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PLACE OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY IN THE SYSTEM OF SCIENCE

Science cannot only be a reproduction of facts, but it must also include creative elements that may derive therefrom. Its content is the accumulation of knowledge and learning about the processes of its creation and the laws that govern it. Science understood in such a way allows man to see the reality more clearly, develops criticism, teaches ordering, leads to cognition and realization of the truth in life¹.

Science should enrich people so that they can develop. However, all science accomplishes these goals in its own way. Using its own methods and systems of thought, the science contributes to the study of reality. Since it is easier to achieve goals in cooperation, no science can treat its own way of cognition, scientific methods, and language as the only way of finding the truth. All science, while remaining itself, must be distinguished by its openness to the results of research of other sciences².

1. The concept of science

The term *science* is ambiguous and is therefore referred to in different ways. Most commonly the following four meanings of science are mentioned.

¹ Cf. W. Pytkowski, *Organizacja badań i ocena prac naukowych*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 7–21.

² Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, Wrocław 1981, pp. 9–10.

Science as scientific thinking (scientific attitude). It is the desire to know and understand, questioning to all statements, inventiveness of thought and criticism, versatility, exactitude, precision, and scientific detachment.

Learning as activity. In a broader sense, it is a set of activities of a science practitioner, i.e., teaching, learning, and acquiring knowledge. In the strict sense, it is scientific research leading to the cognition and systematisation of specialist knowledge based on experience or intellectual self-evidence of the subject, realised according to clearly stated and rational methods.

Science as a product (result) of scientific research. It is a scientific output of mankind, a result of scientific research systematised in a specific form, satisfying general intellectual interests of mankind, expressed in communicative language, rationally justified and organised.

Science as a field of culture directly related to science. It includes the aforementioned forms of scientific cognition, as well as the tools and means of practising science, the persons of scientists and scientific institutions (research institutes), as well as everything that is directly related to the process of scientific cognition³.

The object of scientific cognition can be anything that is accessible to scientific research. However, there are still areas of reality that we are unable to study scientifically. Scientists are looking for ways and methods to study such reality. Thus, the area of scientific research continues to expand⁴.

There are several criteria of scientificness. The first of these is the obviousness of cognition. It follows from this criterion that only those statements are certain that are self-evident. However, there may be direct and indirect obviousness. Directly self-evident assertions result from the structure of the human mind or emerge as such to the mind and cannot be meaningfully questioned. These are called

³ Cf. S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, Lublin 1981, pp. 11–18; Z. Hajduk, *Ogólna metodologia nauk*, Lublin 2001, pp. 178–179.

⁴ Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., p. 31.

axioms. On the other hand, assertions that are indirectly self-evident can be reduced to axioms by appropriate reasoning sequences or can be derived from them⁵.

The second criterion of scientism is experimental verifiability. An experiment in the strict sense is a scientific experiment⁶. More broadly, experience is empirical research conducted using various methods and techniques of scientific observation. And in its broadest sense, experience means life practice⁷.

The third criterion of scientificness is the methodicalness of scientific cognition. Only cognition in which one of the basic scientific methods is applied has a scientific character. The most frequently mentioned methods of scientific thinking are analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, comparison, and generalisation.

2. Development of science

Over the centuries there have been significant changes in the way the concept of science has been viewed. From antiquity to the present day, there have been many conceptions of science. It is difficult to discuss them all in this paper, hence only four basic ones⁸.

The first account of science is associated with Aristotle (384-322). He claimed that science consists in cognition of the external world through the senses. The cognition should be certain and obvious. It is achieved when one grasps the essence of a thing and its ultimate causes. Since cognition of the essence of a thing through its final causes has the character of necessity and generality, therefore individual facts and events do not belong to the scope of knowledge in the strict sense. Hence Aristotle distinguished between *episteme* (scientific cognition) and *doxa* (knowledge). By proper science Aristotle meant obvious,

⁵ Ibid, p. 28-29.

⁶ A scientific experiment consists in producing a specific phenomenon under conditions that enable the measurement of the relationship between a set of factors and the effect produced thereby. Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., p. 29.

⁷ Cf. *ibid*, p. 30.

⁸ Z. Hajduk, *Ogólna metodologia nauk*, op. cit., p. 185.

causal, and general cognition. Based on such an understanding of science, he created a scientific system with a deductive structure, in which some of its tasks are directly obvious, while others are derived from them as conclusions.

Aristotle's definition of science was of a general nature. Detailed sciences could not be included within the scope of science understood in such a way since they do not reach the essence of sensuous objects. Therefore, they could not fulfil the conditions posed by Aristotle. Consequently, Aristotle's notion of science changed over the centuries, however, his concept of science survived through the Middle Ages⁹.

For St. Thomas in the Middle Ages, much as for Aristotle in antiquity, the point of departure in scientific cognition are real existing things subject to the senses. The human mind in the act of cognition reaches the essence of sensuous things, abstracting from their characteristics. In this way general, self-evident, and causal knowledge is attained. And this knowledge is what constitutes science. That is why the medieval definition of science says: *scientia est cognitio certa essentiae rerum per causas*.

According to Aristotle, the primary tasks of science should be self-evident. The articles of faith contained in Divine Revelation and constituting the starting point for theology do not contain this obviousness. Therefore, St. Thomas Aquinas, looking for a solution to this problem, introduced a distinction between superior sciences and inferior sciences. The first have their own primary tasks at the start, based on direct self-evidence, and they constitute premises for another science. The second do not have their own primary principles for their reasoning, but instead borrow them from another higher science.

The first premises of theology (articles of faith) are not straightforward. However, by accepting the primary tasks from the divine revelation, theology may come to know new truths in a methodical

⁹ In the Middle Ages, the so-called Franciscan school used a conception of science based on Plato and St Augustine. Such an approach claimed that philosophy and the secular sciences were not independent, and that they were only subservient to theology.

and scientific way. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, theology is a science insofar as its first premises are true and its statements have the obviousness of result. The truthfulness of the first premises may be proved by demonstrating the historicity and reliability of God's revelation. Accordingly, St. Thomas Aquinas extended the concept of science developed by Aristotle to theology¹⁰. That way of posing the problem persisted into the 20th century¹¹.

The second stage in the development of science took place in the 17th century as a result of the emancipation of the so-called detailed sciences. The Aristotelian and Thomistic conception of science contained postulates (necessity, generality, correctness, obviousness) that could not be realised in their entirety by the modern detailed sciences. That is why modern sciences did not accept the old concept of science. They strove to tighten the concept of science, and thus to exclude theology and philosophy from it. The narrow meaning of the term science is already found in F. Bacon († 1626), Galilei († 1642) and I. Newton († 1727), who based their research mainly on experience. As a result, in the 17th century there were two different conceptions of science: an Aristotelian-Thomistic one and a new conception of science as a deductive theory based on the results of quantitative analysis tested empirically. An attempt to combine those two approaches to scientific knowledge was made by E. Kant († 1804), but it proved unsuccessful. Further development of science clearly followed the path outlined by naturalists of the 17th century, although some representatives of science of that epoch still clung to the old understanding of science.

The 19th century was characterised by a wealth of scientific concepts and an exuberant development of individual branches of scientific knowledge, mainly due to the development of universities. During that period a third fundamental concept of science was born, mainly thanks to the positivists (A. Comte † 1857; J.F. Herschel † 1871;

¹⁰ See S. Thomas Aquinas, S. Th. q. 1 a. 8.

¹¹ S. Napiórkowski, *Jak uprawiać teologię*, Wrocław 1996, p. 173.

J. St. Mill † 1873). It aimed at grasping regularities that are obtained inductively and verified empirically.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, due to the differentiation and specialisation of knowledge on the one hand and the increased development of the humanities on the other hand, the concept of humanistic cognition that was autonomous in relation to natural sciences began to develop (W. Ditchey † 1911; W. Windelband † 1915; H. Rickert † 1936). Criticism of the positivistic conception of science was also undertaken, especially under the influence of a change in the way of practising science, especially physics (A. Einstein † 1955)¹².

As a consequence of the aforementioned events, a fourth fundamental conception of science (phenomenological, practical) emerged in the 20th century. According to the phenomenological concept of science (E. Husserl † 1938; M. Scheler † 1928; R. Ingarden † 1970), cognition takes place in several stages, the first and most important of which is phenomenology, and the next are imaginative variation and eidetic reduction, through which one reaches the perception and essence of things. In that approach, *both real and formal disciplines may deserve to be called sciences, with the proviso that the humanities have been very clearly treated*¹³.

The pragmatist conception of science adopts scientific research as a tool for action. This approach is based on the unity of thinking and acting. Therefore, every scientific assertion can be translated into a directive. True cognition is only true if it is useful and practical, and the action based thereon is effective. The truthfulness of scientific theories is recognised and assessed by their usefulness to man (W. James † 1910; J. Dewey † 1952). The research method emphasises the biological and social function of cognition, which leads to epistemological relativism.

¹² S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, op. cit., p. 93-95; Z. Hajduk, *Ogólna metodologia nauk*, op. cit., p. 189-191; S. Napiórkowski, *Jak uprawiać teologię*, op. cit., p. 178-179.

¹³ S. Napiórkowski, *Jak uprawiać teologię*, op. cit., p. 180; S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, op. cit., p. 165 and 146.

3. Division of sciences

The first divisions of sciences were developed in antiquity. Plato divided science according to the cognitive powers and aims of knowledge. In this way, he distinguished the field of mental cognition, the field of sensory cognition, and practical and technical skills.

A more comprehensive division of science was made by Aristotle. He achieved that on the basis of two principles of division: the aim of science and the degree of abstraction of its subject. Regarding the purpose of science, Aristotle distinguished theoretical (speculative) knowledge, which seeks to know the truth for its own sake, and practical knowledge, when knowledge serves to guide behaviour. And also, productive (conceptual) knowledge, when cognition serves to produce beautiful or useful things.

Due to the degree of the abstraction of the subject, Aristotle divided the theoretical sciences into physical sciences, mathematical sciences and the first philosophy, i.e. metaphysics. Aristotle's classification of science, in its basic assumptions, had a great influence on the subsequent divisions of science¹⁴.

During the Middle Ages there was a division between theoretical knowledge and secular knowledge. Secular disciplines were called liberal arts (*artes liberales*). They were further divided into *trivium* and *quadrivium*. The *trivium* was of a humanistic nature (grammatics, rhetoric and dialectic), while the *quadrivium* was of a mathematical-naturalistic nature (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music)¹⁵.

In modern times new divisions of science were made. For example, based on its sources, F. Bacon († 1626) distinguished

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 234-235; Z. Hajduk, *Ogólna metodologia nauk*, op. cit., p. 214.

¹⁵ S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, op. cit., p. 236; Z. Hajduk, *Ogólna metodologia nauk*, op. cit., p. 214-215. Hugo from St. Victor († 1141) distinguished four groups of knowledge: theoretical (metaphysics, mathematics, physics), practical (ethics, economics, mechanics and logic). St. Thomas Aquinas used Aristotle's classification giving it more methodological justification. St. Bonaventure († 1274) divided knowledge into: theology, philosophy, fine arts, mechanical arts and free arts. See S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacji nauk*, op. cit., p. 236-238; Z. Hajduk, *Ogólna metodologia nauk*, op. cit., p. 214.

between theological (revealed) knowledge and knowledge acquired naturally by man. Depending on various human powers, it can be philosophical (based mainly on reason), historical (based on memory and observation) and poetic (based on imagination). Ch. Wolf († 1754), distinguishing theology from natural knowledge based on the method of the latter, distinguished three groups of sciences: philosophical, or rational; historical; natural, or empirical; and quantitative, or mathematical¹⁶.

In the 19th century there were many attempts to organise science. Among the better-known divisions of science of that period is the division by A. Comte († 1857) and H. Spencer († 1903). Comte distinguished between proper sciences, or fundamental sciences, that is of an abstract and explanatory nature, and derivative sciences, of a more specific nature. According to him, each science goes through three stages in its development: theological, metaphysical, and positive one. H. Spencer divided science by grouping it into abstract (formal), abstract-concrete (explanatory) and concrete (descriptive)¹⁷. Amidst many attempts to divide science in the 20th century, the most successful were proposals to divide it only into main fields of knowledge. The most frequently used epistemological principle of division is the area of research. It groups different sciences of the same material object. The organisational and institutional organisation of sciences by departments of academies of sciences or scientific societies, e.g., PAN (Polish Academy of Sciences), NSF (National Science Foundation), is more evident than before¹⁸.

Taking the sources of cognition as a criterion, all sciences can be divided into theology, based on divine revelation, and sciences based solely on reason. Of the sciences that are based on reason alone, in terms of the way they explain things one can distinguish philosophy,

¹⁶ S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, op. cit., p. 239; Z. Hajduk, *Ogól na metodologia nauk*, op. cit., p. 215.

¹⁷ S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, op. cit., p. 240-242.

¹⁸ Ibid pp. 243-245.

which considers reality in the light of ultimate causes, and the detailed sciences, which study the direct relationships between phenomena.

With regard to their subject and methods, detailed sciences can be divided into formal sciences using the deductive method¹⁹ and real sciences using the inductive method. Within the group of real sciences one can distinguish natural sciences, whose subject is the inanimate and animate nature, and whose aim is to learn about and establish relationships between phenomena. The technical sciences, as implementation sciences, aim to apply the results of natural research in practice, mainly chemistry, biology, and physics. The real sciences also include the humanities, which are concerned with man and culture²⁰. They are divided into three groups: the sciences of man and society (psychology, ethnology, anthropology, socioeconomics), the sciences of cultural resources (the sciences of religion, morality, art, and the sciences of the history of man living in society and his creations (historical sciences divided according to epochs, fields of culture, etc.))²¹. A complete catalogue of humanities raises problems due to the heterogeneity of their names and difficulties in their classification. Majka assumes a division of the humanities into theoretical humanities and practical humanities. The former includes nomological humanities (sociology, economics, legal theory, cultural theory) and idiographic humanities (historical sciences, including the history of religion, cultural history, social history, economic history, political history, humanistic geography, cultural anthropology, and ethnology). Cultural history includes the history of material culture, the history of literature, the history of art and the history of customs. The practical humanities include the political science (social and economic policies) and psychotechnics²².

¹⁹ Formal sciences include logic, mathematics, computer science, semiotics, semantics. See J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 34-36; S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, op. cit., p. 250.

²¹ S. Kamiński, *Pojęcie nauki i klasyfikacja nauk*, op. cit., p. 267.

²² Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

4. The concept and division of theology

The term theology stems from the Greek *logos* (word, concept, science) and *Theos* (God). The term *teologia* (English theology) thus means the science of God; theology is the science of God²³. The object of theology is God and His creatures remaining in relation to God as their end and cause. From the point of view of its material object, theology is divided into many theological disciplines whose internal unity is secured by the formal object common to all theological disciplines, i.e., by the common point of view of all theological disciplines, which is the light of divine revelation. All theological disciplines constitute an internal unity since they treat the material object in the light of divine revelation.

Theology can be systematised in various ways. Commonly, a classification into historical theology, systematic theology and practical theology is accepted. Historical theology includes biblical history and theology, church history, patristics, history of dogma and theology. The focus is on the historical facts contained in Scripture and in the Church. The task of historical theology is to discover and determine the meaning of historical, cultural, and theological facts. This sense can only exist in relation to God as the subject of salvation history; the facts, things, signs, and events studied by historical theology would themselves have no theological sense and would be

²³ The term “theology” has undergone a semantic evolution. It is not found in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Initially, Christian writers did not use this term either. Origen is the first to give the term ‘theology’ a Christian meaning.

He defined the practice of theology as talking about God and Christ, confessing and worshipping them. In the writings of the Latin Fathers, the term „theology” had no ecclesiastical meaning until St Augustine. What we today call theology, in the Latin Fathers and writers was called: “doctrina christiana”, “sacra Scriptura”, and “sacra erudition.” It was not until Peter Abelard that theology was understood as the whole of Christian science (teologia christiana). The understanding of theology as a systematic knowledge about God based on Revelation did not come until the 13th century. From the 13th century the term „theology” became widespread and preserved its content till our times as a systematic science about God based on Revelation. W. Granat, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, Lublin 1965, pp. 8-9.

meaningless. By virtue of their role, they are included in the economy of salvation²⁴.

The revealed truths are contained in the articles of faith which constitute the content of Sacred Scripture and tradition. These truths, by themselves, do not yet constitute a structured system. They are, however, a starting point for theological scientific investigation. Systematic theology organises them, explains and justifies all that is contained in God's revelation. The task of systematic theology is to interpret the content of the truths of faith and to derive new truths of faith from God's revelation. Although the traditional classification of systematic theology into fundamental, dogmatic, and moral theology is not questioned, we also encounter a subjective division of theological issues. This is related to the tendency to study the same subject matter from different points of view applying different methods²⁵.

Since theology is a science, and pastoral (practical) theology has its own section of research within the whole material subject of theology, it follows that pastoral theology, as a part of theology, is a theological science with its own material subject, which is separate and distinct from other theological sciences. It conducts scientific reflection on the salvific activity of the Church, through which the Church embodies herself in a particular historical and social reality²⁶.

Because of its subject matter, pastoral theology is a practical science. Its subject is the salvific activity of the Church as the People of God. It is also a normative science, as a set of norms, models, and directives of action, which should be followed by the Church, ecclesial communities, and their representatives in various fields and on various levels of ecclesial activity. The practical and normative elements of the theological and pastoral cognition should form the totality. The entirety of the theological-pastoral thinking consists

²⁴ Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., pp. 185–193; W. Granat, *Dogmatyka katolicka*, op. cit., pp. 46–49.

²⁵ Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., pp. 195–196.

²⁶ Cf. F. Blachnicki, *Teologia pastoralna ogólna*, part 2, Lublin 1971, pp. 88–98.

of both practical and normative aspects of scientific cognition since norms and practical directives for ecclesial activity cannot be constructed without prior reflection on reality and the foundations of its evaluation²⁷.

5. Concept and issues of pastoral theology

The term *pastoral theology* is used in a twofold sense. In a broad sense, it is used to designate several branches of pastoral theology, each of which deals with the salvific activity of the Church. These disciplines cover: pastoral didactics, which includes catechetics and homiletics; liturgy and pastoral theology in the narrow sense. Each of the aforementioned sub-disciplines of pastoral theology addresses its own area of the Church's activity, as well as possesses its own way of scientific reflection and its own methodological workshop²⁸.

Pastoral theology in the narrow sense is one of the mentioned sub-disciplines of pastoral theology. Its subject is the activity of the Church as the People of God in the world. Since representatives of various directions and approaches of this discipline emphasise different aspects of the Church's salvific activity in the theological and pastoral reflexion, and stress either ecclesiological or communitarian elements, or praxeological or socio-political ones, etc., there are numerous different definitions of pastoral theology²⁹.

Representatives of the ecclesiological current believe that pastoral theology is the theological science of the Church's actualization in the present³⁰. Rahner considers that pastoral (practical) theology is a theological science which, based on theological reflection on the contemporary situation of the church, reflects on the actualisation

²⁷ Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., p. 207.

²⁸ W. Furst, *Die Praktische Theologie und ihre Fächer*, in: *Katholische Theologie heute*, published F. Wohlmuth, Würzburg 1990, p. 317.

²⁹ Cf. R. Kamiński, *Wprowadzenie do teologii pastoralnej*, Lublin 1992, pp. 83–99.

³⁰ Cf. H. Schuster, *Istota i zadania teologii pastoralnej*, „Concilium: Międzynarodowy Przegląd Teologiczny” 1965–1966 no. 1–10, p. 156.

of the church today³¹. Similarly, Klostermann, for whom practical pastoral theology is the science of realizing the Church as a community in the modern world³². According to Greinacher, pastoral (practical) theology is a critical theory of the Church's practice in society³³. Zeffass approaches pastoral (practical) theology as the science of the practical activity of the Church³⁴. Representatives of the socio-political current define pastoral theology as the doctrine of the Church's salvific activity in the light of the historical practice of liberation³⁵.

On the basis of the ecclesiological concept of pastoral theology, taking into account the sociological aspect, there are definitions of pastoral theology formulated by sociologists of religion. One which is close to Houtart³⁶ and Laloux³⁷ is a definition by Fr Piwowarski, who defines pastoral theology as *a science aiming at working out current theological models and corresponding imperatives and programmes of action by means of a theological-sociological analysis of the concrete present situation of the Church*,³⁸ whereby the Church

³¹ *Die Praktische Theologie ist die theologische Wissenschaft, die aus einer theologischen Reflexion und Deutung der je jetzt gegebenen Situation der Kirche heraus auf den je jetzt falligen Selbstvollzug der Kirche reflektiert.* K. Rahner, *Pastoraltheologie*, in: *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie. Praktische Theologie der Kirche in ihrer Gegenwart*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1964–1972, vol. 5, p. 394.

³² F. Blachnicki, *Teologia pastoralna ogólna*, part 1, Lublin 1970, p. 57.

³³ N. Greinacher, *Teologia praktyczna jako krytyczna teoria praktyki Kościoła w społeczeństwie*, „Collectanea Theologica” 61 (1991) fasc. 2, pp. 55–71.

³⁴ Cf. R. Zeffass, *Praktische Theologie als Handlungswissenschaft*, in: *Praktische Theologie Heute*, München-Mainz 1974, pp. 164–177.

³⁵ M. Midali, *Teologia pastorale o pratica*, Roma 1991, pp. 379–385.

³⁶ Cf. F. Houtart, *Sociologie et pastorale*, Paris 1963, pp. 171.

³⁷ Cf. J. Laloux, *Manuel d'initiation a la sociologie religieuse*, Paris 1967, pp. 105.

³⁸ The current theological model is a pattern (an ideal model) worked out by a pastoralist for Christians and Christian communities based on the disciplines of systematic theology and historical theology and on the basis of the humanities. The greater premise is provided by the above-mentioned theological sciences, the lesser premise by the humanities. The conclusion by virtue of the higher premise is theological in nature. The theological models provide the basis for developing imperatives and programmes of action. A pastoral imperative is a set of directives (orders and recommendations) referring to the implementation of the theological models in

*in that particular present situation actualises her own essence, fulfilling the mission of salvific mediation*³⁹.

John Paul II's apostolic exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* describes pastoral theology as *scientific reflection on the Church as she is built up daily, by the power of the Spirit, in history; on the Church as the "universal sacrament of salvation", as a living sign and instrument of the salvation wrought by Christ through the word, the sacraments and the service of charity* (PDV 57). The document also reads that *[n] or is [pastoral theology] a set of exhortations, experiences and methods. It is theological in its own right, because it receives from the faith the principles and criteria for the pastoral action of the Church in history (...). Among these principles and criteria, one that is specially important is that of the evangelical discernment of the socio-cultural and ecclesial situation in which the particular pastoral action has to be carried out* (PDV 57).

Pastoral theology is a scientific discipline which brings together various reflections, analyses and proposals coming from theological research centres, from the hierarchy of the Church, from pastoral institutions and from individual pastoralists, in order to systematize, coordinate and, as far as possible, objectively present them in view of the common goal, which is the self-realization of the Church given the current conditions of place and time⁴⁰.

The task of pastoral theology is to elaborate and formulate the principles and directives which should guide the Church's present-ness, necessary at all times. By working out pastoral principles and directives, pastoral theology contributes to the effectiveness of ecclesiastical planning, to the delineation of paths for the Church's realization today and in the future. Pastoral theology cannot,

a specific place and time. Action programmes are substantively and methodically planned stages of realisation of the theological models. W. Piwowarski, *Perspektywa teologiczna a perspektywa socjologiczna w duszpasterstwie*, „Chrześcijanin w Świecie” 26 (1973), pp. 32-33.

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴⁰ H. Schuster, *Istota i zadania teologii pastoralnej*, art. cit., pp. 159-160; Cf. PDV 57.

however, be a substitute for conferences or pastoral councils, where it is discussed what needs to be done here and now and to what extent certain practical and theological principles can be applied in a particular situation. This is confirmed in the apostolic exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* with the words: *the study of pastoral theology should throw light upon its practical application through involvement in certain pastoral services* (PDV 57).

It is also the task of pastoral theology to train pastors and lay apostles and prepare them for work in the Church⁴¹. It is about the formation of a theological-pastoral way of thinking, about the ability to evaluate and solve concrete pastoral problems and situations in the light of theological principles stemming from the essence of the work of salvation and its manifestation in the Church. It aims to improve the ability to make an independent diagnosis and appropriate decisions when confronted with a specific life situation (cf. PDV 57).

The material subject of pastoral theology is the life and work of the Church in contemporary conditions. This subject should be seen within the option of the conciliar vision of the Church as a community of God's people and the Mystical Body of Christ. Pastoral theology understood in such a way leads to scientific reflection on the life and activity of the Church, on the entities of the Church's salvific activity, on the functions, structures, and conditions of her realization in the present. The principles of the Church's activity are formulated on the basis of Divine Revelation and the teaching of the Church. They are the criteria for evaluating the current response of the Church to the calls to realize herself and her mission in the present time. Based on these principles the imperatives for the Church's activity today and in the near future are established.

Pastoral theology also analyses the current situation of the Church in which she carries out her activity. It is an analysis of a theological and sociological or theological and psychological nature, carried out with the help of methods characteristic for these disciplines. This analysis aims at verifying the legitimacy and effectiveness

⁴¹ R. Kamiński, *Wprowadzenie do teologii pastoralnej*, op. cit., p. 98.

of the existing forms of Church activity in the current conditions. What is crucial here is the interpretation of the Church's previous forms of activity, the institutions serving it and the existing relationship between the Church and culture. The theological interpretation of the aforementioned phenomena is connected with reading the signs of the times, which are phenomena from various fields of human activity, expressing the needs and aspirations of contemporary humanity. These phenomena become signs of the times only when they come to consciousness in the course of history⁴².

Pastoral theology also establishes certain directives and pastoral indications which the Church should follow in her activity. By formulating theologically sound principles and pastoral directives concerning the Church's activity today and in future, pastoral theology contributes to the formation of the consciousness of those who are responsible for the Church's pastoral activity. The outlined problems are realised within the framework of fundamental (general) pastoral theology and detailed pastoral theology.

Such an understanding of the material subject matter of pastoral theology allows to distinguish pastoral theology from ecclesiology, practiced within the framework of systematic theology. Ecclesiology practiced within the framework of systematic theology deals with the Church in its essential and static structure, especially with the transcendental-sacramental essence of the Church. Pastoral theology, on the other hand, deals with the Church in her existential and dynamic dimension, i.e., her manifold activity in the world, understood at the same time as a socio-historical and transcendental activity. Since both aspects of ecclesiology, i.e., essential and existential, permeate and complement each other, there is a need for cooperation between pastoral theology and systematic theology⁴³.

The formal subject of pastoral theology is the Church's making herself present in the present. This means that the formal point

⁴² A. Zuberbier, *Materiały do teorii teologii praktycznej*, Warszawa 1974, pp. 74-77.

⁴³ H. Schuster, *Istota i zadania teologii pastoralnej*, art. cit., p. 157; A. Zuberbier, *Materiały do teorii teologii praktycznej*, op. cit., p. 105-107.

of view of the field of pastoral theology is the conditions in which the Church is made present in the current situation. This subject is not dealt with by the basic theological sciences since they do not have suitable research tools for analysing the present situation of the Church. The subject for these disciplines is the Church in her essence. The analysis of the current activity of the Church with all its conditions is the task of pastoral theology⁴⁴. These conditions define the possibilities for the Church to establish herself and to respond to the growing ecclesial problems.

The specific situation in which the Church must fulfil her mission is not an accident, but the time foreseen by God in which the Church must exist and act. For this reason, the current situation in which the Church effects salvation is a constitutive element of the Church's salvific activity. The Church's interest in knowing the current situation is likewise a recognition of the Church's own condition and embodiment in the present. The analysis of the current situation of the Church is a theological analysis, although based on results provided by the extra-theological sciences⁴⁵.

6. Specificity of pastoral theology

The specificity of pastoral theology is determined by its practical and normative character. What is important for pastoral theology is the question whether the Church, actualising its activity in the specific conditions of place and time, realises in its structure, goals, forms, and methods of activity, in the results achieved and in the lives of its members – the salvific mission to which it has been called? The answer to this question must include reference to God's revelation and the logical teachings on the one hand, and on the other

⁴⁴ H. Schuster, *Istota i zadania teologii pastoralnej*, art. cit., p. 158; W. Piwowarski, *Eklezjologiczna koncepcja teologii pastoralnej*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 69 (1966)5, pp. 304-306.

⁴⁵ F. Blachnicki, *Teologia pastoralna ogólna*, part 2, op. cit., pp. 92-93; W. Piwowarski, *Eklezjologiczna koncepcja teologii pastoralnej*, art. cit., p. 306.

hand, to the given situation. Both elements, normative and practical, constitute one whole in the theological-pastoral research⁴⁶.

Pastoral theology is a practical science because of its object, which is the salvific activity of the Church as a community of God's people. For this reason, it is concerned with the study of social and individual reality and knowledge of the conditions of place and time in which the salvific activity of the Church takes place, knowledge of the Church's historical pastoral experience and everything that sheds light on the attitudes and behaviour of individual people and communities. Effective activity of the Church presupposes knowledge of social, historical, religious-pastoral, and psychological reality, i.e., knowledge of persons and groups of people on whom the Church acts. Pastoral reflection must be based on knowledge of a reality which is subject to constant change⁴⁷. The same forms of pastoral action may have different meaning and effectiveness in achieving their goal in different historical, social and religious contexts.

Pastoral theology is a normative science since it elaborates norms and principles which should guide the ecclesial communities and their representatives in various fields and at various levels of ecclesial activity. The norms and principles of the Church's activity are formulated in the light of the Revelation of God and the teaching of the contemporary Church. They are the criteria for evaluating the current response of the Church to the calls for realization of the Church and her mission in the present time. Based on these norms and principles, the imperatives for the Church's activity today and in the near future are established.

Attempts to subordinate or prioritize the practical or normative element would be a distortion of pastoral theology, as it has occurred so many times in the past. There must be no superiority of one element over the other, for theory and practice in pastoral theology are not

⁴⁶ R. Kamiński (ed.), *Teologia pastoralna*, vol. 1, Lublin 2000, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., pp. 207–208.

opposites, nor do they stand side by side or against each other but constitute a bipolar and differentiated unity⁴⁸.

The mutual relationship between ecclesiastical theory and practice can be described as a relationship of mutual influence. There is a qualitative transition between the normative and practical elements of theological-pastoral reflection. Theory needs to be proven or countered by practice; ecclesiastical practice, on the other hand, makes normative presuppositions that justify and explain the conditions of implementation before it can derive practical conclusions. Practice puts theoretical models into practice. Theory also serves as a stimulus for action⁴⁹.

The specificity of pastoral theology also lies in the fact that its scientific research is based on two types of sources: God's revelation and the religious experience of people and religious communities. The task of pastoral theology is to work out the theological principles which determine the salvific activity of the Church in the modern world. Therefore, it first learns what demands God's revelation and the Church's teaching impose on the work of the Church's salvific mission, that is, what the Church is to do, in the light of revealed truths and principles, at various levels of pastoral activity. This research serves to know the goals, contents, means and methods of pastoral activity. In the light of the aforesaid principles pastoral theology reflects on the forms of the Church's salvific activity in order to reassess the value of the forms currently in use and to formulate guidelines for the future.

An important question for pastoral theology is whether the Church, which acts in specific conditions of place and time, realises-in her structure, goals and ways of acting, in the results achieved and in

⁴⁸ N. Greinacher, *Das Theorie-Praxis Problem in der Praktischen Theologie*, in: F. Klostermann, R. Zerfass, *Praktische Theologie heute*, München-Mainz 1974, pp. 109–110; T. Neufeld, *Das Theorie-Praxis Probleme als Anfrage an die Praktische Theologie*, „Franziskanische Studie“ 61 (1979) no. 2–3, pp. 210–235.

⁴⁹ T. Neufeld, *Das Theorie-Praxis Probleme als Anfrage an die Praktische Theologie*, art. cit., p. 218.

the lives of her members-the salvific mission she was called to carry out. The answer to this question must include reference to God's revelation and the theological sciences, ecclesiology, and on the other hand to the concrete situation which can be studied using sociological, psychological methods etc. The study of social and individual reality, knowledge of the conditions of place and time in which the salvific mission of the Church is carried out, knowledge of the historical pastoral experience of the Church and of everything which sheds light on the attitudes and behaviour of individual people and human communities constitute an important stage in the study of pastoral theology.

Effective ecclesial activity presupposes knowledge of social, psychological, religious-pastoral and historical reality, i.e., knowledge of individuals and groups of people whom the Church influences. The same forms of pastoral action may have different meaning and different effectiveness in achieving the goals in different historical, social, religious, and pastoral conditions. Pastoral reflection must be based on knowledge of the constantly changing reality⁵⁰.

Pastoral theology draws conclusions for more effective salvific activity of the Church. Based on God's revelation and the Church's teaching as well as the experience of Christians, pastoral theology formulates conclusions in the form of principles, directives and pastoral guidelines. They constitute an important element of pastoral theory, which takes into account the current needs and challenges emerging at the time. Pastoral theology justifies pastoral conclusions on the basis of divine revelation and human experience. Every pastoral principle, rule or instruction should be based on truths and principles derived from God's revelation or should be empirically justified and supported by sociological, psychological research, etc. Working out legitimate conclusions and theories of pastoral ministry requires taking into account both theological and empirical sources of theological and pastoral research upon which the value of theological and pastoral reflection depends.

⁵⁰ Cf. J. Majka, *Metodologia nauk teologicznych*, op. cit., p. 208.

The complexity of the subject matter means that there are different types of academic reflection in pastoral theology. Hans van der Ven speaks of four types of scientific research: monodisciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary⁵¹.

Monodisciplinary research is characterised by a common goal and method. Such a type of research was present in pastoral theology until 1777. At that time, pastoral theology was a combination of reflections, rules, advice, and recommendations directed towards pastoral practice. The individual theological disciplines touched upon problems related to pastoral practice.

After the introduction of pastoral theology as an independent discipline at the universities in 1777, a great development of the discipline occurred, however the renewed theological discipline still benefited from the research methods used in other theological disciplines.

Multidisciplinary research conducted within pastoral theology has various objectives and multiple methods. They indicate that pastoral theology cannot realise itself only in one dimension. It must also refer to research conducted by other scientific disciplines. Thus, the pastoral theology binds together the theological science with the results of empirical research. The empirical sciences provide data which pastoral theology applies in its scientific reflection. Pastoral theology considers the results of empirical research, compares them with the logical theory and then interprets them theologically. The empirical sciences focus on explaining the phenomena of individual and social life from a psychological, sociological and praxiological perspective. Theological reflection, on the other hand, is about critical reflection from the perspective of the Gospel and theological teaching⁵².

⁵¹ H. Van der Ven, *Unterwegs zu einer empirischen Theologie*, in: *Theologie und Handeln*, ed. O. Fuchs, Mainz 1984, pp. 102–128; Cf. S. Knobloch, *Was ist Praktische Theologie?*, Freiburg/Schweiz 1995, p. 206.

⁵² S. Knobloch, *Was ist Praktische Theologie?*, op. cit., p. 209.

Interdisciplinary research, as the name implies, points to an interdependence between pastoral theology and empirical sciences. Interdisciplinary research is characterised by a common goal and different methods. H. van der Ven defines multidisciplinary as following one another (*nacheinander*), while interdisciplinarity as walking together (*miteinander*). The former refers to a *serial monologue*, the latter to a *parallel dialogue* between scientific disciplines⁵³.

In intradisciplinary research, both theological and empirical research methods as well as the findings merge into one methodic and methodological unity. It means that pastoral theology itself should be *empirical*. It requires such a methodological instrumentarium in which the search for methods and research techniques of other sciences is integrated into theology.

Summary

The author discusses the place of pastoral theology in the world of science. Emphasizing that the content of any science is the accumulation of knowledge, learning the laws that govern it, which develops criticism, teaches ordering, leads to the knowledge and realization of truth in life, the author first explains the multiple meanings of the term *science*, showing in a synthetic way its concepts from antiquity to modernity and its division. Then, explaining the essence of theology, he presents its division and moves on to show the concept and problems of pastoral theology. Explaining its essence, he refers to the definition contained in John Paul II's exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*, which describes it as *a scientific reflection on the Church as she is built up daily, by the power of the Spirit, in history; on the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation, as a living sign and instrument of the salvation wrought by Christ through the word, the sacraments and the service of charity* (PDV 57). He also points out that the Pope indicated its full-fledged status as a theological science, *because it receives from the faith the principles and criteria for the pastoral action of the Church in history (...). Among these principles and criteria, one that is specially important is that*

⁵³ Ibid.

of the evangelical discernment of the socio-cultural and ecclesial situation in which the particular pastoral action has to be carried out (PDV 57).

The author, presenting pastoral theology as a discipline dealing with the activity of the Church as the People of God in the world, stresses its specificity, which is related to its normative as well as practical character. Noting that pastoral theology, while seeking an answer to the question whether the Church, actualizing its activity in the specific conditions of place and time, realizes in its structure, goals, forms and methods of action, in the results achieved and in the lives of its members-the salvific mission to which it has been called, emphasizes that it must refer both to divine revelation and theological teachings, as well as to particular reality. Both elements, normative and practical, constitute a single whole in theological and pastoral studies.

Key words: science, pastoral theology, making the Church real, People of God, pastoral theory and practice

Streszczenie

Autor podjął kwestię miejsca teologii pastoralnej w świecie nauki. Podkreślając, że treścią każdej nauki jest gromadzenie wiedzy, poznawanie prawideł, którymi się rządzi, co rozwija krytycyzm, uczy porządkowania, prowadzi do poznania i realizowania w życiu prawdy, wyjaśnił najpierw wielorakie znaczenie terminu *nauka*, ukazując w syntetyczny sposób jej koncepcje od starożytności do współczesności oraz jej podział. Wyjaśniając następnie istotę teologii, przedstawił jej podział, przechodząc do ukazania pojęcia i problematyki teologii pastoralnej. Tłumacząc jej istotę, odwołał się do definicji zawartej w adhortacji Jana Pawła II *Pastores dabo vobis* ujmującego ją jako *naukową refleksję o codziennym wzrastaniu Kościoła, w mocy Ducha Świętego, w kontekście historii: a więc o Kościele jako powszechnym sakramencie zbawienia, jako znaku i żywym narzędziu zbawienia Jezusa Chrystusa, działającym przez słowo, sakramenty i posługę miłości* (PDV 57). Zauważył też, że papież wskazywał na jej pełnoprawny status nauki teologicznej, *ponieważ czerpie z wiary zasady i kryteria działalności duszpasterskiej Kościoła w historii (...). Wśród tych zasad i kryteriów szczególnie ważne miejsce zajmuje ewangeliczne rozeznanie sytuacji społeczno-kulturalnej i kościelnej, w której prowadzona jest działalność duszpasterska* (PDV 57). Autor ukazując teologię pastoralną jako dyscyplinę zajmującą się działalnością Kościoła jako Ludu Bożego w świecie, podkreślił jej specyfikę, która

wiąże się z jej charakterem normatywnym jak i praktycznym. Zauważając, że teologia pastoralna szukając odpowiedzi na pytanie czy Kościół, aktualizujący swoją działalność w określonych warunkach miejsca i czasu, realizuje w swojej strukturze, celach, formach i metodach działania, w osiągniętych rezultatach i w życiu członków–zbawczą misję, do której został powołany podkreślił, że musi ona odnosić się zarówno do Objawienia Bożego i nauk teologicznych, jak też do konkretnej rzeczywistości. Obydwa elementy, normatywny i praktyczny, stanowią w badaniach teologiczno-pastoralnych jedną całość.

Słowa kluczowe: nauka, teologia pastoralna, urzeczywistnianie się Kościoła, Lud Boży, teoria i praktyka duszpasterstwa

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