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Benedict XVI about the European culture

The article concerns the doctrine of Benedict XVI aims to pinpoint the most important moments of his social teaching and bring closer important Pope's statements on contemporary culture.

The author analyzed the teaching of Joseph Ratzinger before his election as Bishop of Rome and confronted them with his papal teaching until the historical abdication.

On admission it should be noted that J. Ratzinger at the beginning of the road to cognition of Jesus was considered for a progressive. After the Second Vatican Council, he insisted on conservative teaching. He justified the change of his views by the evolution of beliefs, suggesting in this way that he is able to adapt his doctrine to contemporary ideological transformations. In his teaching often raise eg. the issue of the crisis of the European culture emphasizing inter alia, that modern inhabitants of the old continent broke with its „Christian roots”. Defining the culture as „grown in the process of historical development community form of expression results of knowledge and values that shape the life of a particular community” J. Ratzinger paid special attention to the axiological and epistemological dimension in this matter.

In 2004. he wrote that community shapes the human, gives him the form of thinking, his feeling and action. This structure of thinking and imagination was called culture. He argued that the manifestations of culture include: a common language, the organization of the community in the form of the state and its institutions, laws, customs, moral beliefs, art and various forms of worship¹.

According to J. Ratzinger, the culture is an attempt to understand the world and the manner of existence of the human in world, inspired with his interest in existence.

In turn the Second Vatican Council established that culture determines what belongs to the essence of human, his true and full of humanity. According to the Council, it is

¹ J. Ratzinger, *W drodze do Jezusa Chrystusa*, Cracow 2005, p. 46 ff.

a concern for the good and the values of nature, and where it is said about human life, there nature and culture are closely connected with one another².

The term culture, according to the Council Fathers, is defined by which we improve and develop the gifts of the spirit and body. Culture is what allows one to know and subdue the world. The Council explained that „the progress of customs and various institutions makes human life more social both in the family and in the whole civic community and [culture – ed. Ł. K.] expressed throughout history, transfers and retains in its works great spiritual experiences and desires in order to serve the development of even the whole human race”³.

So far, the definitions of culture a lot has been created. In the mid nineteenth century, specialists dealing with this problem distinguished nearly a quarter thousand of meanings⁴.

Culture by J. Ratzinger shows us, for example, how to be human, to engage and react to the history of the world, to pursue prosperity and happiness, which only be solved jointly with other people. In his opinion, the epistemological question about the source of culture concerns the formation of this community, which is a condition of the happy life of the individual. Cognition is to be an understanding⁵ that will open the field of practice, and its essential part will be value and morality.

J. Ratzinger argued that human will only achieve happiness in communion with God when he answers the question of transcendence, because – in his conviction – one can not live well and understand the world unless the divine question is resolved. In this way, it has legitimized the combination of faith with culture. In his book *Look at the naughty* J. Ratzinger argued that the „hermeneutics of faith is the only form of understanding that transcends the diversity of cultures, times and nations in the space of his vision – no culture and no nation deprives their own values. In the higher unity of the Word that became flesh, they can find their place, preserve their identity, and by purifying by faith, reach out to her true depth”⁶.

In J. Ratzinger's books, we also read that the separation of these forms took place in modern times, when enlightenment closed the faith in the intellectual and social

² About the culture see A. F. Dziuba, *Chrześcijaństwo a kultura*, Warsaw 2008. For definitions of cultures, see R. Darowski, *Filozoficzna refleksja nad człowiekiem i kulturą*, in: *Poza utopią i nihilizmem. Człowiek jako podmiot kultury*, A. Waśko (ed.), Cracow 2007, p. 7-15.

³ *Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Kościele w świecie współczesnym. Gaudium et spes*, p. 53, in: *Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje, dekrety, deklaracje*, Poznań 2002, p. 570. Study on the Council definition of culture: see M. Nowaczyk, *Zasady polityki kulturalnej Kościoła katolickiego*, in: *Kościół współczesny. Dwadzieścia lat po Soborze Watykańskim II*, W. Mysłek, M. Nowaczyk (eds.), Warsaw 1985, p. 271 ff.

⁴ T. Gaśowski, *O wzajemnych relacjach kultury i polityki. Kilka uwag metodologicznych*, in: *Poza utopią i nihilizmem*, op. cit., p. 189.

⁵ On the subject of cognition at J. Ratzinger: see J. Ratzinger, *Patrzyć na przybitego. Szkice o chrystologii duchowej*, J. Merecki (trans.), Cracow 2008, p. 22-25; see J. Ratzinger, *Kościół. Pielgrzymująca wspólnota wiary*, W. Szymona (trans.), Cracow 2005, p. 19 ff.

⁶ J. Ratzinger, *Patrzyć na przybitego*, op. cit., p. 42.

„ghetto”. Culture just then had to turn away from faith, which left faith in historicizing, the imitation of the past and the adaptation, or lost in resignation and cultural abstinence. This in turn would lead to a new iconoclasm seen in this doctrine as an incentive to convene the Second Vatican Council⁷.

The problem of culture, J. Ratzinger also touched on the book *Faith – truth – tolerance*. He wrote that it was only in modern times that Europe created a culture which could „exist as a field that is different from religion or [is] completely opposed to it. In all cultures well-known for history the religion is an essential element of culture, its dominant element and determines the structure of values, and thus the internal system and order of cultures (...). If we will remove from characteristic culture for it and testifying about it religion, this we deprive it its heart”⁸.

Recalling the teaching of John Paul II, we will conclude in this context that „»Human is both a child and a father of culture in which he lives«; Is the recipient and creator. (...) the split between the professed faith and everyday life is attributed to John Paul II's most important errors of the present day. It is often living according to the principle: as if was no God. So often the faith which isn't becoming a culture, isn't a faith fully adopted, thought over or survived with the adequate devotion”⁹.

According to J. Ratzinger, „the essence of great cultures is the interpretation of the world ordering the attitude of the divine”, culture has the capacity to cross the „boundary of what is visible, the boundary of what is revealed, and the study of the proper foundations, which opens the door to divinity”.

According to the doctrine taught by J. Ratzinger, religion and culture have been linked together for a very long time. He claimed, for example, that: „The history of religion coexists with the history of mankind. As soon as we know it, there has never been an epoch in which the question of the All-Other Divine would be a stranger. There was always a desire to know God”¹⁰. The Community Entity was supposed to help here find pre-rational and irrational truths. An essential feature of the culture was – in his opinion – the ability to invoke „the wisdom of the »fathers«, who were closer to the gods and to the initial messages of the nature of revelation”, coming from the encounter of the cause of everything.

Therefore, when we talk about the crisis of culture, its causes in this doctrine are traced in a cultural entity that can not unobtrusively combine supratational patterns with critical cognition, especially modern, rationalized. According to J. Ratzinger authenticity of the character of this axiom becomes dubious, transforms from the truth into ordinary habit and loses its vitality”. Full concept the contemporary cardinal presented the culture and its crisis in the book *Faith – truth – tolerance*, bringing one of interesting problems

⁷ J. Ratzinger, *Duch liturgii*, Poznań 2008, p. 148.

⁸ J. Ratzinger, *Wiara – prawda – tolerancja. Chryścijaństwo a religie świata*, R. Zajączkowski (trans.), Kielce 2005, p. 49.

⁹ A. F. Dziuba, *Chryścijaństwo a kultura*, Warsaw 2008, p. 39.

¹⁰ J. Ratzinger, *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 120.

up, meetings of religions and cultures, very important especially in the context of „the coexistence of cultures and peace between religions”¹¹. In this way a modern crisis of the European culture was supposed to be created, characterized by weakened faith and Christian values.

There are many ways to explain the causes of cultural crisis. Mirosław Nowaczyk, in his research on Catholic doctrine, pointed out, for example, that its sources were found in dissonance between technological and moral-religious progress. Human developing the scientific and technological civilization, has failed to undergo humanistic control, this is a manifestation of the dangerous reversal of the hierarchy of such values which is a manifestation of the dangerous reversal of the hierarchy of such values, in which place the chiefs occupy not spiritual values [read. moral-religious] but material. The consequence of this is the lack of justice, lack or limitation of freedom, and consequently the violation of human dignity as a person”¹².

In J. Ratzinger's doctrine one can find, for example, an incentive to open up the culture to manifestations, and perhaps even to external stimuli. In 1978, the theologian argued that „the size of culture manifests itself in its openness, its ability to enrich itself, its transformation and its exchange of development dynamics”¹³. According to J. Ratzinger, eg. no need to talk about inculturation but about „meeting cultures” or even „interculturality”. Inculturation assumes that „faith in some way is stripped of culture into a religion indifferent to religion, whereby the meeting of two previously alien entities and their synthesis”.

Issue remains practically questionable according to J. Ratzinger this kind meeting of, because „there is no faith or culture without culture devoid of religious elements”. Obstacles on the path of such intercultural understanding were supposed to be „divisions, barriers, alienating opposition, inability to pass” or alienation of man „which inhibits the ability of cognition and at least partially separates people from truth and hence from each other”¹⁴.

At the beginning of the 21st century, there was talk of a specific conflict of cultures in the dispute over the content of the preamble to the European Constitution. On the 10th anniversary of Poland's membership in the European Union it is important to recall the important issues raised at the time of the new members.

¹¹ See J. Ratzinger, *Wiara – prawda – tolerancja*, op. cit., p. 49 ff. More on this topic: A. Nichols, *Myśl Benedykta XVI. Wprowadzenie do myśli teologicznej Josepha Ratzingera*, D. Chabrajska (trans.), Cracow 2006, p. 383-408. Study on culture at J. Ratzinger: K. Koehler, *Czy skazani jesteśmy na nihilizm?*, in: *Poza utopią i nihilizmem*, op. cit., p. 144-149.

¹² See M. Nowaczyk, *Zasady polityki kulturalnej Kościoła katolickiego*, in: *Kościół współczesny*, op. cit., p. 278.

¹³ J. Ratzinger, *Śmierć i życie wieczne*, M. Węclawski (trans.), Warsaw 2005, p. 76.

¹⁴ See J. Ratzinger, *Wiara – prawda – tolerancja*, op. cit., p. 48-54. About the subject inculturation see J. Ratzinger, *Duch liturgii*, E. Pieciul (trans.), Poznań 2008, p. 122, 160; J. Ratzinger, *W drodze do Jezusa Chrystusa*, J. Merecki (trans.), Cracow 2004, p. 52 ff.; J. Ratzinger, *Sól ziemi. Chryścijaństwo i Kościół katolicki na przełomie tysiącleci*, G. Sowiński (trans.), Cracow 2005, p. 116; J. Ratzinger, *Bóg i świat. Wiara i życie w dzisiejszych czasach*, G. Sowiński (trans.), Cracow 2005, p. 346.

The EU constitution was criticized, for example, for lack of reference to the Christian roots of Europe. G. Watts wrote that „Nowhere in the world has secularism and relativism been accepted more enthusiastically than in Europe, which was once the heart of Christianity. When the Constitution of the European Union was created in 2004, all references to God and Christian values were excluded”¹⁵.

George Weigel argued that even the efforts of John Paul II hadn't helped, whose „interventions during the European constitutional debate of 2003-2004 did not have a bearing on the European constitution of the Christian roots of European civilization, failed to prevent attempts to introduce *de facto* secularism if not *de iure*, as the official ideology of the European Union”¹⁶.

Ryszard Wójtowicz thought, that „the regulation in the preamble or even the heritage of Christian values in Europe is an opportunity for the Church and for the reevangelization and recatechization of Europe of the 21st century”¹⁷.

According to G. Weigl, the whole issue started with the fact that „the authors of the new constitution of Europe felt obliged to enter into it the declaration of secularity – and its distinguishing features: skepticism and relativism – as can be said the official *credo* of the newly enlarged European Union. Therefore, the historical merits of Christianity towards Europe at the level of culture, Christianity devoted to freedom, human rights and democracy can not be mentioned in the preamble – because their mentioning would be tantamount to recognition that freedom and moral obligations, freedom and the spiritual dimension of human experience have something in common”¹⁸.

Predicted cutting away the European Union from Christian roots was had to become a negation of tolerance, which wanting to respect all cultures, without giving preference to any, has become rather absolutization of thinking and living.

Joseph Ratzinger argued that the conflict of cultures is not a dispute of the great religions, only an expression of modern consciousness erases God from public life. It wasn't about a protection of nontheistic creed and the dignity of atheists and agnostics, but only about the subjectivisation of God. The cardinal pointed out the culprit relativism, which had become dogmatism and begin to think that he has the ultimate knowledge of reason¹⁹.

Just a dozen or so years backwards the concept was popular collisions of large cultural systems describing clash of the west democracy with the Islam. These two

¹⁵ G. Watts, *Pracownik Wimmicy Pańskiej. Portret papieża Benedykta XVI*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 79.

¹⁶ G. Weigel, *Boży wybór. Papież Benedykt XVI i przyszłość Kościoła katolickiego*, D. Chylińska, M. Romanek, R. Śmietana (trans.), Cracow 2006, p. 55.

¹⁷ R. Wójtowicz, *Jan Paweł II wobec wyzwań XXI wieku. Wybrane zagadnienia*, in: *Religioznawstwo Polskie w XXI wieku*, Z. Stachowski (ed.), Tyczyn 2005, p. 421.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 299; see G. Tobin, *Ojciec Święty Benedykt XVI, papież nowego tysiąclecia*, S. Bocian (trans.), Cracow 2005, p. 214; see J. Ratzinger, *Wykłady bawarskie z lat 1963-2004*, A. Czarnocki (trans.), Warsaw 2009, p. 185-190.

¹⁹ See J. Ratzinger, *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*, W. Dzieża (trans.), Częstochowa 2005, p. 62 ff.

different cultures have had constitute very diversified worlds, which represent „different forms of power and moral orientation”.

J. Ratzinger thought then that the sharp contrast to Western Islam's culture was not right²⁰. The situation of threat had to arise up mainly because of the contrast enhancement between them, it was merely the result of opposing the enlightenment mind of a dangerous form of religion marked by fundamentalism.

In doctrine J. Ratzinger we are finding the statement that frequent underlining differences between cultures contributed for incorrect comprehending this event. In this situation, the Europeans wanted to overcome fundamentalism to ensure the victory of reason and enlightenment forms of religion. Theologian suggested that the clash of cultures occurred only because modern civilization ruled God out.

J. Ratzinger in his book *On the Road to Jesus Christ* argued that the clash of cultures does not destroy them in any way, and even leads to their mutual understanding. Unjustly it was supposed to be accused for disregarding other cultures. The mission of evangelization was accused of seeking to dominate one culture, as if unity of cultures was impossible without destroying it.

In light of the previously reminded doctrinal threads, it can be stated that the problem of the crisis of European culture is primarily a break with sacrum and Christian roots [values]. Europe, once Christian²¹, was to become the starting point for a new scientific rationalism offering great opportunities but bringing great dangers. Rationalism was to develop a modern culture, excluding God from public consciousness. J. Ratzinger seemed to be convinced that all temptations arise by removing God and treating the sacrum as secondary. He wrote: „Recognizing oneself, your own needs and temporary desires are more important than Him. This is precisely the temptation that always threatens us, because then we deny to God the place that is due to us, and our God we do ourselves or powers threatening us”²². By negation²³, the human was to bring about the shock of morality, bring it to the subjective sphere²⁴.

J. Ratzinger argued that one could speak of Europe's sin, which was to bring about the exclusivity of technical reason and the destruction of Christian ethos²⁵. It would seem that „a world of value for Europe [its culture and its faith, what its identity is

²⁰ See J. Ratzinger, *Sól ziemi*, op. cit., p. 209 ff.; see J. L. Allen, *Papież Benedykt XVI. Biografia Josepha Ratzingera*, R. Bartoń (trans.), Poznań 2005, p. 321, 325 ff.; see J. L. Allen, *Benedykt XVI. Początki pontyfikatu*, R. Bartoń (trans.), Poznań 2006, p. 85 ff.

²¹ J. Ratzinger, *Wiara – prawda – tolerancja*, op. cit., p. 71-81.

²² J. Ratzinger, *W drodze do Jezusa Chrystusa*, op. cit., p. 153.

²³ In 2001, Ratzinger concludes that rationalistic construction, eg. in the case of marxism, „It replaces the notion of God and excludes Him necessarily, by entering His place. Systematic exclusion of the divine element from the shaping of human history and life, referring to the ultimate character of scientific understanding, is perhaps a new and at the same time a truly menacing element of this particular product of Europe which we call marxism”. J. Ratzinger, *Czas przemian w Europie. Miejsce Kościoła i świata*, M. Mijalska (trans.), Cracow 2005, p. 114.

²⁴ See J. Ratzinger, *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*, op. cit., p. 43 ff.

²⁵ See J. Ratzinger, *Czas przemian w Europie*, op. cit., p. 109.

based on] it reaches its end and has actually disappeared from the scene, so here comes the hour of the value system of other worlds". In his opinion, the European people must return to the spiritual roots, because it will only help to avoid self-destruction of the old continent²⁶. The return of the lost identity and the return to ethical tradition, as well as the acceptance of the Christian God, were to be a guarantee of human dignity²⁷ and achieve lasting peace among nations.

In an interview with Peter Seewald, J. Ratzinger concludes that Christ brings peace. The church is trying to avoid conflicts, but sometimes „the right message can not achieve its purpose, because it is also to confront us with a dispute, to get us out of lies, to bring forth the brightness, the truth”²⁸.

Peace concept by J. Ratzinger was presented in two books: *The Time of Change in Europe. Place of Church and world and Europe. Its laying the ground today and tomorrow*. In the first one he combined peace with justice. The most important threats to peace were the dangers of the war, the classic wars, the loss of the internal peace of states, including the threat of liberation, terrorism and taking out of the lawlessness into the rank of the law. According to J. Ratzinger, a country without justice was supposed to be „a big bunch of criminals”²⁹. In the second, he argued for the recognition of the moral values of the Church. Europe criticized for breaking away from the Christian roots, because it guaranteed its lasting peace. He again recalled the relationship between peace, justice and law, recognizing them as inseparable, which in the context of contemporary military action in Europe seems to be the most legitimate.

J. Ratzinger also argued that Christian politicians should spread the values proclaimed by the Church with various kinds of agreements in defense of human life. The consensus on the birth of life was to prevent paganism, preserving autonomy against a particular party³⁰.

Faced with the progressive moral crisis and the cultural crisis behind it, the responsibility for errors has devastated progress, science and freedom that threatened human, causing inequality and in violation of human dignity³¹. In the industrialized society, as determined by the technique, moral values were to lose the obvious and thus the force of commitment³².

The definition of J. Ratzinger's morality is found in A. Torielli, who recalled that the prefect played an important role in developing the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in which morality is „learning about what happiness is and how to find it, but obviously

²⁶ J. Ratzinger, *Chrystus i jego Kościół*, W. Szymona (trans.), Cracow 2005; J. Ratzinger, *Patrzeć na przybyciego...*, op. cit.

²⁷ See J. Ratzinger, *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁸ See J. Ratzinger, *Bóg i świat*, op. cit., p. 205 ff. About the topic avoiding disputes of the Church with world compare with documents of the Sciences of the Faith Congregation, especially: *Dominus Iesus*.

²⁹ See J. Ratzinger, *Czas przemian w Europie*, op. cit., p. 35-53.

³⁰ See A. Torielli, *Ratzinger strażnik wiary*, B. Tomaszek (trans.), Cracow 2005, p. 148 ff.

³¹ See J. Ratzinger, *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*, op. cit., p. 59-64.

³² J. Ratzinger, *Bóg i świat*, op. cit., p. 127; see A. Nichols, *Mysł Benedykta XVI*, op. cit., p. 408-414.

not selfish, but true. (...) The happiness of man is love. In this sense, the morality of the Catechism is a morality on what love is"³³.

According to J. Ratzinger, there was a situation in which only morals unconstrained from human were recognized³⁴, and the crisis of basic dogmas of faith³⁵ was to break the relationship between the sexual sphere of human and marriage, to separate sex from procreation, to contribute, among other things to spread homosexuality³⁶.

J. Ratzinger seemed convinced that in modern society only a few people believe in the divine commandments, and even less convinced of the saving mission of the Church, that it can flawlessly transmit divine prohibitions. Meanwhile, the Church invariably persisted in adhering to the decree defending man against abortion, euthanasia and suicide³⁷.

In 2005, this particular doctrinal luggage became the basis of the content of Benedict XVI. Shortly after the election of the new pope, a particular activity of doctrine was observed around the economic crisis. Pope focused his doctrine especially on the sphere of the economy and new phenomena. In his view, the society of the 21st century did not seek to achieve common good and did not follow the principles of Christian ethics³⁸, as he had mentioned many times before.

The Pope was to take advantage of this opportunity and draw attention to the need to return to the appropriate rules and logic at this historical moment that the economic crisis has created³⁹. The method of Benedict XVI was a return to the new evangelization⁴⁰. Benedict XVI applied the method of evangelization, which proclaimed the need to consolidate social awareness and responsibility⁴¹, and to enable a truly human develop-

³³ See A. Tomielli, *Ratzinger strażnik wiary*, op. cit., p. 138.

³⁴ See J. Ratzinger, *Czas przemian w Europie*, op. cit., p. 22.

³⁵ See J. Ratzinger, *Wiara – prawda – tolerancja*, op. cit., p. 113.

³⁶ See J. Ratzinger, *Raport o stanie wiary*, Z. Orszyn (trans.), Marki 2005, p. 73-81.

³⁷ See J. Ratzinger, *Czas przemian w Europie*, op. cit., p. 23, 32.

³⁸ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 9 (316), p. 5; Benedict XVI, „*Miłość w prawdzie*” jest główną siłą napędową rozwoju każdej osoby i całej ludzkości, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 10 (317), p. 29; Benedict XVI, *Chcemy tworzyć nadal więź prawdziwego braterstwa z narodem Przymierza*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 3-4 (321), p. 18; Benedict XVI, *Osoba ludzka i dobro wspólne w centrum zarządzania sprawami publicznymi*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 3-4 (321), p. 11; *Konferencja prasowa w samolocie*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 7 (324), p. 6. Benedict XVI, in his interview with journalists, said of the need to preserve ethics: „In fact, we now see that pure economic pragmatism, which abstracts from a real human being that is ethical, does not lead to positive results but creates insoluble problems” (ibidem).

³⁹ G. M. Vian, „*Caritas in veritate*”: nadzieja i realizm, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 9 (316), p. 3.

⁴⁰ „Term »**evangelization**« has a very rich meaning. In broad terms, it embraces the whole mission of the Church: the whole of his life is *traditio Evangelii* – the proclamation and transmission of the Gospel, which is »the power of God for salvation for every believer« (Rz 1, 16), and in its innermost essence is identical with Jesus Christ. The whole of mankind is thus addressed in this sense of evangelization. In any case, »evangelizing« means not only teaching a certain doctrine, but proclaiming the Lord Jesus with words and deeds, and thus becoming an instrument of his presence and action in the world” (*Nota doktrynalna Kongregacji Nauki Wiary na temat pewnych aspektów ewangelizacji*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2008, no. 2 (300), p. 50).

⁴¹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, op. cit., p. 5.

ment⁴². In the Pope's view, the exclusion of Christian values from the European worldview caused social behavior dictated only by private interests and the logic of power⁴³. In the encyclical *Caritas in veritate*⁴⁴, therefore, he returned to Paul VI's teaching on integral human development⁴⁵ and, according to his original course, updated the doctrine in the context of the contemporary economic crisis⁴⁶.

Benedict XVI argued that spiritual development requires God, and that if he continues to focus solely on the benefits he receives through reprehensible means, he will destroy the fraternity and cause poverty, regardless of the common good. After Paul VI, he recalled the study of economic development, which was to „bring real growth, covering all”. He urged to take advantage of the historical opportunity and rethinking „the way to adopt new rules and find new forms of commitment”, and „to use positive experiences” and „negative rejection”, eventually also to convert and re-accept Jesus of Nazareth. The Pope wanted cultural renewal and rediscover „the values on which to build a better future”⁴⁷.

Giovanni Maria Vian among the inspirers of the aforementioned Encyclical *Caritas in veritate* mentioned Leon XIII of the *Rerum Novarum*⁴⁸ from 1891, developed by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo anno*⁴⁹ and *Nova impendet* from 1931⁵⁰. In his opinion, Benedict XVI also applied the teachings of John XXIII and John Paul II, among others from the 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*⁵¹. The Polish pontificate is interesting because John Paul II emphasized the Marian devotion, while Benedict XVI taught about Jesus, which is *de facto* the foundation of the „new evangelization”.

⁴² After the publication of the encyclical *Caritas in veritate* the category of „development” often appeared in pope's speeches: Benedict XVI, *Ochrona środowiska jest ściśle związana z integralnym rozwojem człowieka*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 10 (317), p. 35; Benedict XVI, *Rozwiązania obecnych problemów ludzkości nie mogą być tylko techniczne*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 10 (317), p. 37; Benedict XVI, *Niech Bóg błogosławi wszystkim mieszkańcom Malty i Gozo*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 6 (323), p. 8; Benedict XVI, *Niech moc zmartwychwstania Chrystusa napętni całą ludzkość, by budowała przyszłość w miłości*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 6 (323), p. 34.

⁴³ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴⁴ Benedict XVI's comment on the encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, in: Benedict XVI, *„Miłość w prawdzie” jest główną siłą napędową rozwoju każdej osoby i całej ludzkości*, op. cit.

⁴⁵ Paul VI, *Populorum progressio*, in: Jan XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II, *Encykliki*, Warsaw 1981. Paul VI wrote: „The development we are talking about is not just about economic growth. If it is to be authentic, it must be integral, that is, to lift every human” (ibidem, p. 119). Then the pope recalled the words of L. J. Lebre: „we do not agree to the separation of the economic, the human, the development from the civilization into which it is inscribed. For us, man, every man, every human group, and all mankind are important to us” (L. J. Lebre, *Dynamique concrète du développement*, Paris 1961, p. 28, cit. after: ibidem).

⁴⁶ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Leon XIII, *Rerum novarum*, in: *Dokumenty nauki społecznej Kościoła*, M. Radwan, L. Dyczewski, A. Stanowski (eds.), Rome – Lublin 1987.

⁴⁹ Pius XI, *Quadragesimo anno*, in: ibidem.

⁵⁰ G. M. Vian, *„Caritas in veritate”: nadzieja i realizm*, op. cit., p. 3.

⁵¹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, in: *Encykliki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II*, Cracow 2005.

As part of the formation of the faithful, the Pope wrote three parts of *Jesus of Nazareth: From Baptism to Jordan to Transfiguration* (2007)⁵², *From Jerusalem to Resurrection* (2011)⁵³ and *Childhood* (2012)⁵⁴, while the latter – the shortest – treated as prolegomena to the rest. In all of the books, he remarked – surprisingly – that they should not be treated as official papal teaching⁵⁵, and he gave „private” authorship, confusing the Catholics.

The commonality of all parts of *Jesus of Nazareth* was to critique the historical-critical method, examining the figure of Jesus, which did not exhaust the „task of interpretation”, and also had its „boundaries”. The Pope made the fusion – the historical-critical method with a „new methodological look” that enabled it to theologially interpret the Bible. In the third part of *Jesus*, Benedict XVI wrote directly about the two stages of „correct interpretation”: questions about the author’s intentions and the truth contained in the text, in accordance with the assessment of his meaning⁵⁶. In this concept he played a role known to the postulate of „connecting” faith with the reason that Benedict XVI has repeatedly linked with the idea of John Paul II⁵⁷.

Benedict XVI’s evangelizing method was also to warn of destructive progress without moral development, because it raised the fear of uncontrolled progress in the Church. Especially in recent years the society was to be accompanied by fear of crisis, which in his opinion created a potential return to values such as love⁵⁸, truth⁵⁹, dignity⁶⁰, justice⁶¹, brotherhood⁶² and peace⁶³.

Benedict XVI argued that economics can not be neutral because it belongs to the sphere of human activity and therefore should be ethical⁶⁴. The Pope argued that

⁵² J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jezus z Nazaretu, I: Od chrztu w Jordanie do Przemienienia*, W. Szymona (trans.), Cracow 2007.

⁵³ J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jezus z Nazaretu, II: Od wjazdu do Jerozolimy do Zmartwychwstania*, W. Szymona (trans.), Kielce 2011.

⁵⁴ J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jezus z Nazaretu, III: Dzieciństwo*, W. Szymona (trans.), Cracow 2012.

⁵⁵ J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jezus z Nazaretu, I*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁵⁶ J. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Jezus z Nazaretu, III*, op. cit., p. 5-6.

⁵⁷ Ł. Kleska, *Idea jedności wiary i rozumu. Od Fides et ratio do Caritas in veritate*, in: *O racjonalności w nauce i w życiu społecznym*, Z. Drozdowicz, Z. Melosik, S. Sztajer (eds.), Poznań 2009, p. 265-271.

⁵⁸ Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2006, no. 3 (281), p. 4-21.

⁵⁹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, op. cit.

⁶⁰ Benedict XVI, *Bioetyka i naturalne prawo moralne*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 5, p. 19; Benedict XVI, *Jeśli chcesz krzyczeć pokój, strzeż dzieła stworzenia*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 1 (319), p. 8; Benedict XVI, *Osoba ludzka i dobro wspólne w centrum zarządzania sprawami publicznymi*, op. cit., p. 11.

⁶¹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, op. cit., p. 5; Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁶² Benedict XVI, *W Betlejem znajdujemy naszą nadzieję*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2010, no. 2 (320), p. 11.

⁶³ Benedict XVI, *Orędzie Papieża Benedykta XVI na Światowy Dzień Misyjny 2009 r.*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 10 (317), p. 5.

⁶⁴ See Benedict XVI, *Zwalczanie ubóstwa drogą do pokoju. Orędzie Ojca Świętego Benedykta XVI na Światowy Dzień Pokoju 1 stycznia 2009 r.*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 1 (309), p. 6; Benedict XVI, *Nikt sam nie zbuduje własnego szczęścia*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 2 (310), p. 40; *Działalność Stolicy Apostolskiej. Kronika*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 3 (311), p. 62; Benedict XVI, *Do Afryki skieruję przesłanie nadziei. Konferencja prasowa w samolocie*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 5 (313), p. 18; Benedict XVI, *Potrzebny jest umiar i solidarność aby zwalczyć ubóstwo*, „L’Osservatore Romano”, 2009, no. 2 (310), p. 40.

economic ethics was to be based on two fundamental pillars: the inalienable dignity of the human person and natural moral norms. According to him, the challenge for true human development was to demonstrate that „one can not neglect or weaken the traditional principles of social ethics, such as transparency, honesty and responsibility”⁶⁵.

So the society of the 21st century was to remember and to rediscover what one can and can do, because the „closure of God” and the „atheism of indifference” so far have led to the forgetfulness of the Creator and values. These difficulties, according to the pope, were to be the greatest obstacles to development⁶⁶. The *Caritas in veritate* encyclical was supposed to initiate a global consensus and change consciousness. In turn, the book *The Light of the World* was meant to convince the faithful that God must become the „first necessity” in the struggle of the anguish of our time⁶⁷.

In his book-interview⁶⁸, Benedict XVI argued that we are living in a critical moment in history. The Pope claimed that „we must proclaim the necessity of breakthrough” and conversion. Modernity needed a new evangelization, inner balance, and the need for spiritual growth, because progress so far was not conducive to the development of the „moral and human dimension”. Benedict XVI claimed that „the world can not function without the power of religious authority”. He urged for a new experiment with God and allowed him to enter into society⁶⁹. Help with this papal doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth, which was meant to understand the figure of Jesus⁷⁰.

Benedict XVI, in a sense, advocated for modernization taking advantage of the effects of the global crisis. In social science, these „signs of the times” have been used for a long time, responding to the transformation with the contemporary expressions of culture. Leo XIII has already begun searching for social solutions in „dialogue” with the world. Pius X struggled with modernism and did not accept reformism. Benedict XV used the events of the First World War, the October Revolution, and the collapse of

⁶⁵ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, op. cit., p. 16, 21.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, p. 32.

⁶⁷ Benedict XVI, *Światłość świata. Papież, Kościół i znaki czasu. Benedykt XVI w rozmowie z Peterem Seewaldem*, Cracow 2011.

⁶⁸ J. Ratzinger gave three such interviews on the state of modern Catholicism: J. Ratzinger, *Sól ziemi. Chrześcijaństwo i Kościół katolicki na przełomie tysiącleci*, G. Sowiński (trans.), Cracow 2005; J. Ratzinger, *Bóg i świat. Wiara i życie w dzisiejszych czasach*, G. Sowiński (trans.), Cracow 2005; J. Ratzinger, *Raport o stanie wiary*, Z. Oryszyn (trans.), Marki 2005. As Pope gave the fourth interview: Benedict XVI, *Światłość świata*, op. cit.; see Ł. Kleska, *Oblicza Josepha Ratzingera*, Warsaw 2011.

⁶⁹ Benedict XVI, *Światłość świata*, op. cit., p. 73-74, 146. „Today, human thinks that he himself can do everything he had previously expected from God alone. According to this model of thinking, which is supposed to be scientific, **matters of faith appear as archaic, mythical, belonging to the ancient civilization**. Religion, in any case, Christian, is considered a relic of the past” (ibidem, p. 144).

⁷⁰ In the book-interview *The Light of the World*, the Pope wrote: „It is not necessary simply to break away from the historical approach, but the self-criticism of the historical method, the self-criticism of historical reason, who discerns its limitations and recognizes conformity to knowledge coming out of faith; That is: the synthesis of a rational historical interpretation and that guided by faith. Both elements need to be linked together in the right way. This also reflects the essential relationship between faith and reason” (ibidem, p. 178).

„monarchist forms of government and the replacement of them with parliamentary-type democracies”. Popes in their social masters used all the opportunities, whether it was liberalism, modernism, communism, socialism or fascism⁷¹. The purpose of these cultural programs was to saturate the culture with the content of the Gospel to its clericalisation, because – as Zbigniew Stachowski states – „The culture of the Christian world is a culture of hegemony and dictation”⁷².

For Benedict XVI the occasion was a global economic crisis⁷³.

The pontifical method changed with historical events and with a lessened impact on culture. Joseph Ratzinger already outlined his cultural program in 2001, pointing out the need for a new evangelization in the face of the crisis of culture⁷⁴. He wrote, among others about the need to identify a new path and learn the art of life, often criticized the European worldview for breaking with the Christian roots of Europe⁷⁵. He claimed that Europe was in crisis because it broke with moral values⁷⁶. He talked about the European sin, the destruction of the Christian ethos of Europe⁷⁷. J. Ratzinger, even before his pontificate, persuaded to return to ethical tradition, regain lost identity and re-accept God, legitimizing his thesis with the need for defense, guaranteeing dignity and lasting peace⁷⁸. When talked about inculturation⁷⁹, J. Ratzinger was already thinking about interculturality⁸⁰.

In 2012, Benedict XVI addressed the participants in the First Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Propagation of New Evangelization⁸¹, highlighting the need for new evangelizers in „changing conditions of history”. Benedict XVI claimed that the preaching of the Gospel must be done with „enthusiasm”, effectively, the lifestyle of believers must be genuinely reliable and persuasive⁸². Searching for ways to preach the Gospel was the main theme of the 13th Ordinary General Assembly of the

⁷¹ More in this topic eg.: A. Gianelli, A. Tornielli, *Papieże a wojna. Od pierwszego światowego konfliktu do ataku na Irak*, L. Rodziewicz (trans.), Cracow 2006; L. Ring-Eifel, *Światowa potęga Watykanu. Polityka współczesnych papieży*, T. Sotowska (trans.), Warsaw 2006; J. Orlandis, *Kościół katolicki w drugiej połowie XX wieku*, P. Skibiński (trans.), Radom 2007.

⁷² Z. Stachowski, *Dyktat kulturowy chrześcijaństwa*, „Przegląd Religioznawczy”, 2010, no. 4 (238), p. 171-174.

⁷³ G. M. Vian, „*Caritas in veritate*”: nadzieja i realizm, op. cit., p. 3.

⁷⁴ J. Ratzinger, *Nowa Ewangelizacja*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2001, no. 6, p. 35 ff.

⁷⁵ J. Ratzinger, *Wiara – prawda – tolerancja*, op. cit., p. 71-81.

⁷⁶ J. Ratzinger, *Europa. Jej podwaliny dzisiaj i jutro*, op. cit., p. 59-64.

⁷⁷ J. Ratzinger, *Czas przemian w Europie*, op. cit., p. 109.

⁷⁸ J. Ratzinger, *Europa. Jej podwaliny dzisiaj i jutro*, op. cit., p. 21.

⁷⁹ On inculturation, look especially at: Z. Stachowski, *Kultura w ujęciu Jana Pawła II*, in: *Jan Paweł II a wyzwanie współczesności*, Z. Stachowski (ed.), Warsaw 1991; Z. Stachowski, *Kościół i kultura. Problem inkulturacji w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, Warsaw 1990; R. Wójtowicz, *Nowa ewangelizacja*, „Przegląd Religioznawczy”, 2012, no. 4 (246).

⁸⁰ Ł. Kleska, *Oblicza Josepha Ratzingera*, op. cit., p. 66, 71, 94.

⁸¹ The Pontifical Council – the dicastery in question, was established on June 28, 2010 due to the crisis of faith in countries with a Christian tradition.

⁸² Benedict XVI, *Musimy szukać nowych sposobów skutecznego głoszenia Ewangelii*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2011, no. 7 (335), p. 39 ff.

Synod of Bishops, on which the pope emphasized the „content of faith”⁸³. The Pope pointed out to consider: the sacrament of marriage and the figure of Jesus Christ⁸⁴. At Mass at the start of the session he recalled that „the Church exists to evangelize”. The new evangelization had a need for renewal, which would affect the dynamism of the *mission ad gentes* proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ, those who do not know him, and those who, although baptized, move away from the Church and do not practice⁸⁵.

Benedict XVI has failed to realize his intentions and to transform European culture. His abdication completed several years of efforts to correct doctrinal errors and catechesis of Europe, and the election of Pope Francis changed the course of the new evangelization method rather than the activation and regret for the sins of the Church, rather than the doctrine. The state of European culture in the 21st century may be affected by the question of military action in Eastern Europe, which is particularly interesting in the context of the discussed issues, since Benedict XVI claimed that Christ would bring peace.

The Pope retiree saw the danger of peace in bringing lawlessness to the ranks of the law. He said that a state without justice would be „a great bunch of criminals”. He persisted in recognizing moral values and criticized Europe for cutting off from Christian roots because they were meant to guarantee a lasting peace. The absence of moral values in economics was not without significance, especially of the private, which seemed to be putting its business on the economic crisis, and in 2014 on peace.

Lukasz Kleska – BENEDICT XVI ABOUT THE EUROPEAN CULTURE

The article concerns the doctrine of Benedict XVI aims to pinpoint the most important moments of his social teaching and bring closer important Pope's statements on contemporary culture. The author analyzed the teaching of Joseph Ratzinger before his election as Bishop of Rome and confronted them with his papal teaching until the historical abdication.

⁸³ G. M. Vian, *Ogień Ewangelii*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2012, no. 11 (347), p. 16.

⁸⁴ Benedict XVI, *Kościół istnieje po to, by ewangelizować*, „L'Osservatore Romano”, 2012, no. 11 (347), p. 17.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 18.