

JANUSZ MARIAŃSKI
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

Catholicism in Poland in the process of transformation

Advancing social transformation and modernisation determine not only changes in the financial conditions of the life of Poles, in the social and political structure and culture, but also in the world of recognized values and life orientations as well as religiousness and morality. The society is becoming more and more fragmentary, decentralised, it is subject to division into a lot of diverse social groups with various viewpoints, preferences, values and norms, taste and fashion, etc. In practice it means departing from the strategy “either... or” to the tactics of multiple choice “not only this, but also that” when faced with life choices. In the conditions of social and cultural pluralism, religious identity in the modern world is not what is given, but what is assigned. Entities independently formulate their own identities, outlooks on life, system of moral values. Social pluralism as well as its social and psychological dynamics are making it more and more difficult for entities to remain certain as to their outlooks on life, without engaging in the constant process of fight with themselves and the outer world. Religiousness stops being a part of the cultural heritage and the choice of religion becomes a conscious decision of an entity¹. In the conditions of postmodernity religious identities are very diverse.

New religious identities are different from the former ones. They are less rationalised, more individualised, connected with emotions, open to extraordinariness. “There is also the danger of hybridisation of the religious identity, a peculiar religious syncretism. Many believe that you can be a Catholic and go to Orthodox church, since they sing beautifully there, you can burn incense sticks at home in front of Buddha’s statuette, from Hinduism you can adopt faith in reincarnation and visit temples of various religions. Many young people choose something for themselves

¹ P.L. Berger, *Religia i nowoczesność. Rozmowa z amerykańskim socjologiem religii Peterem L. Bergerem*, “Europa. Miesięcznik Idei”, 2012, no. 5, p. 24.

from different religions and not according to a specific rule or as a result of thoughtful reflections, but on the basis of what fulfils their personal needs at a given time”². These syncretic tendencies are based on the fact that people combine very diverse views on religion and the *sacred* together. Many people try to formulate their religious attitudes and behaviours on their own by saying “I am Catholic, but ...”, which means they have various reservations about the official religious doctrine. In transformation conditions, subjective religiousness stabilises in alternative forms, which compensates for the loss of traditional, church religiousness to a certain extent³.

Poland seems to be an exception in Europe which undergoes secularisation or dechristianisation. Changes in religiousness in the Polish society are mild and hardly noticeable, they do not alarm the Church, but in the long run some differences are visible. According to the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), even a certain increase in religiousness was observed in the years 2004-2006, but it was not very high and did not last. After 1989 a slight decrease in religious practices has been observed, especially among adolescent people. According to Mirosława Grabowska, “we can speak of a gradual departure of young people from the Church. As those who attend church regularly account for about 40 per cent, while a little over 40 per cent attend church occasionally; almost 20 per cent declare that they do not follow religious observances whatsoever. It means that practically more than half of young people remain outside of systematic influences of the Church – it is really a lot”⁴. In the overall society, changes in religious practices are smaller, less radical.

The process of secularisation in Poland did not begin with political changes in 1989, but in the conditions of political, social, economic and cultural transformations it probably gradually accelerates. The fall of the Communist regime enabled opening to the world on a larger scale. The development of information technologies contributed to a mass appearance of new cultural trends, lifestyle models and outlooks on life, including those which are contrary to Catholicism or even hostile towards it. It is one of the key factors accelerating the process of secularisation in the Polish society. Some observers of the Polish society notice far-reaching changes in the religiousness of Poles even today, while regarding the thesis of a unique character of the Polish religiousness against a background of other European countries as false. The vast majority of Western sociologists expressing their opinion on Catholicism in Poland forecast a fast secularisation in Poland.

² L. Dyczewski, *Tożsamość religijna*, w: *Tożsamość religijna w nowoczesności*, L. Dyczewski, K. Jurek (ed.), Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2015, p. 26.

³ G. Pickel, *Jugendliche und Religion im Spannungsfeld zwischen religiöser und säkularer Option*, w: *Vernetzte Vielfalt. Kirche angesichts von Individualisierung und Säkularisierung*, Hrsg. von Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Volker Jung. Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh 2015, p. 144.

⁴ M. Grabowska, *Polska wiara* [interview conducted by Z. Radzik], “Tygodnik Powszechny”, 2016, no. 32, p. 25.

For almost 30 years we have been building a new society, the society of great change, transformation, modernisation. We are becoming a modern and pluralistic society, at the same time preserving – despite some negative tendencies – Christian tradition and faith. Family, nation, Church – these are undoubtedly the pillars of the culture-forming and ethical role of Catholicism in Poland. And we have John Paul II! Would all this be possible without his teachings and life testimony? How long will the heritage of John Paul II retain the power shaping Catholicism in Poland, a “specific case” in Europe – as sociologists refer to it or rather “the Polish miracle” – as theologians say? How does the religiousness of Poles present itself in the conditions of a modernising society, which imitates the patterns of many domains of social life in Western Europe? Is the scenario of highly advanced secularisation slowly unfolding? To what extent do the evangelising efforts of the Catholic Church and other religious associations in Poland neutralise secularisation processes connected with social modernisation? In which direction is the Polish society, called until recently a Catholic society, evolving? What are the development tendencies in Catholicism in Poland? Does Poland have a mission of re-Christianisation of Europe and restoring it to Christianity?

Many sociologists, especially from Western countries, forecast negative changes in Catholicism in Poland and in the religious identities of Poles. Some observers of the Polish society notice far-reaching changes in the religiousness of Poles even today, while they regard the thesis of a special nature of the Polish religiousness against a background of other European countries as false. The vast majority of European sociologists expressing their views on the subject of Catholicism in Poland forecast a fast secularisation in Poland and being under the influence of negative cultural patterns widespread in the West. The transfer of Western-European secularism and the assimilation of Catholic Poland into Europe on its own terms is being talked about. According to Peter L. Berger: “Poland will probably follow the same direction as other European countries. It was the case with Ireland – this until recently very Catholic country, has changed rapidly. Will Poland be another Ireland in this respect? I do not know, but probably yes, if only the currently observed trends continue”⁵.

One of a few spheres in the lives of Poles, which did not succumb to substantial influence of transformation, or only to a minor extent, was religiousness and morality. After almost two decades of social and political as well as cultural transformation after 1989, religiousness and morality have remained quite stable, which also concerned – with a few reservations – adolescent people. Changes in social structures were much faster than in the axiological sphere. In fact, there has been little change, religiousness and church morality have remained rather stable. If new diversity in religiousness and morality were the case in the Polish society, they were not radically new and not

⁵ Peter L. Berger, *Religia i nowoczesność. Rozmowa z amerykańskim socjologiem religii Peterem L. Bergerem*, op. cit., p. 26.

known so far, but some processes have accelerated, especially those which had earlier origins, both in the processes of social modernisation, as well as in the context of the globalising world. These changes were occurring gradually and were more or less unnoticeable. They accelerated a couple of years after the death of John Paul II, but the person of this Saint Pope will certainly slow down the decrease in the religiousness of the Polish society in the nearest future.

It seems that in the past 10 years (2006-2015) there were more and more significant changes in this respect, which allow us to formulate a hypothesis of not only crawling, but accelerating secularisation in the Polish society. Sociological research and opinion polls confirm the thesis of the emerging change in global attitudes of the younger and older generations of Poles towards religion, that is regarding the so-called nationwide religiousness as well as first and foremost on the plane of everyday life (awareness as well as religious and moral behaviours). Especially values and moral norms of religious provenience are being questioned or even rejected, they undergo liberalisation and marginalisation. There is not one, but many various forms of religiousness and morality in the dynamically changing Polish society.

Despite pessimistic predictions and forecasts, the religiousness of Poles and their bond with the Catholic Church has not changed drastically, some sociologists point to a relative stability of religiousness and church matters. According to numerous sociological studies and opinion polls after 2008, we are dealing with more visible changes in the religiousness of Poles, especially concerning their bond with the Catholic Church. A couple of years after the death of John Paul II the indicators of religiousness slightly began to fall, stronger secularisation trends have emerged. We can assume that social and political, economic as well as cultural changes in the 21st century influence the attitudes and behaviours of people in the sphere of religion. In the distant future Poland will not protect itself from the acceleration of this process. It is possible that Poles will be less religious in the nearest future.

In this study we will describe – in the light of sociological research and opinion polls – changes occurring in the religiousness of the Polish society on the basis of chosen parameters of religiousness: self-declarations of denomination and religion, faith and religious beliefs, moral attitudes, religious practices, bond with the Catholic Church. In the conclusion of this study we will indicate certain forecasts and claims concerning Catholicism in Poland. We define the very changes in the religiousness of Poles as religious identities. Religious identities are being shaped on the basis of recognized articles of faith, values and moral norms, common rituals and experiences connected with them, social and religious bonds with the parish and the Church. In this study they will first and foremost concern Catholic religious identities.

Self-declarations of religiousness

Peter L. Berger, an American sociologist, often emphasises that Western and Central Europe are the most secularised area of the world. At first, the phenomenon of "eurosecularism" was characteristic of the northern part of the European continent, later it was spreading exceptionally quickly to other areas of Europe (e.g. France, Belgium, Spain). In this context Berger formulates a hypothesis that another countries will undergo secularisation, along with joining Europe. European integration favours adopting "eurosecularism", together with the whole "European package". This trend – according to him – can already be noticed in the case of Ireland and Poland, where we are only dealing with a delay of this process. "New" Europe will soon look like "old"⁶. Sociological analyses referred to in this article show the scale of secularisation processes in the Polish society.

Most Poles admit to being a member of one of Christian Churches, especially that of the Catholic Church. According to data from the European Social Survey collected in 2002, 93,33% of surveyed adult Poles considered themselves believers of a religion, in 2012 – 89,93%. In the years 2002-2012 the indicator of respondents identifying themselves with a religion dropped by 3,4%. Among those who felt connected with a religion, denomination or Church, 98,56% of respondents indicated Roman Catholicism in 2002, while in 2012 – 98,74% (0,40% – Protestantism, 0,31% – Orthodoxy, 0,49% – other Christian religions, 0,07% – Eastern religions)⁷. Catholicism in Poland is regarded as the obvious religious belief in the society, but Poles have the choice between being affiliated to it or not. Many of them are aware that there is the possibility to change this decision in the future.

Self-declarations of faith on the scale from devoted believers to declared atheists remained fairly stable and at a high level in the years 1989-2005. According to the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) monthly surveys, more than 90% of adult Polish respondents considered themselves believers, including one in ten of the surveyed who regarded their religiousness in the category of devoted believers. In 2005 12% of respondents perceived themselves as devoted believers, 84% – as believers, 4% – as non-believers; in 2014 (respectively) – 8%, 84%, 8%. In the years 2005-2014 the percentage of non-believers significantly increased (from 4% to 8%) while the percentage of devoted believers decreased (from 12% to 8%). In the group of the youngest respondents (18-24 year-olds) the percentage of devoted believers remained fairly stable, however, the number of non-believers increased more than twofold (from 6% to 15%) and the number of believers decreased (from 86% to

⁶ Peter L. Berger, *Alternatywne nowoczesności*, source: www.newsweek.pl/alternatywne-nowoczesnosc/45397,1,1.html [retrieved on: 03 V2015].

⁷ The European Social Survey, source: www.ifispan.waw.pl [retrieved on: 10 V 2015].

77%)⁸. In February 2015 the indicator of devoted believers and believers did not exceed 90% (88,1%) for the first time. Even if religious self-declarations do not remain in the Polish society at a relatively high level, for a couple of years we have noted a slow increase of those who declare themselves to be weak or strong non-believers.

In the light of indicators concerning the self-declaration of faith, the number of persons who regard themselves as believers has decreased since 2005. This tendency is confirmed by the analysis of the faith in God. According to a survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in 1997, 61% of adult Polish respondents declared their attitude to God in the following way: I believe in God and I have no doubts as to His existence, 25% declared that they believed in God, although they sometimes had doubts, 5% declared that they sometimes seemed to believe in God and sometimes not, 6% did not believe in personal God, but believed in some kind of higher power, 2% did not know whether God existed and did not believe there was a way to check it, 1% did not believe in God; in 2015 (respectively) – 56%, 27%, 5%, 5%, 4%, 3%. In the years 1997-2015 a slight decrease in the unwavering faith in God was visible (from 61% to 56%), however, the number of people in doubt and non-believers increased minimally⁹. In the Polish society the majority of respondents declare faith in personal God. However, it is a simple declaration, which includes various notions, or sometimes even plain ignorance. In some circles of the society the notions of non-personal God have already appeared, especially among adolescent people. God is perceived as some sort of Transcendent Power, Higher Power, Energy, Cosmic Force.

In the Polish society pro-belief attitudes are shared by the vast majority of Poles, but they are slowly approaching the minimum limit of the so-called cultural certainty (80%). Atheistic attitudes are still rare, but in large cities they amount to over 15%. Maybe atheism does not fit in the national culture of Poles, while non-believers – especially in small social environments – feel that they are a minority, tolerated at most. Even if atheism is a matter of the significant minority, attitudes in between belief and non-belief seem to be visibly increasing in the first decade of the 21st century. In the conditions of the developing pluralistic society, faith will not rather be a “twist of fate”, but a matter of personal choice and preferences. The possibilities of broadening the scope of free choice in religious matters are constantly being searched, which also favours the choice of religious non-belief and irreligion.

Atheism – just like before the year 1989 – is not yet in fashion, although the number of atheists and agnostics is slowly increasing. However, critical attitudes towards the Church have become popular (ecclesial atheism). In sociology still persists the thesis on a relatively stable religiousness in the Polish society, declared on the

⁸ R. Boguszewski, *Zmiany w zakresie podstawowych wskaźników religijności Polaków po śmierci Jana Pawła II*, „Komunikat z badań CBOS”, 2015, no. 26 pp. 2-12.

⁹ R. Boguszewski, *Kanon wiary Polaków*, „Komunikat z badań CBOS”, 2015, no. 29, pp. 1-3.

level of general denominational and religious affiliation. Slowly new environments of atheists, agnostics and enemies of the Church are beginning to appear and consolidate. Atheists in Poland not so much negate religion ostentatiously, though it has been changing lately, as they rather live without it, preserving the sentiment to the Catholic religious tradition (they are rather atheistic than atheists). Sociological knowledge on the subject of atheistic environments in Poland is quite limited, while sociologists – even if in empirical analyses they have taken into consideration the independent variable “belief – non-belief”, did not attach a lot of weight to this type of analyses (the category “non-believers” was in general not very numerous in the studies).

Faith and religious beliefs

Advancing social modernisation in many countries has questioned the credibility of religion. In modern societies the phenomena formerly explained and interpreted in a religious way, have gained interpretation outside of religion. They are socially and religiously pluralised, entities in their lives are confronted with various religions and non-religious outlooks on life, which claim the right to know the whole truth. The awareness of a modern human being is becoming more and more relativised and distanced from their own religion and their own Church. People find it harder to believe in the transcendental powers: God or gods, angels and Satan. Religions lose their former cultural certainty, while entities stand before the necessity of their personal choice of faith (the obligation to choose). Social modernisation is connected with secularisation of the religious awareness of believers, but above all with its pluralisation.

Religious pluralism increasing in the modern world causes a loss of significance of attitudes towards faith in the awareness of believers, they are becoming unspecified to a certain degree and dispersed (diffusive). In Europe, but also in the Polish society, those who do not treat the *Bible* as the Word of God, but as a book containing religious content or important truths about life, are becoming more and more numerous. Fewer and fewer people imagine God as a person or believe in life after death, especially in the existence of hell or resurrection of the body. In the perception of eschatological articles of faith, Christian content is intertwined with non-Christian, e.g. with faith in reincarnation. In modern societies together with the increase of religious pluralism, the awareness of believers is becoming more and more unspecified. The question about the authenticity of faith is not treated as a priority by many believers, they rather leave it open, sometimes they are indifferent to it.

According to the survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in February 2015, adult Poles declared their attitude to chosen Christian content in the following way (the answer “definitely yes” and “rather yes”): afterlife – 65,6%, a human being has an immortal soul – 69,0%, Judgment Day – 69,3%,

resurrection of the dead – 61,2%, the existence of hell – 55,4%, the existence of heaven – 70,1%, we are born burdened with original sin – 59,4%, miracles that cannot be explained with the help of human knowledge – 69,3%; in 1997 (respectively) – 71%, 76%, 77%, 67%, 59%, 72%, 70%, 60%. The average indicator of declared articles of faith in the Catholic Church in 1997 amounted to 69%, compared with 64,9% in 2015 (it dropped by 4,1%). Within the last 18 years the indicators of faith in the immortality of the human soul, in the Judgment Day, afterlife, original sin and resurrection of the dead have decreased a little¹⁰.

Although about two thirds of the surveyed adult Poles declared their belief in the afterlife, the notions of what happens to us after we die are a bit more varied. According to the survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in February 2015, they were thus: nothing, death is the end – 17,9%, there is something, but I do not know what – 31,1%, we go to heaven, hell or purgatory – 35,7%, we all go to heaven – 3,7%, we reincarnate, that is after our death we are born again in this world but in another form – 2,8%, after this life we melt in a sort of eternal bliss – 0,9%, other answers – 0,5%, I do not know – 6,7%, I refuse to answer – 0,6%. Severe doubts concerning life after death were expressed by almost every fifth respondent (17,9%), fewer declared that they do not believe in salvation whatsoever (14,8%). In the years 2006-2015 no visible changes in the belief in the afterlife were found in the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) surveys, although the number of respondents who declared that death is a definite end grew (from 14% to 18%)¹¹.

Selectivity or selectiveness towards the articles of faith is gradable, only sometimes complete, i.e. it rejects some, even crucial articles of faith (e.g. the immortality of the human soul), but it accepts the existence of God. Even among deeply religious persons or regular churchgoers we can find signs of religious erosion or even the acceptance of elements of non-Christian beliefs (a peculiar religious eclecticism). Some believers do not feel inwardly obliged to accept the whole canon of religious faith and as a result they do not feel the affective and cognitive dissonance. Even respondents declaring themselves to be devoted believers sometimes express doubts as to certain content of faith, or even question it. The so-called DIY enthusiasts combine a part of the official religion with elements of other religions to create their own religiousness, just like children playing with a Lego set (*à la carte, bricolage, patchwork*)¹².

Although the majority of Poles still share religious beliefs of the Catholic Church, for a dozen or so years we have been observing a slow process of erosion of the religious awareness of Poles. A declaration of the type "I am a believer" does not always mean the acceptance of the basic articles of Christian faith, it rarely coincides

¹⁰ Ibidem, pp. 8-10.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 4.

¹² Peter L. Berger, *Refleksje o dzisiejszej socjologii religii*, "Teologia Polityczna", 2009-2010, no. 5, pp. 94-95.

with holding views contrary to dogmas taught by Christian Churches. Probably the process whereby religious beliefs gain the status of usual opinions among many others is a bit more rapid than the process of the unconditional questioning of the articles of Christian faith. Both these processes contribute to the erosion of the religious awareness and weakening of the credibility of religion, though it can also be regarded – from the sociological point of view – as a process of autonomisation and religious creativity.

Regression of religious practices

Obligatory (compulsory) and voluntary (optional) religious practices are often used to measure the institutionalised religiousness. They are an external expression of identification with a religious group, they are the manifestation of social integration with the Church community and congregation, they influence the inter-generational transfer of the pattern of religiousness as well as other aspects of religious life beyond worship (e.g. the acceptance of moral rules of religious provenience) as well as social life (e.g. pro-social and civic attitudes). These results of attending religious practices manifest themselves in various ways in the lives of individual persons, attending church regularly, not regularly or seldom. The participation in religious practices does not always indicate the level of internalisation of norms regulating the religious life of Catholics, the bond with the congregation or activity within movements and religious communities.

The Catholic Church in Poland in the post-war period placed great emphasis on religious practices and rituals, collective and external forms of worship, therefore opposing – more or less consciously – the top-down, controlled, repressive secularisation. Less attention was paid to deepening religiousness in its internal and personal aspects when striving for the mass dimension of worship practices. Religiousness manifested itself stronger in the spheres of religious practices than on the plane of the acceptance of religious beliefs and moral teachings of the Church. Ritualism was the dominating quality of the folk religiousness, not only in rural environments. In pluralistic societies a significant decrease in the level of religious practices can be observed.

In the survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in February 2015 on a representative random sample of adult population of Poland, the respondents assessed *inter alia* the importance of some one-off religious practices according to the scale from 1 – not important at all to 7 – very important. According to three degrees of the scale, a baptism ceremony was assessed as important by 83,4% of adult Polish respondents, a wedding ceremony – by 81,1%, a funeral ceremony – by 85,4% (the response “it is not important” according to three degrees on the scale, respectively: 9,%, 11,%, 9,1%). The remaining respondents chose the value “4” (between important and unimportant) or were undecided. In the years 2006-2015 the approval

of the so-called one-off practices (baptisms, weddings, funerals) underwent some minor changes. In 2015 a baptism ceremony was regarded as really important or rather important by 4% fewer respondents than when compared with 2006, a wedding ceremony – by 3% fewer and a funeral ceremony – by 4% fewer. The importance ascribed to these ceremonies decreased along with the size of the place of residence of the respondents, their level of education, income *per capita*, while it increased along with the frequency of religious practices. People who did not follow religious observances whatsoever attached definitely less importance to baptism, wedding and funeral ceremonies than churchgoers¹³.

According to surveys conducted in the years 1997-2005 by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS), the level of religious practices remained fairly stable and changed only slightly. In the years 2005-2015 the percentage of regular churchgoers (practicing at least once a week) decreased from 58% to 50%, while the number of those who do not follow religious observances whatsoever increased (from 9% to 13%) as well as the number of irregular churchgoers (from 33% to 37%). Especially significant changes occurred with regard to the respondents in the 18-24 age range. The indicator of weekly churchgoers decreased in the years 2005-2014 from 51% to 44%, while the indicator of respondents who do not attend church whatsoever increased: from 10% to 18%. Another group of respondents with faster changes in religious practices are the inhabitants of cities with a population of more than 500 thousand. In the years 2005-2014 the number of respondents declaring lack of involvement in religious practices increased: from 17% to 23%¹⁴.

According to the survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in February 2015, 3.5% of adult Polish respondents declared that they took part in such religious practices as Masses, church services or religious meetings usually a few times a week, 46,1% – once a week, 14,7% – on average once or twice a month, 22,9% – a few times a year, 11,7% – did not participate in them whatsoever, 1,1% – refused to answer; in March 2015 (respectively) – 4,3%, 42,0%, 18,6%, 21,6%, 12,3%, 1,2%; in May 2015 – 5,0%, 44,6%, 14,4%, 20,6%, 14,9%, 0,4%¹⁵. In 2015 the indicator of regular churchgoers (every Sunday) did not reach 50%.

According to data collected by the European Social Survey in 2002, 1,02% of adult Polish respondents declared that they participated in Masses, church services and religious meetings every day, 6,65% – more than once a week, 49,10% – once a week, 18,81% – at least once a month, 16,67% – only on the occasion of holidays,

¹³ K. Kowalczyk, *Sfery sacrum i profanum w życiu społecznym*, "Komunikat z badań CBOS", 2015, no. 31, pp. 8-9.

¹⁴ R. Boguszewski, *Zmiany w zakresie podstawowych wskaźników religijności Polaków po śmierci Jana Pawła II*, "Komunikat z badań CBOS", 2015, no. 26, pp. 3-13.

¹⁵ The results of the study: *Aktualne problemy i wydarzenia* (no. 300), "Komunikat z badań CBOS" (internal reference), Warszawa 2015, p. 35.

3,28% – even more rarely and 4,47% – never; in 2012 (respectively) – 1,21%, 5,89%, 42,23%, 19,66%, 18,64%, 5,20%, 7,17%. In the years 2002-2012 the indicator of respondents participating in religious practices at least once a week decreased from 56,77% to 49,33% (dropped by 7,44%). According to this survey, in 2002 47,41% of adult Polish respondents declared that they prayed every day, 16,21% – more than once a week, 9,86% – once a week, 5,65% – at least once a month, 6,22% – only on the occasion of holidays, 6,96% – even more rarely, 7,70% – never; in 2012 (respectively) – 40,58%, 16,05%, 10,28%, 7,83%, 7,72%, 6,73%, 10,80%. In the years 2002-2012 the number of respondents declaring everyday prayers dropped by 6,83%¹⁶.

A lower level of religious practices has been observed by sociologists among adolescent people. Youth from the last years of upper secondary schools (lyceums, technical colleges and vocational schools) in 2013 declared their participation in such religious practices as Masses, church services or religious meetings in the following way: a few times a week – 6%, once a week – 37%, on average 1-2 times a month – 13%, a few times a year – 21%, did not participate whatsoever – 23%; in 1998 (respectively) – 6%, 48%, 10%, 19%, 16%. The number of regular churchgoers (a few times a week or only on Sunday) in 1998 amounted to 54%, in 2003 – 48%, in 2008 – 49%, in 2010 – 45% and in 2013 – 43%. In the years 1998-2013 there has been a decrease of this number by 11% and amounted to 39% in 2013 among boys and 46% among girls (living in the countryside – 51%, in towns below 20 thousand inhabitants – 37%, in cities from 20 to 100 thousand inhabitants – 34% and in cities above 100 thousand inhabitants – 35%)¹⁷.

In Poland we can observe a slowly developing generation gap between adolescents and adults concerning religious practices, while the differences in the numbers of regular churchgoers sometimes reach from 20% to 30% in separate adolescent groups. The indicator of adolescent people and adults not attending religious practices whatsoever also differs significantly (it is higher among adolescent people). In the Polish society a radical polarization of religious practices on account of age is not yet noticeable, although the generation gap will probably be more evident in the future, in accordance with the tendency visible in modernised Western societies. Even today many priests alarm that the Catholic Church “loses adolescents”. Since 2005 the number of people not participating in religious practices has grown, especially among adolescent groups.

Higher levels of participation refer to another, important obligatory religious practice in Catholicism, i.e. receiving Communion during Easter. Empirical evidence we have access to come from opinion polls, revealing the respondents' declarations of going to confession and Communion during Easter (the indicator of *paschantes* amounts

¹⁶ European Social Survey, source: www.ifispan.waw.pl [retrieved on: 10 V 2015].

¹⁷ R. Boguszewski, Michał Feliksiak, Magdalena Gwiazda, Jolanta Kalka, *Młodzież o sobie: wartości, obyczajowość, grupy odniesienia*, in: *Młodzież 2013. Opinie i Diagnozy* (no. 28), M. Grabowska, J. Kalka (ed.), CBOS, Warszawa 2014, pp. 118-123.

to more than 70%). The numbers are probably overstated by at least 10% and have also shown a slight decrease in the recent years. A positive indicator of worship involvement is shown by a growing number of Catholics receiving Sunday communion in the last decades (the so-called *communicantes*), as well as participation in various forms of voluntary practices, such as retreats, days of concentration, pilgrimages, cooperation with organizations and Christian works of mercy. Maybe in the future we will observe changes leading to an increase in the number of active, aware and religiously involved Catholics on the one hand, but on the other hand there might be an increase in the number of non-practising, not involved religiously or even non-believers.

If we are speaking of new religious diversities in the Polish society, we do not regard them as something radically new and so far unknown, but rather we mean the growth of certain processes, which originated earlier, both during the social modernisation as well as in the context of the globalising world. In the future the increase in the processes of “dechurching” (weakening the bond with the Church) will be more probable than the secularisation understood as breaking with Transcendence. All these phenomena need to be examined not so much as certain “states of affairs”, but as rapidly changing processes. We are in between huge processes of religious and church transformations in the Polish society, hence it is not easy to form a definitive opinion on the subject of the future shape of Catholicism in Poland. Cessation of religious practices is not equal to resigning from identification with the Church, much less abandoning the religious belief (“I belong and I partially believe”).

Sociological research and opinion polls do not validate the thesis on the movement on the inclined plane, decline or crisis of faith, but without doubts they indicate changes in religious practices towards their weakening. Sociological portraiture of religious practices in the Polish society should be continued. In religious matters there is no deterministic conditioning. The future of Catholicism in Poland will not be a result of random events, but will depend in large measure on the activity of believers as well as the development of religious and church institutions. Finally, it should be emphasized that the forecasts concerning the overall religious phenomena rarely prove correct, while a sociologist is neither a futurologist, nor a prophet.

Catholic morality in the process of transformation

Even if the “moral decline” is not the case in the Polish society, there is definitely a growth of permissiveness and questioning ethical rules, which derive from the teachings of the Catholic Church. From the sociological point of view, we speak of transformations of values, norms and moral judgments, some sociologists do not want to call this phenomenon a crisis or erosion of moral awareness, but from the point of view of the Church, whose members question its moral teachings, the matter looks

quite different. After all, here we have departures from values as well as religious and moral norms recognized in this religious community. The emergence of new values, norms and moral judgments, which are not consistent with or even contrary to the professed faith, can be regarded as an erosion of moral awareness, or at least as a symptom of morality becoming independent from religion.

Religious and moral values are becoming the object of negotiation, they are associated with unpleasant restrictions as the opposite of happiness or they are becoming a matter of free choice. In many aspects of life, values and moral norms – especially those of religious provenience – lose their unquestioned nature, one needs to ponder over alternative norms and make *ad hoc* choices from among them. Many members of the Church ignore its commandments, while the desired normative integration transforms into a situational integration according to the logic of choice. Also those who advise what should be chosen and what to resign from are becoming more numerous. It is difficult to present and reduce various attitudes and moral behaviours of contemporary people to the lowest common denominator as well as to decide, with reference to them, whether we are dealing with an inhibited or accelerated process of the secularisation of morality. In social reality there is not one morality, but its various forms (polymorphic morality). As a matter of fact, it cannot be otherwise, since in the postmodern social and cultural reality there are many ambiguities, ambivalence, ephemerality, fragmentarisation, instabilities, etc., connected with radical changes and transformations (social plane), and what is more, adolescent people are in the phase of becoming adults, which involves questioning the former identity typical of the period of childhood and searching for new sources of the sense of their own existence (individual plane). The uncertainty and unpredictability of social situations, common in modern societies, constitute a difficult and demanding environment for the functioning of the young generation.

Religious morality is becoming more and more varied and “colourful” as well as polymorphous. Only a part of held values and norms correspond to institutionalised patterns, propagated by the Catholic Church. The Church does not want to accept its limited competence with regard to many contemporary moral problems of humanity – claim its critics. Contemporary people are ready for axiological negotiations, but they do not want others to impose on them top-down mandates and prohibitions, which apply to everyone categorically, or ethical codes. The majority of Poles regard the Decalogue – theoretically – as relevant in their lives (“it applies”), but some commandments meet with less acceptance than others. “Moral” commandments (IV–X) are more accepted than “religious” commandments (I–III). To what extent do Poles respect the former and the latter in everyday life, is a different matter. Generally phrased commandments of the Decalogue are still theoretically regarded as the basic foundation of the stability of society, while in specific cases, which lack such social significance, the freedom of individual choice remains. The social scope of partial permissivism defined in such a way and moral relativism is difficult to

define. At least one in ten adults and one in five young Poles is characterised by doubts in the Decalogue or rejects it altogether.

Many Catholics seem to claim that on the question of morals there are no definitively justified judgments. They willingly emphasize that there cannot be a serious discussion with the Church, but only an order and obedience. Such an attitude does not favour the internalisation of Christian values and moral norms. In contemporary culture, in which "it is forbidden to forbid", all norms and rules can be regarded as a kind of repression. An entity itself is not its own norm. Hence the transition to the popularization of permissivism, or even relativism is easy. Sociological studies indicate the weakening of some values and moral norms, also when it comes to people declaring themselves to be religious and fulfilling basic religious practices. In the contemporary society and culture – partially also in the Polish society – relativism is becoming more and more common, often aggressive, there are less and less fundamental certainties, values and norms, which give meaning to life. Popular moral nihilists are the most dangerous. Evolution towards a society which is ethically neutral, has "weak" values and moral norms, would be a dangerous solution not only from the religious, but also from the social point of view.

The largest disproportion between religiousness and morality is noticeable in the marital and family matters. Sociological studies confirm transformations occurring in the awareness of Poles as to their attitude towards problems connected with marital and family morality. Premarital sexual intercourse, using a contraceptive method, abortion, divorce, free love, cohabitation, euthanasia, *in vitro* fertilization are no longer phenomena socially and morally stigmatized to such an extent as in the past. The formation of love between a man and a woman, experiencing pleasure, emotional feelings are just as important, or even more important for many than the dimension of procreation in marriage. Often an individual "self" becomes the basic source of values and norms connected with marriage and family. However, it needs to be emphasized that sociologists of empirical orientation are more often interested in questioning and exceeding norms rather than in their content or social recognition.

It is still too early to speak of new, distinctive, mass surfacing moral and cultural trends, radically different from the previous tendencies, that is of trends characterized by the individualistic understanding of freedom, relativistic treatment of values and norms, hedonistic model of activity and carefree lifestyle. Certain tendencies among adolescent people, aimed at weakening the basic moral orientations, which were formerly deeply rooted in tradition and the Church, now are clear after all. They prove that permissive morality is strengthening. However, adolescent people are not entirely confused, although they live in an uncertain and unstable world from the viewpoint of values. Their axiological awareness is neither a nihilistic desert nor a safe fortress. Even if the claim that Western Europe is under extensive processes of radical relativism and scepticism is a little exaggerated, then undoubtedly these sort of processes of moral transformation are partially visible also in Poland, especially

among adolescent people. In the European cultural circle the expansion of tolerance and permissivism is a clear and permanent trend or even – maybe – a megatrend of civilisation. However, we cannot be sure that trends from the past decades will be continued. Long-term forecasts are uncertain.

The results of sociological research and opinion polls on values and norms concerning marital and family morality are not completely comparable and their results are ambiguous, at least with regard to the precise assessment of the level of approval and disapproval of pro-family values and norms of Catholic provenience. The questions posed to respondents do not always have the same form, the reported empirical results come from various social environments. The time factor needs to be taken into account in the assessment of the empirical results (the vast majority of studies referred to herein were completed in the first decade of the 21st century). We can generally estimate that about 25% of adolescent respondents in Poland approve of values and norms of the Catholic marital and family ethics, about 50% adopt selective attitudes and about 25% have completely abandoned such morality. With reference to the whole society, the approval of these values and norms amounts to about 40%, partial approval and partial disapproval (selective attitudes) – 40% and complete disapproval – 20%.

Pro-family morality is becoming more and more autonomous, independent from religiousness, in the Polish society. We can speak of a peculiar dissonance between the moral Catholic doctrine and actual attitudes of Catholics with regard to marital and family morality. In the presence of alternative symbolic universes, a moral universe adopted by an entity is one of many. It may undergo a gradual collapse, be shaped as a disordered structure comprised of many inconsistent elements derived from various sources, it may strengthen and gain new shapes compatible with new social and cultural conditions or develop as a private morality. While distancing yourself from the teachings of the Church within the moral sphere will be regarded as a specific indicator of secularisation, we can certainly speak of de-Christianising and secularisation processes in Poland for a long time.

Even if the saying: "Poles are religious, but not very moral" or "teenagers are religious, but they have their own morality" is not entirely true, it shows the direction of changes in the mentality of Poles, that is a significant "disproportion" between commonly declared pro-religious attitudes and moral behaviour of believers on a day-to-day basis. Morality in its social dimensions acquires a more and more individual, kaleidoscopic diversity, far-reaching fluidity and indeterminacy. Many Catholics in Poland treat the moral doctrine of the Church marginally, especially with regard to marital and family matters. They do not abandon their Church, but inwardly secularize it.

The Catholic Church as a religious and social institution

Many Poles were afraid of the power of church institutions, bishops and the clergy under the influence of the mass propaganda in the 1990s. The media depicted the Church as something to accept or reject, defend or attack and not as a specific religious reality, in which many contemporaries find their sense of life, become actively involved and devote their time and energy, as an environment of religious life. One of many indicators of the attitude of Poles towards the Catholic Church is the trust declared towards it.

According to sociological research and opinion polls, Poland is characterized by a very low level of social trust, which certainly has an effect on the trust towards the Catholic Church. The trust declared towards the Church has a "fluctuating" nature to some degree, once it increases, then it decreases, depending on specific events concerning the Church itself, as well as its place in society. According to surveys conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in the years 2010-2015, a slight decrease in the positive ranking of the Catholic Church was found. In June 2010, 64% of adult Polish respondents declared a positive assessment ("good") of the activity of the Roman Catholic Church and 25% – negative ("bad"); in March 2015 respectively: 55% and 32%¹⁸. For a few years a slight decreasing tendency has been observed.

The Institute of the Public Opinion Research Centre TNS OBOP conducted surveys in 2006 and in 2011 among Poles above the age of 15 on their personal trust in 35 institutions of various profile – from the Sejm to the emergency ambulance service. In 2011 the fire brigade, the emergency ambulance service and the army enjoyed the greatest confidence of Poles. The Catholic Church was on the seventh place. 61% of respondents trusted it, and 33% did not; in 2006 (respectively) – 70% and 28%. In the years 2006-2011 the declared personal trust towards the Catholic Church dropped by 9%. While comparisons within all institutions of public life have a limited sense, the established decline in the trust towards the Catholic Church is distinctly significant, the more so because it was one of few institutions, which lost social trust¹⁹.

According to the all-Poland survey conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre TNS OBOP in July 2016, 16% of respondents above the age of 15 decidedly declared their trust towards the Catholic Church, 44% – rather yes, 20% – rather not, 13% – definitely not and 8% – difficult to say. Personal trust towards the Catholic Church (answers "definitely yes" and "rather yes") was less often declared by people from 15 to 19 years old than persons above the age of 60 (56% compared with 73%);

¹⁸M. Feliksiak, *Oceny instytucji publicznych*, "Komunikat z badań CBOS", 2015, no. 42, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Zaufanie do instytucji publicznych. Porównanie lat 2006 i 2011*, "Komunikat z badań TNS OBOP", (October, 2011), Warszawa 2011, pp. 1-3.

respondents having primary or secondary education trusted the Church more often than those with higher education (71% compared with 54%); respondents living in the countryside more often than those living in cities with more than 500 thousand inhabitants (66% compared with 47%); farmers (91%), retirees and pensioners (72%) as well as physical workers (59%) more often than drivers and specialists (47%), administration and services employees (51%), pupils and students (58%); believers and regular churchgoers (84%) more often than irregular churchgoers (62%) and non-practising (17%). In the years 2010-2016 the indicator of respondents declaring trust towards the Catholic Church decreased from 66% to 60% (information gained by the Public Opinion Research Centre TNS OBOP).

The loss of trust in the Catholic Church is not as meaningful as the indicator of the declared lack of trust. Distance and criticism of some Catholics towards the Church – especially if it adopts a generalized form – can have an influence on the assessment of many important elements of its social and moral doctrine. Especially political gestures of “people of the Church” can have negative effects in the democratic and pluralistic society on the declared trust towards the Church in other domains of religious life.

The level of trust in institutions and chosen social groups in Poland is especially low among university students. In the middle of 2012 among Polish students (all-Poland test) 62% of respondents declared trust in charities, 53% – in courts, 45% – in the police, 23% – in public administration, 22% – in priests and bishops, 18% – in journalists and the media, 12% – in the Sejm and the Senate, 4% – in political parties, 1% – in politicians as a social group. Among university students as a whole, 33% of the respondents declared that the Catholic Church in Poland gives the right answers to questions concerning moral problems and needs of an entity, 44% – that it does not give them and 24% – difficult to say; family life problems (respectively) – 32%, 49%, 19%; spiritual needs of a human being – 57%, 26%, 17%; social problems in our country – 16%, 61%, 23%²⁰.

The presence of religion in the public life of the Polish society is a different matter. According to the survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in March 2015, 10.5% of adult Polish respondents declared that they feel uncomfortable when they see crosses in public buildings, e.g. offices and schools, 88,1% – that they do not feel uncomfortable, 1,2% – difficult to say and 0,2% – refused to answer; that Religious Education is present in schools (respectively) – 16,3%, 81,3%, 2,1%, 0,3%; that the Polish military oath has a religious nature – 9,3%, 83,2%, 7,0%, 0,5%; that priests appear on public television – 19,9%, 75,3%, 4,4%, 0,4%; that the Church expresses its opinion on moral and social issues – 33,3%, 59,8%, 6,6%, 0,4%; that the Church adopts a stance on acts passed by the Sejm – 55,0%, 34,8%, 9,8%, 0,5%; that priests tell people

²⁰ A. Guzik, R. Marzęcki, Ł. Stach, *Pokolenie '89. Aksjologia i aktywność młodych Polaków*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Pedagogicznego, Kraków 2015, pp. 123-124 and 188.

who to vote for during elections – 83,8%, 12,4%, 3,3%, 0,5%; that priests bless public places and facilities – 18,3%, 77,5%, 3,9%, 0,3%; that priests participate in public ceremonies and state celebrations – 14,1%, 81,1%, 4,4%, 0,4%²¹.

Crosses in public facilities, the religious nature of an army oath, Religious Education lessons in schools, participation of priests or bishops in public ceremonies and state celebrations, blessing public places and facilities by priests or finally priests who appear on public television – all these situations are not controversial to the majority of the Polish respondents. In the years 1995-2015 there were no clear changes in these matters, the survey results were rather stable. With regard to the Church adopting a stance on acts passed by the Sejm or priests telling people who to vote for in elections, the situation is reversed. The majority of the surveyed Poles do not accept such behaviours, even with a slight increasing tendency. In the years 2009-2015 the indicator of those who approve of the fact that the Church adopts a stance on acts passed by the Sejm decreased from 47% to 35%, while the fact that priests suggest people who to vote for in elections – from 26% to 12%²².

The Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) survey results give us the right to draw a conclusion that the Polish society in large measure accepts the present model of relationships between the Church and the state as well as the current policy. The presence of religious symbols and the Church in the public sphere (except for a clear engagement in political activity) is already quite established in the Polish culture and in the Polish landscape, whereas more detailed issues are under discussion. Mirosława Grabowska rightly adds: "We need to turn our attention to the fact that (social and political) subjects are present and active in public and political life, some of which not only approve of the presence of religion and the Church in public life, but even demand their expansion and intensification, while others reject this presence, demanding a specific purification of the public sphere from religious institutions and people, symbols and content. Although they have not wielded – so far – a significant influence on social attitudes, it does not mean that they do not have an effect and that this influence will not become noticeable in the future"²³.

While the presence of religious symbols in public life seems to gain far-reaching approval in the Polish society, the political involvement of the Church, especially the clergy, is negatively assessed by the majority of Poles. The vast majority of adult Poles agree with the view that Catholics have the right to express their views concerning their religious affiliation in public life. According to the survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in March 2015, 22% of adult Polish respondents

²¹ Wyniki badania *Aktualne Problemy i Wydarzenia* (no. 298), "Komunikat z badań CBOS" (for internal use), Warszawa 2015, pp. 27-30.

²² M. Grabowska, *Boskie i cesarskie. O stosunkach między państwem i Kościołem*, "Komunikat z badań CBOS", 2015, no. 48, pp. 3-5.

²³ Ibidem p. 11.

expressed the view that Catholics in public life have the right, or even should present their views concerning their religious affiliation; 60% – that Catholics in public life have the right to express their views concerning their religious affiliation; 12% – that Catholics in public life should avoid disclosing their views concerning their religious affiliation; 6% – difficult to say. People who are religiously committed and those of right-wing political views are more inclined than non-religious people and those of left-wing views to perceive the expression of views concerning their religious affiliation in public life as a duty of a Catholic²⁴.

Self-determinations with regard to personal faith of Poles according to its connections with the teachings of the Catholic Church are undergoing clear changes. From the sociological point of view, a category of people who describe themselves as believers in their own way is especially interesting. They believe in what they regard as true and what subjectively suits them. A part of Church recommendations and orders does not belong in their religious code. Even if the majority of contemporary Poles define themselves as believers, it does not mean at all that their religiousness has not altered. In the social reality a clear change (transition) from institutionalised religiousness to religiousness shaped anew is noticeable, with an emphasis on the freedom of choice.

According to a survey conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in 2005, 66% of respondents declared that they are believers and follow the recommendations of the Church, 32% – that they believe in their own way and 1% – that they are non-believers; in 2014 (respectively) – 52%, 39%, 5%²⁵. In March 2015 adult Poles declared their attitude towards the teachings of the Catholic Church thus: I am a believer and I follow the recommendations of the Church – 42,7%; I believe in my own way – 49,7%; I cannot say whether I believe or not – 1,5%; I am not a believer and I am not interested in these matters – 1,5%; I am a non-believer because the teachings of Churches are false – 1,6%; I define it in another way – 1,6%; no answer – 1,4%²⁶.

In the years 2005-2015 the indicator of believers who follow the recommendations of the Church decreased considerably, which may signify negative changes in the approval of the religious authority of the Catholic Church in the Polish society. There are strong indications that in Poland, along with the hitherto prevailing religiousness defined by the Church and institutionalised, there will be an individual religiousness, more concentrated on religious experience than on the doctrine. Sociologists are

²⁴ B. Roguska, *Katolik w życiu publicznym – potencjalne konflikty norm i wartości*, "Komunikat z badań CBOS", 2015, no. 45, pp. 2-3.

²⁵ R. Boguszewski, *Zmiany w zakresie podstawowych wskaźników religijności Polaków po śmierci Jana Pawła II*, "Komunikat z badań CBOS", 2015, no. 26, p. 6.

²⁶ Results of the study *Aktualne problemy i wydarzenia* (no. 298), "Komunikat z badań CBOS" (for internal use), Warszawa 2015, p. 22.

referring to religious nomads, who are searching for the path to God in their own way, often outside of the Church structures. The process of declining identification with the institution of the Church is slowly becoming noticeable.

Forecasts and requirements concerning Catholicism in Poland

Secularisation and individualisation tendencies in the contemporary world will not stop before the borders of Poland, they are slowly reaching our country. In the Polish society, church religiousness also remains, passed on by two main institutions of socialisation and upbringing: family and the Church (parishes, religious movements and communities, Catholic associations), even if it is inconsistent or selective in large measure. Strong secularisation processes and slightly weaker individualisation processes in the society, religion and family are confronted with well-organised and multifaceted evangelisation influence of the Catholic Church and its institutions as well as other Christian Churches and religions. The competitiveness of secularised and individualised as well as Christian models and patterns of religious and moral life is becoming more and more visible in the Polish society in the 21st century.

Processes of changes in the presence of the Catholic Church in public life are ambiguous. Secularisation processes in Poland are not advanced enough, while Catholicism is neither as strong as its defenders claim, nor as weak as its critics describe it. It is undoubtedly internally diversified and interdisciplinary. Catholicism in Poland is as if "polyphonic", it can even seem to be a peculiar bastion or fortress. From the outside the institutional edifice of the Church is as if untouched (e.g. self-declarations of faith and religion, participation in religious practices, organisation of parish structures), but if you look closer, you can notice serious cracks reaching as far as the foundations of its structure, especially with regard to morality.

We can hypothetically assume that changes in the religiousness of Poles will be heading not so much for secularism (atheism, indifference), as for questioning the Church both as a religious and social institution (religiousness not unmediated by the Church). The main tendency of these transformations will be selectivity ("soft" or "hard") rather than atheism, people will leave the Church more often in its institutional sense (weakening religious practices) rather than religion and spirituality ("I believe in God and not in the Church"; "I am not particularly religious, but..."; "I am not religious, but I seek spirituality"). Precise scenarios of religious transformations are difficult to define. The Church itself has to constantly oscillate between a moral institution (obliging, normative), and a mystical community (community of faith, spirituality, trust and hope). On the other hand, believers should have faith not because they were conditioned by tradition and environment, but because they want it themselves and decide on their own (religiousness by choice).

If we distinguished three scenarios of the future of religion and the Church: the scenario of its falling significance (regression, advancing secularisation), the scenario of growth (religious revival, the “springtime” of Christianity) and the scenario of stabilisation (maintaining *status quo*), then in the light of Poles’ forecasts and data collected by opinion polls as well as sociological research, the most probable would be the first scenario, then the third and the least probable – the second alternative. Despite a pessimistic overtone – from the point of view of the Church – of the results of sociological research and opinion polls, we cannot exclude different directions of the transformation processes. Social processes, especially those of religious nature, are difficult to predict and what seems rather unrealistic at the moment, in other changing circumstances becomes probable. Alongside a stable secularisation trend, models of alternative religiousness may be developing.

If social and cultural transformations in Poland are imitative to a certain degree when compared to the Western societies, we should expect that the processes of “dechuraching”, secularisation, pluralisation and individualisation of religiousness will be observed more and more often in the Polish society. However, it is possible that the influence of modernisation processes on religiousness and the bond with the Church in the Polish society will follow a different development path, combining modernity (social modernisation) with religiousness. Social trends do not occur on the basis of deterministic logic, inevitable, independent of ideas and activities of people. Modernity is a result of life experience of people thinking and being active in a certain way. Modern societies do not have to be secular by definition.

Janusz Mariański – CATHOLICISM IN POLAND IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

In this article we will describe – in the light of sociological research and opinion polls – changes undergoing in the religiousness of the Polish society on the example of chosen parameters of religiousness: self-declarations of denomination and religion, faith and religious beliefs, moral attitudes, religious practices, bond with the Catholic Church. In the conclusion of this study we will indicate certain forecasts and requirements concerning Catholicism in Poland. We define the very changes in the religiousness of Poles as religious identities. Religious identities are shaped on the basis of accepted articles of faith, values and moral norms, common rituals and experiences connected with them, social and religious bonds with the parish and the Church. In this study they will concern above all Catholic religious identities.