pastoral activity.

In pastoral work there are no readymade formulas for achieving personal holiness, nor for solving the individual problems of contemporary Christians. One cannot treat pastoral actions instrumentally in a „commercial” way. The power of pastoral activity has its source in the truthfulness of the Gospel, which, even when it grieves, is „grieved in God’s way” and thus reveals and awakens the authentic Christian vocation.

⁷ Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter to the Young People of the World for the International Year of Youth*, Vatican 1985, 1 (hereinafter abbreviated as LM).

The principle of evangelical realism is particularly important in all forms of the communal exercise of the Christian vocation in groups of various kinds, since it makes it possible to draw a clear distinction between their natural and supernatural character. The confusion of these two orders in the activity of religious groups leads to a questioning of evangelical realism. The result is the application to their members of a falsely understood „psychological therapy” through spiritual means. Its positive effects are illusory and constitute „a new patch on an old garment”. Permanent evangelization must play a central role in the action plan of religious groups. It is a constant invitation to meet Christ in order to have one’s own conversation with Him, which is of crucial and fundamental importance for people, especially young ones⁸.

In pastoral ministry, evangelical realism makes possible pastoral contact „each with each.” „Following Jesus”, however, remains a personal decision of man, since it is a response to the individual call and invitation of Jesus. Pastoral care should therefore put at the forefront the unambiguous definition of the principles of man’s realization of his Christian vocation on an individual level. The only model for all to follow is Christ, and it is only the personal response to Jesus’ call that provides the basis for fulfilling the Christian vocation in the community dimension. Thus, evangelization efforts should precede pastoral work, for in the Gospel there is the answer to the fundamental question about the meaning of life. The truth of the Gospel, on the other hand, is so closely connected to the life of each person and his or her experiences, that an encounter with Christ cannot take place outside of the real world.

Evangelization is bearing witness to Christ. *This witnessing, however, cannot be separated from the truth and from reality*, writes M. Gogacz. *Because of this, the ability to recognize truth and reality is indispensable, the ability to be in the real world of created beings and in the real world of the Creator, who is our loving Father. (...) Our teaching of Christianity, our behaviour, action and testimony*

⁸ LM 2.

*will inspire confidence only when it is confirmed by the real world: the reality of creatures and the reality of the Creator who is God in the Trinity of Persons*⁹.

2. Pastoral programs

The task of pastoral theology is to make long-term predictions and to create programs of pastoral action¹⁰. This task is fulfilled by the pastoralist,¹¹ who is also a pastoral futurologist. Church action programs are usually ad hoc in nature and involve predictions for the short term¹². For such predictions a scientific diagnosis of the current ecclesiastical reality in the context of historical (external) conditions is needed. However, the planning of church activities should also take into account a longer-term perspective. In a scientific way such long-term forecasts can be formulated by pastoral futurology¹³.

⁹ M. Gogacz, *Warunki skuteczności apostołstwa świeckich*, „Communio” 1 (1986) 6, p. 125-126.

¹⁰ In the Church, long-term programs of activities may be related to the preparation for the celebration of the anniversary of historical events (e.g. novena before the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland), or a program of preparation for the celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ.

¹¹ In Poland, pastoral programs are prepared by a team of people, specialists in various fields, often only theoreticians or practical experts. These teams often lack pastoralists who combine theory with practice. A „collective pastoralist” is most desirable to create such programs.

¹² Pastoral programs cover one year.

¹³ Pastoral futurology is not about creating utopias or new ideologies, but about making valid predictions for the Church based on theoretical and practical knowledge about the Church. Predicting the future for the actions of the Church is easier than other kinds of futurology, because the main goal of the Church—the fulfillment of the salvific mission—cannot change, and secondary and intermediate goals do not affect the primary forms of realization of the Church. The second facilitation for pastoral futurology is pastoral anthropology, which shows man in the basic and unchanging dimensions of humanity (created man, saved man, eschatological man). Ecclesial futurology is also facilitated by the acceptance of the truth that the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit, therefore her development is purposeful, orderly, and the attainment of the final goal is certain despite all the shortcomings of ecclesial

a) pastoral futurology

Various methods can be used to make futurological predictions of ecclesial action. The most common is the extrapolation of current trends in ecclesial practice determined within the Church, taking into account the changes in the earthly reality in which the Church carries out her salvific mission. One can take into account various religious, moral, socio-cultural, moral, economic and even political transformations. Some of the transformations in the Church will concern structures (e.g., the growing importance of small groups in ordinary ministry, the emergence of various forms of extraordinary ministry), while other transformations will relate to specific pastoral activities (e.g., a change in the style of pastoral ministry in urban environments, greater participation of laity in parish councils).

The conditional predictions take into account both positive and negative factors that will affect pastoral activity over a period of time. The longer the time horizon of the pastoral prediction being prepared, the less controllable the accuracy of the prediction is, as the relationships between positive and negative factors influencing the shape of church practice will become looser and looser.

There may be elements of self-fulfilling predictions in classical conditional predictions. This is due to the fact that in determining the conditional prediction it is possible to indicate with a high degree of probability the inevitability of certain positive and negative phenomena in ecclesial reality (e.g. increase in the number of people recognizing the evangelical values while contesting church structures: Christ-yes; Church-no).

b) conditional forecasting

Forecasting the activities of the Church is closely related to the directions of changes taking place in earthly reality. The trends of phenomena resulting from the process of globalization, demographic changes, large-scale migration, ecological problems

communal life in the human sense. Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, Vatican 1979, 21 (hereinafter abbreviated as RH).

can be predicted with great accuracy, because these transformations are constantly monitored and scientifically studied and interpreted. Some of them have a very large impact on the practice of the Church. Therefore, in projecting the renewal of the Church's activity, taking into account the salvific character of the ontological community of Christ's disciples and followers, it is necessary to indicate how this community can become more and more also a „humanly” conscious community of life and action¹⁴.

In the activity of the Church the influence of grace is manifested and the conditions of nature are marked. However, there is no contradiction between the two, for they preserve their autonomy in pastoral practice. The ontological community of Christ's followers becomes the Church through the grace given to each member individually. The fruitfulness of saving „ecclesial” grace is unconditional. On the other hand, the natural conditions of the Church have a human dimension and are functionally dependent on people. For this reason, the Church unconditionally fulfills the salvific plan, while at the same time human activity is of great importance in the same Church, even though there may be abuses of nature and practice because of this. It is necessary, however, to accept the fundamental truth that although the building of the Church rests on man by his nature frail and flawed, yet through Christ he is changed as if into a strong rock which with God's help will never fail: „Upon this rock I will build my Church”¹⁵.

Speculative theology examines the essence of „ecclesial” grace, analyzes its supernatural character, seeks to justify its fruitfulness, considers the influence of grace on human spiritual development, and defines the role of grace in the salvific mission of the Church. The fruit of these studies is theoretical ecclesiology. Pastoral theology, on the other hand, studies ecclesial practice, analyzing its structural, personal and functional elements, monitoring the course of particular activities and procedures of their implementation, defining their

¹⁴ RH 21.

¹⁵ Mt 16:18; Pope Paul VI, Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*, Vatican 1964, 37 (hereinafter abbreviated as ES).

organization in detail. In this way it forms a pastoral ecclesiology. However, it must be very strongly emphasized that pastoral theology, while studying the nature of the Church manifested through actions, does not violate the autonomy of salvific „ecclesial” grace, whose fruitfulness is manifested in the individual life of each member of the Church.

The ultimate goal of the Church is not subject to human influence, since God’s providence oversees the realization of the salvific plan and the ecclesial community acts under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Church, therefore, as an organic salvific community, has no free will or thought of her own, but is completely subject to the actions of the Holy Spirit. The Church is constituted by people, but the organism of the Church is not the sum of persons and does not arise from the union of their existence. It was Jesus Christ who founded the Church to be the devoted mother and dispenser of salvation for the whole human community. The Church of Christ is thus called to carry out salvific mediation, but her mission is parental in nature, for she is a „mother” to the human community. The Church, therefore, gives birth to a saving human community. The Church’s born followers of Christ throughout the ages show their special love and care for the Church. The motive of love for the Church is the predilection for the glory of God Most High and the eternal salvation of human souls¹⁶.

c) positive and negative conditional predictions

In preparing both positive (optimistic) and negative (pessimistic) conditional predictions for church practice, several principles must be considered. First of all, it is necessary to precisely delineate the structural and functional elements of the projected phenomena (events, processes, qualitative and quantitative transformations). It is also important to determine the conditions that may positively or negatively affect the forecasted phenomena. The third principle concerns the influence of forecasted phenomena on people’s attitudes,

¹⁶ ES 21.

socio-cultural transformations and the value system. When setting conditional predictions they should also be „cleansed” of emotions that carry unfounded hopes or fears¹⁷.

The Church lives in the world and fulfills its salvific mission there, but the relationship between the Church and society varies. Given the manifestations of society’s aversion to the Church, she may keep these relations to a minimum in order to refrain from contact with a godless society. She may set herself the task of searching out the evils that are rampant in it and publicly denounce and combat them by waging „holy war”. On the contrary, she may approach secular society to such an extent that she seeks either to influence it or to govern it in the name of God. The Church, without excluding other appropriate forms, may also enter into dialogue with society. This dialogue must not be uniform all the time, but must be adapted to the abilities of those with whom it is conversed and to the circumstances. For dialogue is different with children and adults, with believers in Christ and those who do not believe in him. This is required first of all by the widespread habit of understanding the relationship between the sacred and the secular; then by the increased development which has so profoundly changed the appearance of human society in our time; by the pluralism of that society; and finally by the maturity reached by modern man, who, whether believer or nonbeliever, has, under the influence of civilization, become capable of thought, of conversation, of serious dialogue¹⁸.

Although the Church has contributed much to the progress of culture, we know from experience that for accidental reasons the reconciliation of culture and Christian teaching has not always been without difficulty. These difficulties are not necessarily detrimental

¹⁷ When predicting e.g. the possibility of the unity of Christian Churches it is necessary to indicate the necessary conditions in which this unity could take place, and also to predict how it could influence the system of values and attitudes of Christians united in one Church of Christ, as well as how this would affect the earthly reality.

¹⁸ ES 78.

to the life of faith, but can even stimulate the mind to a more accurate and profound understanding of it. Newer research and discoveries in the sciences, as well as in history and philosophy, raise new questions which have implications for life and call for new investigations on the part of theologians¹⁹. It is the task of theologians to seek ever more appropriate ways of communicating doctrine to contemporary people, while preserving the methods and requirements proper to the science of theology. For it is necessary to distinguish between the deposit of faith itself, that is, its truth, and the manner of expressing it, while preserving the same sense and meaning²⁰.

3. Principles of pastoral programming

Since the Church is a visible community, there must be room in pastoral activities for human activity, but within a well-defined scope. For this reason, the salvific mission should be an organized activity, and pastoral programming can take into account the tenets of organization and management theory and serve to help guide the salvific activity of the Church as well. However, the Magisterium's teaching on the supernatural nature of the Church and her hierarchical structure must be accepted. If her divine nature is fully recognized, her social dimension (human community) can be shown in this perspective. Considering the salvific purpose of the Church's activity and the social dimension of the ecclesial community, a very important question arises which must be taken into account in pastoral programming: to what extent will the intensification of social (complementary) activity serve the salvific mission?

The Church lives and acts in human society and is therefore deeply rooted in it. The Church's bond with human society has concrete dimensions: from it she receives her members, from it she receives the priceless treasures of human culture, she shares its destiny and

¹⁹ Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, Vatican 1965, 62.

²⁰ Cf. Pope John XXIII, *Speech on the occasion of the solemn opening of the Second Vatican Council*, Vatican 11 October 1962, AAS 54 (1962), p. 792.

promotes its well-being. Comprehensive studies show, however, that today's humanity is in the midst of changes, upheavals and developments that alter not only its external lifestyle but also its spiritual attitude. People's views, their mental culture, and their spiritual life are being strongly influenced whether by the great advances in the many sciences, technology, and social life, or by the philosophical currents or various theories of statehood that are troubling and permeating society. All this, like the waves of the sea, floods the Church and causes upheaval within her. The prevailing relationships in the world have a great impact on the members of the community of Christ and lead to bewilderment and confusion, which can undermine the very foundations of the Church's cohesiveness, since many expect the Church to renounce her mission and to adopt new and unexpected forms of life²¹.

In planning the pastoral activities of the Church, therefore, important questions of a cognitive nature arise: 1. are the needs of disciples of Christ fully united to the ecclesial community considered in the pastoral programs prepared? 2. do pastoral plans take into consideration the needs of people who are poorly connected to the ecclesial community? 3. does pastoral programming address the needs of people who are not connected to the Church?

The Church, before studying any special issue and before balancing the guidelines of her conduct toward the human community, must first reflect on herself. The Church must therefore discern more clearly the purposes entrusted to her by God, in order to acquire more light, new strength and a surge of joy in the performance of her tasks, and finally to find more appropriate ways of establishing closer, more effective and more fruitful relations with the human community to which she belongs, even though she differs from it in her own distinctive characteristics²².

In this perspective, further debatable issues arise. The planning of the Church's activities, both pastoral and complementary,

²¹ ES 26.

²² ES 18.

demands self-reflection on the part of the Church, who must come to know herself better and better. This is the task of all theology, but a special research mission in this regard falls to pastoral theology. It is only in the second stage of pastoral programming that the goals, tasks, methods and means of pastoral actions should be defined more precisely: pastoral, apostolic, evangelizing, complementary (education, upbringing, social and charitable activities, cultural and media activities). In pastoral planning the specificity of the internal situation within the Church is also very important, as well as external influences, conditioned by religion, social, cultural, moral, economic, political. Every evaluation of the external and internal situation of the Church must be verified by means of precisely defined criteria formulated on the basis of theological and pastoral research on the one hand and empirical research on the other.

In the assumptions of pastoral programs it is presupposed that the planned actions will be effective, i.e. will bring the expected effect. It is therefore necessary to determine exactly what should remain intact in the Church and what needs to be renewed. The supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the life of the Church leads to her becoming more and more in harmony with the original thought of her Founder, on the one hand, and with the proper character of human society, which the Church shapes through the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation, on the other²³. The planned vision of the Church in the future must therefore take into account the expectations of her members. However, one cannot operate here on the principle of supply and demand. Church members must be adequately prepared to receive and accept the new face of the Church. The Church is constantly transforming herself, striving towards Christ's ideal, but at the same time remaining close to people whose weaknesses limit her growth towards perfection. For this reason the Church seeks the possibility of renewing herself, that is, of correcting the errors committed by her members, which her own conscience points out and condemns in the mirror of her model-Christ. The purpose of pastoral programs,

²³ ES 44.

therefore, is to make the members of the Church aware of the need to correct their own mistakes and to strive earnestly for all things more perfect, as well as to select carefully the means for achieving this necessary renewal, the goal of which will be the improvement of the life of the ecclesial community²⁴.

Pastoral programs should be prepared collaboratively, involving specialists from various disciplines of knowledge about the Church and its activities. In pastoral programming, the help of specialists from secular sciences and practical experts in various fields of the broader life of the human community is also necessary. Pastoral programs should be prepared holistically, without the necessity of adapting their main principles to the pastoral work carried out in individual dioceses. Thus a high degree of organizational generality should remain. It is impossible to prepare national programs in such a way that individual dioceses change their basic assumptions. Diocesan pastoral ministry has its own specificity, which should not be violated by a well-constructed national program. Instead, there is a need to harmonize the goals of the national program with diocesan initiatives. Creating constantly new proposals introduces unnecessary organizational mess. The national program should not demolish the diocesan pastoral ministry, but complement it, support it, inspire it, renew it, and build it up. In each diocese the Church fulfills her salvific mission in communion with the whole Church. This is the basic assumption. The basic salvific and complementary functions are also carried out in the local Church. Pastoral programs should therefore be built on these foundations, without introducing unnecessary organizational novelties. Every diocese, regardless of the program, must update the ways in which it fulfills its salvific mission. The task of each local Church, on the other hand, must be to monitor pastoral activity on an ongoing basis, to establish a calendar of works to be carried out and to promote pastoral initiatives on a diocesan level.

Finally, it is worth returning once again to the first question: can salvific activity be programmed? Pastoral programs mobilize

²⁴ Cf. ES 44.

the members of the Church and guide their activities. It is therefore necessary to prepare annual pastoral programs. On the other hand, it is necessary to think seriously about the addressees. A pastoral program will fulfil its role if it reaches the addressees. It may be considered that until now the program has been known by selected people, especially pastors. Instead, the program should be in every Catholic family's home. Do contemporary Christians not read the Bible or the Catechism? This is not an argument. The program should be found in Catholic families.

There are very many possibilities and ways to reach people. You can prepare important content in the form of very small publications; you can reach them through catechized youth, through members of various church associations; you can look for ways to reach the recipients through the Internet. The assumptions of the program should be known to the widest possible group of people. The program itself will not change anything, neither will the knowledge about it fulfil its role, but the test of its need and effectiveness is every disciple of Christ, who identifies himself with the Church or is far from it. The pastoral program should be alive, and the strength of its life comes from each person who will find in it guidance for himself on the path of his life in Christ and in the world. The program has a fundamental task: to attract to Christ and to help His disciples in their daily lives to follow the way of faith to reach the treasure in heaven.

Summary

The aim of this article is to present strategies and tactics of planning in pastoral practice. A very important role in pastoral planning (general and detailed) is played by evangelical realism, which points to eternal life as the most distant perspective of the work of salvation (pastoral future research). This ultimate goal of the Church is not subject to human influence, since divine Providence watches over the realization of the plan of salvation and ecclesial communion acts under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Since the Church lives in the world and fulfils her mission of salvation there, the results of theological research and the achievements of the laity must be included in the planning. This helps the Church to understand better

the conditions under which she can fulfil her mission of salvation. In pastoral planning, the Church's self-reflection also plays an important role in determining precisely what should remain intact in the Church and what should be renewed. Properly planned pastoral activity helps the Church to draw people to Christ and to support them on the path of faith that leads to eternal life.

Key words: planning, program, pastoral, Church

Streszczenie

Celem tego artykułu jest przedstawienie strategii i taktyki planowania w praktyce pastoralnej. Bardzo ważną rolę w planowaniu pastoralnym (ogólnym i szczegółowym) odgrywa realizm ewangeliczny, który wskazuje na życie wieczne jako najdalszą perspektywę działalności zbawczej (futurologia pastoralna). Ten ostateczny cel Kościoła nie podlega wpływom ludzkim, gdyż nad realizacją planu zbawczego czuwa Boża Opatrzność, a wspólnota eklezjalna działa pod wpływem Ducha Świętego. Ponieważ Kościół żyje w świecie i tam spełnia swoją zbawczą misję, dlatego w planowaniu należy uwzględnić wyniki badań teologii i osiągnięcia nauk świeckich. Pomaga to Kościołowi lepiej rozeznaczyć warunki, w jakich spełnią swoją misję zbawczą. W planowaniu pastoralnym ważną rolę spełnia również autorefleksja Kościoła, dzięki której można dokładnie określić, co powinno pozostać w Kościele nienaruszone, a co podlega odnowie. Właściwie zaplanowana działalność pastoralna pomaga Kościołowi przyciągać ludzi do Chrystusa i wspiera ich na drodze wiary, która prowadzi do życia wiecznego.

Słowa kluczowe: planowanie, program, działalność pastoralna, Kościół

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