ARTYKUŁY

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SOME REFLECTIONS ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY IN (POST) MODERN SOCIAL SPACE

Summary: The article attempts to consider the issues of the position of marriage and family in the post-modern social space. Today's society is characterized by a hedonistic, consumerist lifestyle. Traditional values and religious worship are negated. Postmodernity develops the cult of individuality and presents man with an offer of multiplicity and various choices. The article presents issues related to the cult of individuality, and the topic of marriage and family, in the context of postmodern threats. In the first part of the article, the author deals with the subject of postmodern society and the problem of terminology. The second part of the article deals with the issue of individuality and family presence. In the third part, the author outlines some of the threats to marriage and family in relation to the teachings of Pope Francis.

Keywords: cult of individuality, teaching of Pope Francis, postmodern society, postmodern family, marriage, values.

Zygmunt Bauman emphasized in his scientific works that we are currently witnessing the emergence of a new culture, which some researchers call postmodernity, (Bauman 2006) or late modernity. Using modern terminology, „it should be said that the existing family forms seem to be fluent […] or, using the concepts of Anthony Giddens, family forms are subject to constant review and reform." (Bernasiewicz, 2015, p. 87) The model of the traditional family is changing, which is related to, among others, with a demographic decline of births, an increasing number of divorces and the popularity of forms of life outside of wedlock. In postmodernity, the crisis has embraced the model of the traditional family, in its current form.

In postmodernity, the crisis has embraced the model of the traditional family, in its current form, because it has ceased to be a permanent, permanent

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and specific social system. At present, the crisis has affected the family as an institution, as various forms of partnership are popular. Marriage – and then the family – „is no longer something obligatory – they are not treated as an obvious stage in human life." (Lubowicka, 2019, p. 145) The postmodern era is also characterized by a radical change in people's attitudes towards marriage, family, children, and divorce. Social acceptance of the dissolution of marriage has become a natural choice. „Family and marriage are no longer the most important values that they commit to something and in the name of which one should sacrifice." (Lubowicka, 2019, p. 145) Family ties have also changed, where individualism is gaining strength, relationships are loosening, and moral and religious norms lose their value and importance.

In the article, the author focuses on the characterization of modern times, which are connected with the broadly understood threats related to marriage and family. This article is in three parts. The first is an attempt to characterize the present times. In the second part, the author attempts to outline the relationship of an individual to marriage and family in the postmodern era. The third part concerns the problems faced by the family in the modern world with emphasizing the teachings of Pope Francis.

(Post) modernity – what is it?

Contemporary civilization has entered a new phase of history, characterized by rapid social changes and the questioning of fundamental values. Postmodern society is a system where individual sectors of social life are based on opposing, often incompatible systems of values and meanings. (Mariański, 1997, p. 89) The greatest impact on society is currently consumerism, relativism, individualism, a certain „commodification of culture," as well as the flourishing of new religious systems. (Szacka, 2003) Traditional value hierarchies and patterns of behavior are constantly disintegrating and redefining. Modern man has become the center of all changes, he is elevated above tradition, objective truths, moral, social and legal norms. The cult of human individuality and uniqueness is clearly emphasized. In postmodern reality, old and new cultural forms have collided, which consequently interact and together create the present. (Mariański, 1995, p. 62) Postmodern society is defined in the literature on the subject as a society of sensations, because a modern individual composes his life based on experiencing many positive experiences as possible, as well as pleasures from the surrounding world. Consumption, along with hedonism, becomes an end – in itself – and a chosen lifestyle. (Mariański, 1997, p. 90)

Marek Dziewiecki writes that „more and more experts from various disciplines of knowledge agree with the statement that in the second half of the 20th century the era of modernism and modernity ended, which in the field of thinking was characterized by the pursuit of precise, rational, scientific knowledge of objective reality, and in the field of action, it was characterized by striving to achieve high efficiency and effectiveness in all undertakings. (Dziewiecki, 2002) Contemporary trends came to be referred to as postmodernism or postmodernity. Postmodernity is not limited only to the philosophical trend, but concerns the overall state of contemporary culture (including art), politics, science and religion.

Currently, there is a discussion in the scientific community about modern times and the terminology used to define it. The concept of postmodernity is considered „as a new era in the history of the so-called Western society.” (Biernat, 2014, p. 183) The questions arise: is (post) modernity a new socio--cultural reality? Is (post) modern reality only a certain attribute of modernity perceived as fluid (late)? A visible symptom of changes is the use of the prefix „post” in the names: postculture, posthumanism or posthistory, which indicates the social transformations that have taken place, including the definite ending of the old and the beginning of the new reality. The prefix „post” emphasizes that we have witnessed a move beyond modernism. This new „epoch” is qualitatively different from the completed one. (Biernat, 2014, p. 185–186) The terms postmodernism and modernity are used interchangeably, although sometimes the difference between the concepts is revealed (one can refer to the philosophy of, among others, Zygmunt Bauman). Above all, these terms are used to describe contemporary social changes, including the crisis of authority, great ideologies, and religious meta-narratives.

Between individuality and presence in family

In postmodernity, individualisation appears as an element of a certain socio--cultural process. The ubiquitous cult of reality, pragmatism, skepticism and episodicism intensifies the individualisation of the individual. Postmodern man does not seek the ultimate truth, such a situation creates an attitude based on the acceptance of truths that will be changeable and relative. In postmodernity, the family has become obsolete. In its space, an individual often experiences a lesson based on pluralism and individualism. Interpersonal contacts took on a new face, influenced by modern communication technologies. Mobile phones and the Internet have reduced the communication distance, and increased the intensity and quality of relationships, while depriving them of content and

depth. Zygmunt Bauman remarks that „modern living conditions have thrown people into the situation of individuals, whose lives have broken down into fragments that have broken down into many loosely related goals and functions, set in different and mutually autonomous contexts and subject to different pragmatic rules – these all – encompassing visions, suggesting purposefulness, uniformity and coherence of the world, ceased to appeal to their imagination and accept their everyday experience. (Bauman, 1996, p. 11) Decisions, attitudes and values become a private choice of a person, a certain subjective self-reflection (or self-expression). The values and attitudes represented by man constitute his personal space. And so, although „the possibility to choose from various lifestyles, views of the hierarchy of values […] accompanied by the lack of generally applicable and recognized criteria for making such choices, places the individual in a special situation: although he is still included in social structures, in becomes a self-referential unit in the area of decisions that are important for one's own existence." (Zduniak, 2016, p. 61) Decisions made by man will be made in a purely subjective context, based on selfishness, excluding the social context.

The sociologist Urlich Beck in the book *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity,* states that „individualization means that a person's biography, liberated from existing relations, open and dependent on his own decisions, is handed over to the individual as a task to be carried out by him in his actions. The proportion of life opportunities that are essentially closed to decisions is decreasing, while the areas open to them and the biographies that must be created are increasing. The individualization of positions and life careers, therefore, means that biographies become self-reflective. They transform from a society delimited biography to an individual biography. Decisions on education, profession, job, place of residence, spouse, number of children […] as well as other minor decisions not only can, but must be made." (Back, 2002, p. 202) The reality of everyday life is presented to man as a certain market offering a complete package of answers to the needs of earthly life. The individual „gets lost" in choices that lead to the enjoyment of material goods. The postmodern person feels the need to plan, to individualize every decision he makes. Man makes individual choices, which in effect create a complete, but are often internally incoherent „project." Individualization caused a growing distance to social and political institutions, including institutionalized religion losing its importance. The negation of the values conveyed by religion led to the loss of man in hedonism, which became the main motive of behavior. Postmodern society does not need God and religion. Moreover, faith is not attractive to a postmodern man. It is a difficult choice that requires full commitment from a human being. (Kaufmann, 2014, p. 253) In addition, faith brings limited

benefits here and now, and it is temporality that becomes the main driving force of man. For an individual in postmodernity, the choice of an individual is his natural right, but all human choices take place in „the conditions of risk, contingency and changeability of the socio-cultural context." (Mariański, 2017, p. 179) A man choosing his path in life, creating his biography as a result, is burdened with sole responsibility for failure or success. (Sztompka, 2012, p. 646) Recalling the words of A. Giddens „We are not what we are, but what we will make of ourselves." (Giddens, 2006, p. 105) A person is faced with a choice of many life options, including: educational, professional and forms of family life. On the contrary – in a traditional society – choices made by man „were to some extent a matter of the community." (Mariański, 2017, p. 179) In postmodern times, both family and social ties were loosened. Janusz Mariański calls citizens in a postmodern pluralist society „masters of freedom and responsibility, balancing their choice between different offers and facing various changing offers." (Mariański, 2017, p. 179) The individual is convinced that anything is possible. (Wiśniewski, 2002, p. 70)

Family transformation is at the center of discussions over the past few decades about changes in communities. The family is connected to society and has been regarded as a value for centuries, but throughout history has highlighted its various elements. Moreover, the family as a social structure has the ability to adapt to the current situations in a given epoch. It can be said that the family is also a certain sign which includes the values, attitudes, behavior styles and fashions that characterize a social group from a given era. The family is above all a value for its members who satisfied the need for security, love and socialization. (Kamińska, 2016, p. 79)

In postmodernity, man has divided his life into two spheres: public and private. The family ceased to be a carrier of religious, historical and social values. In postmodernity, the Church and social communities no longer constitute „a carrier of a system of values, setting the standards of good and evil […] of proper and improper behavior." (Kamińska, 2016, p. 83) For the postmodern man, they are no longer an authority on which he could follow. The family gained considerable autonomy from broadly understood social structures. The family also took over the function of stabilization from society. The family creates a community between the closest relatives and covers a person's private space. Breaking the ties of the postmodern family with society resulted in the loss of support in a larger social group. As a result, the society perceived as a whole ceases to be a product reproduced in families, becoming a certain mosaic of alternative values or styles of behavior. (Kamińska, 2016, p. 83–85) The following factors contributed to the creation of a new family form: an increase in the number of divorces, problems with procreation, informal

relationships, intercourse before marriage, abortion, divorce, violence, sexual abuse of women and children, individualism and relativism, absence of fathers, loneliness, abandonment of the elderly, economic migrations. (Biernat, 2014, p. 188) The values preferred by the postmodern man influenced the „impermanence of family life and the lowering of the perception of the traditional family as a value." (Kamińska, 2016, p. 84) Today, the family is fragile as the two sides have to get involved in the relationship. Often, young people postpone setting up a family for a later time, while the more attractive options are a career, no fertility or alternative forms of adult life (e.g. single, single parent, cohabitation.) In the postmodern family, "a pluralism of values is dominant, based on the idea of freedom. The freedom of this institution as a whole consists in the possibility of choosing and redefining a set of any values […] while the postmodernity in the bosom of the family is also expressed in the fact that parents can pass on value to their children in any way that is not threatened by anyone […] it exists in conditions of contradictory, conflicting forces, on this basis they create their own values and models." (Kamińska, 2016, p. 85)

The transformations of the postmodern family are associated with the development of information technologies; strong emphasis on education involving both children and adults; lack of ensuring the economic security of the family and stress resulting from the relationship between work and family. (Biernat, 2014, p. 188–189; Elkind, 1992) These transformations are macrosocial and affect all families. The hallmark of the postmodern times is the loss of security and instability by a pluralist society. David Elkind in his publication lists the following types of modern families: working parents, broken, adoptive, monoparent, as well as reconstructed. (Biernat, 2014, p. 188–189; Elkind, 1992) The contemporary media, broadly understood, influences families very much. The social and cultural message of parents (or grandparents) loses to the offer proposed in the media. In the family, the socialization and ideological functions are weakened. „The world penetrating the family through electronic media in a subtle way dissolves the socio-cultural environment of the family, saturating it with highly persuasive interactions." (Biernat, 2014, p. 191) The IT and telecommunications revolutions have globalized the family. Young people first look for information on the Internet and secondly from their parents. Nowadays, „idols" popular on Facebook or Instagram enjoy more authority than their parents.

Pope Francis on the dangers of family and marriage

Pope Francis often addresses the topic of Christian marriage and family in his teaching. Contemporary times are a difficult and demanding period for the

Catholic family, especially in terms of the Church's pastoral care for it. (Sobczyk, 2014, p. 201) The pope's deliberations on the above subject start from defining what marriage is. And so, marriage is a true and authentic vocation, which is „the answer of two Christians who properly discerned God's will for them and entered into a marriage." (Sobczyk, 2014, p. 202; Francis 2013a) The Pope emphasizes that the family „plays a major role in an integral ecology, because it is the basic social entity, in which there are two basic principles of human civilization on earth: the principle of community and the principle of fertility." (Francis, 2016, no 277)

In the Encyclical Lumen Fidei, the Pope emphasizes that the family is the basic social unit in which ties and interpersonal relationships are deepened. Marriage is the space for a real and authentic human vocation, and it is also the basic environment for the formation of faith. (Francis, 2013a, no 52) Therefore, according to the papal thought, the family is a place of integral formation „where various aspects of personal maturation are closely related to each other. The family fulfills many functions and tasks." (Francis, 2015b; Francis, 2013a, no 213; Walancik, Kucharczyk, 2016, p. 115) The Holy Father emphasizes that it is in the family that a person can shape his personality and build a relationship with God. In a family environment, a person learns responsibility, opens up to other people and becomes a school that educates people to overcome individualistic mentality. The family is also the environment where faith and moral values are shaped.

In his teaching, Pope Francis takes up the constant care of the Church for marriage and family in the face of postmodern threats. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* we read that "the family is undergoing a profound cultural crisis, as are all communities and social ties. In the case of the family, the fragility of ties becomes especially serious because it is the fundamental cell of society, a place where one learns to live together in diversity and belonging, and where parents transmit the faith to their children. There is a tendency to see marriage as a pure form of emotional gratification that can be established in any way and changed according to each individual's sensitivity. However, the indispensable contribution of marriage to society exceeds the level of the couple's emotions and needs. As the French bishops teach, it is not born „from a loving affection, by definition an elusive one, but from the depth of the commitment made by the spouses who agree to enter into total communion of life." (Francis, 2013b, no 66) Currently, marriage and the family are exposed to threats from modern civilization, therefore „it is important to distinguish between the difficulties and dangers arising from common trends present in societies and ideological and legal activities that weaken the proper functioning of the family and the perception of its role. All this weakens not only family ties,

but also the ability to evangelize and abide in faith." (Sawa, 2016, p. 65) In his teaching, the Pope points out that some of the threats concern the chosen way of life of families in Western civilization, are often not associated with religiosity, and thus with growth with faith. The Holy Father points out that „in the dominant culture, the first place is taken by what is external, direct, visible, quick, superficial and provisional. The real element gives way to the apparent. In many countries, globalization has led to an accelerated destruction of cultural roots with the invasion of influences belonging to other cultures, economically developed but ethically weakened [...]" (Francis, 2013b, no 61)

Interpersonal relationships also take on a consumptive character; man strives for pleasure and luxury. This can create an attitude based on materialism, appearances and narcissism. (Francis, 2015b, p. 48–49) In postmodernity, man often equates freedom with the constant consumption of material goods, which are an end in themselves. Man's spiritual needs are relegated to the background. (Franciszek, 2015c) The lifestyle chosen in this way will destroy the family from the inside and will also affect Christian morality. A feeling of emptiness will form in a person, because the consumptive lifestyle gives satisfaction, but only for a while. Recalling the Pope's words, "we are witnesses to a widespread fragmentation of existence; a feeling of loneliness dominates; divisions and contrasts multiply." (John Paul II, 2003, no 8) Pope Francis emphasizes that a serious threat to the family is its spiritual emptiness. This threat is related to postmodern societies that „want to build a world without God and blur or even destroy their Christian roots." (Sobczyk, 2014, p. 208) The Pope warns that both the family and the workplace can become such a desert. That is why it urges us to cultivate faith and bear witness. According to the Pope, „the time of the desert and the way out of it allow […] to rediscover the joy of faith and its vital importance for married couples and Christian families. The desert is a place where the value of what is really necessary for life is discovered." (Sobczyk, 2014, p. 208) Postmodern man compensates for this feeling of emptiness by means of broadly understood idolatry. Franciszek notes that "people become self-referential, they isolate themselves in their consciousness, increase their greed. The more a person's heart is empty, the more they need things that they could buy, possess and consume." (Francis, 2015a, no 204) The prevailing adoration of consumerism focuses man's attention exclusively on the present moment. The Pope emphasizes that „when a human being places himself at the center, ultimately he will give absolute priority to what is temporarily convenient and all the rest becomes relative." (Francis, 2015a, no 122) The Pope further emphasizes that the rejection of God resulted in the rejection of man, which initiated the space for nihilism, relativism on the basis of the theory of knowledge, morality and hedonism in the structure of everyday life.

The „cult of money” present in society often leads to social inequality, violence and, consequently, to the economy of exclusion. „To this […] there are other global problems leading to the deterioration of life or even social decline.” (Sawa, 2016, p. 65)

Instead of serving man, money begins to rule over him. Such an economy excludes, it destroys. The Pope teaches that a just economy is to create conditions in which every person could enjoy childhood „without deficiencies, develop their talents in youth, work with full rights during the years of professional activity, and have access to a decent retirement pension in old age. It is about an economy in which man, in harmony with nature, organizes the entire system of production and distribution, so that the possibilities and needs of everyone find appropriate expression in the social dimension. You and other nations sum up this desire in a simple and beautiful way to live well.” (*Papież: NIE ekonomii wykluczenia i nierówności!*)

The cult of money often breeds social inequality and violence. The Pope's message emphasizes that economy should take into account moral and relational values. The economy can no longer be confined to external goods alone. Its boundaries must embrace the poor, the young and, above all, develop a spiritual life. The Pope indicates in his statements that postmodern workplaces are deprived of the so-called „Spiritual capital.” (Francis, 2015b)

Francis points out the following threats: social divisions, inequality in access to energy, violence, drug addiction, various forms of social aggression. Some technological solutions, including communication via the Internet, are also a threat. This new form of communication is associated with the feeling of „artificial emotions”, a certain melancholy, isolation from interpersonal contacts, and frustration and dissatisfaction with interpersonal relationships. In Europe, the phenomenon of the crisis of the family, and especially the concept of the family itself, is becoming more and more visible. Today's man is entangled in a feeling of a certain helplessness and a sense of loneliness. His life is often devoid of any deeper meaning and joy. He is unable to enjoy everyday life because he focuses on dreams and plans that are mostly material. It is related to postmodern interpersonal relations, which are based on superficiality and usefulness, what is more, they are short-lived, makeshift. Interpersonal relations in postmodernity often reduce themselves to certain situational conventions embedded in a short time perspective. They are not developed and grounded in friendship, trust and love. This is evidenced by the words of the psychologist Susan Pinker that „we are constantly growing friends on Facebook, but we have less and less deep relationships.” (Pinker 2016, p. 22) The postmodern model of interpersonal relations is subject to objectification, and the social interaction itself is short-lived and occasional. Lack of creating deep interpersonal bonds

has a negative impact on the child's development in the family. The postmodern world has become a global village, (Carbajo, 2019; McLuhan, Fiore, 2003) however, ties between people, especially within families, have weakened. (John Paul II, 1991, no 37; Carbajo, 2020; Carbajo, 2019) There is now a decline in natural authority between parents and offspring. The role of the role model is taken over by idols from the Internet who, however, transmit only a reduced message (often morally questionable). Pope Francis admonishes that "media communication needs to be accompanied by a real meeting. In fact, it is not technology that determines whether communication is authentic, but the human heart." (Carbajo, 2020, p. 9; Francis, 2016) The next group of threats to the family and marriage are their internal conflicts. Francis calls for trustful prayer to understand the law of love that governs the lives of Christian families. However, it is a demanding law where man has to deal with selfishness, „which threatens unity and prevents the development of selfless and selfless love." (Sobczyk, 2014, p. 85) In the teaching of the Pope, he also touches on the subject of a temporary culture that questions ultimate things and destroys and destroys what is permanent and unbreakable, as an example we should mention marriage and the family.

People in postmodernity feel a certain fear of a relationship based on trust and love, of marriage. The fear is associated with the belief that freedom in a relationship is limited. They perceive marriage as a certain threat to the individual, as it involves devotion, thus contradicting postmodern trends of selfishness. The contemporary image of marriage in culture is quite negative, focusing human eyesight on: moral freedom, individualism, free understanding of relationships. The current culture, instead of promoting – stigmatize love, loyalty and sacrifice. These elements shape the concept of a postmodern man about marriage and family. The Pope's response to the challenges of postmodern times is a Christian vision of personal and family life. "Pastoral activity should show even better that the relationship with our Father requires and encourages communion that heals, promotes and strengthens interpersonal relationships. While in the world, especially in some countries, wars and clashes break out in various forms, we Christians emphasize the need to recognize other people, heal wounds, build bridges, strengthen relationships and help „to bear each other's burdens" (Gal. 6:2). On the other hand, many forms of association are being born today to defend rights and achieve noble goals. In this way, the desire for participation of many citizens is revealed, who want to be builders of social and cultural progress." (Francis, 2013b, no 67) Francis encourages evangelization through work and prayer. The Holy Father emphasizes that without meeting the Word during prayer, a person becomes unaware of the meaning of everyday life, he is affected by fatigue and weariness. (Francis, 2013b, no 262; Sobczyk, 2014,

p. 211) The Church must care for the Christian family. And such, the Pope indicates the methods of pastoral care: meetings with families, daily and specialist pastoral care and scientific symposia. (Sobczyk, 2014, p. 213)

Conclusions

Postmodern society popularizes a certain model of distance behavior devoid of traditional values, which in turn affects the shaping of the human personality. A significant problem of modern times is the dehumanization of interpersonal relationships, which also affects marriage and the family. The contemporary image of marriage in culture is quite negative, focusing human eyesight on: moral freedom, individualism, free understanding of relationships. The current culture, instead of promoting – stigmatize love, loyalty and sacrifice. Francis in the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* write, that „everything is closely related." (Francis, 2015a, no 137) According to the papal thought, „man is part of a great cosmic family, along with all other creatures. By establishing a relationship with them, he accepts the assumption that God has imprinted Trinitarian dynamism in nature. (Francis, 2015a, no 240; Carbajo, 2020, p. 17)

Postmodern society shows many threats to the family, which takes on a global character and more local for a given social group. Nowadays, the attitude of „having" over „being" dominates, it is visible in the globalization of culture, as well as in the content conveyed by the mass media. Pope Francis in his teaching often touches upon the subject of marriage and family, emphasizing its value and importance, as well as the threats that he has to face on a daily basis. In his statements, he often refers to the Holy Family of Nazareth as an exemplary example to follow. In his teaching, the Holy Father devoted a special place to Christian marriage and family, emphasizing its value and importance, as well as the threats that he has to face on a daily basis. In his statements, he often refers to the Holy Family of Nazareth as an exemplary example to follow. Pope Francis also suggests ways of the Church's pastoral care for the Christian family.

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Refleksje o małżeństwie i rodzinie
w (po)nowoczesnej przestrzeni społecznej

Streszczenie: W artykule podjęto próbę rozważań dotyczących pozycji małżeństwa i rodziny w ponowoczesnej przestrzeni społecznej. Obecne społeczeństwo charakteryzuje się hedonistycznym, konsumpcyjnym stylem życia. Zanegowano tradycyjne wartości, kult religijny. Ponowoczesność rozwija kult indywidualności, przedstawia człowiekowi ofertę wielości i różnorodności wyborów. W artykule przybliżono kwestie związane z kultem indywidualności, małżeństwem i rodziną w kontekście ponowoczesnych zagrożeń. W pierwszej części artykułu autor porusza tematykę ponowoczesnego społeczeństwa i problemu terminologicznego. Druga część dotyczy problematyki indywidualności, a także obecności w rodzinie. W części trzeciej autor przedstawił wybrane zagrożenia dotyczące małżeństwa i rodziny w odniesieniu do nauki papieża Franciszka.

Słowa kluczowe: kult indywidualności, nauczanie papieża Franciszka, społeczeństwo ponowoczesne, rodzina ponowoczesna, małżeństwo, wartości.