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## JOSEPH RATZINGER'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTOLOGICAL MEDITATION AS THE HEART OF FAITH AND THEOLOGY

This article is an attempt on an apologia for christological meditation, due to which according to Joseph Ratzinger “classical formulas of the Council of Chalcedon appear in the right context”. Also, reflection towards Christology as an interpretation of Jesus’ prayer, the bond between the Father and the Son, which in the Paschal Mystery becomes the core of the faith of the Christian Church will be proposed. An attempt to explore the problem of modern understanding of the unity of historicity and divinity of Jesus as well as to try to find an answer to a question of the character of the christological conundrum celebrated during the Eucharist will be made.

### INTRODUCTION

The mystery of Jesus Christ is the central issue of theology. It contains in itself the fullness of God’s Revelation which He passed to Creation<sup>1</sup>. The confession of faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ who comes from Nazareth, is called the son of Joseph who is a carpenter and a devout Jewish woman Mary, a Man who at His time was known as a roving teacher and a healer is indispensably associated with accepting as fundamental the paradox of unity between the Incarnate Word of God, Christ chosen by God and this exact Man who died crucified as an enemy of Israel and the Law. Joseph Ratzinger points that what was generally believed to have been an umbrage and a curse from the Creator should have conditioned the vanishing of memory of slain Jesus and an erasure of His existence from history<sup>2</sup>. However, in the actuality of faith we are dealing with exactly the opposite: a man becomes the Son of God, the Son of God is born as a man, Logos is incarnated,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei verbum*, AAS 58 (1966), n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*, Kraków 2012, p. 199, translated into English as: J. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, San Francisco 2004.

crucified Jesus Christ is accepted as the centre of time – “the final moment in the whole human history”<sup>3</sup>.

The above elements of Joseph Ratzinger’s fundamental postulates concerning the study of the mystery of Jesus Christ in the context of working out a christological meditation however paradoxical as in reference to the criterion of the logic of history, have now been exposed in unusual for them circumstances. The German Cardinal came upon the above rumination during the Congress on the Sacred Heart of Jesus held at Toulouse in 1981. By no means was it intentional, but in the light of a jubilee of three great councils<sup>4</sup> Ratzinger decided to gather his thoughts and, therefore, create a framework for a new tool for faith and theology – christological meditation. His ideas were published in 1984 in a book “The God of Jesus Christ. Meditations on the Triune God”<sup>5</sup> which in this article serves as the basis for analysis.

The phenomenon of simultaneous existence of the initial cause of being and the being itself (the body) of Jesus Christ since the first day of His earthly existence in Israel and later throughout the history of the Church has been attracting interest of those who look for the truth about God, both by means of reasoning as well as almost mystical meditation<sup>6</sup>. Especially dedicated were the theologians of the first few centuries of Christianity whose work effects were the great gatherings of contemporaneous Particular Churches, so-called ecumenical councils. In particular, the Council of Nicaea convened in 325, of Constantinople in 381, of Ephesus in 431, of Chalcedon in 451, and two following of Constantinople in 553 and 681 were significant for the study concerning the mystery of Christ. During often heated deliberations the participants managed to formulate the teaching on Christ, His full divinity and humanity which exist in one being<sup>7</sup>. This truth was for the first time allowed to be presented in paintings during the Second Council of Nicaea, also recognised as the seventh of the first seven ecumenical councils.

Systematic exposition of Christology, the ideas gathered from the first seven Catholic Ecumenical Councils (from Greek καθολικός – “universal”) remains to this day almost intact. The revelation of Jesus Christ included in the articles of the

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem, pp. 199–200.

<sup>4</sup> The First Council of Constantinople, the Council of Ephesus and the Third Council of Constantinople.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Schauen auf den Durchbohrten*, Einsiedeln 1984.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger – Benedykt XVI, *Na początku Bóg stworzył... Cztery kazania o stworzeniu i upadku. Konsekwencje wiary w stworzenie*, Kraków 2006, pp. 25–27, translated into English as: J. Ratzinger, *'In the Beginning...' A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, Michigan 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Undoubtedly, the fundamental reference for christology is the Chalcedonian tenet whose controversial “novum” is the nucleus of theological reflection. Cf. L. Perrone, *Wpływ Dogmatu chalcędońskiego na refleksję teologiczną między IV a V soborem ekumenicznym*, in: A. di Berardino, H. Crouzel, P. Grech, E. Osborn, L. Perrone, M. Simonetti, B. Studer, *Historia teologii I. Epoka patrystyczna*, eds. A. di Berardino, B. Studer, Kraków 2002, pp. 547–616.

Credo poses as foundation for Christianity, is solid and stays unswerving. Dynamic development connected with changing the aims but, more importantly, the methods applied to the study are the characteristics of theology. As Joseph Ratzinger notices, the structure of theology changed after the Second Vatican Council<sup>8</sup>. In place of extending the elements of exposition of the doctrine, questioning of its plausibility appeared. What is more, even if it was still considered to be true, the foundation for the study was looked for in historical facts rather than in gospels<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, the direction of theological analysis has been reversed – the truth about Christ is to be found beyond the Revelation.

In the view of the above currents, it seems proper to reflect on the mystery of Jesus Christ in the way Joseph Ratzinger does – by means of christological meditation. The aim of this article is, therefore, presenting the methodological intuitions of the German cardinal in the area of christological investigation whose main focus is to reflect on the evangelical portrayal of the filial dialogue with the Eternal Father. However, this does not imply an attempt that would contest scientific analysis but an attempt whose core is the search for biblical manifestation of the prayer of the Son of God which allows the most intimate cognition of Jesus. Conclusions derived from this reflection solve the contemporary theological dilemma of simultaneity of history and faith – Jesus who is Christ. Having that as a background, the Christocentric part of the Church and celebrated by her Liturgy will be presented.

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Ratzinger (cf. J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, Kielce 1994, p. 13, translated into English as: J. Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ. Meditations on the Triune God*, Chicago 1978) conducts the following analysis: “After the council, the theological panorama changed significantly not only with regard to the issues discussed by theologians but its structure in particular. While before the council, the disputation had a clear and indisputable schema, now even the basics are a subject to discussion. It is especially seen in the case of christology. The analysis shifted from developing theories that would comprehensively explain the mystery of the Hypostatic Union or discussing particular issues concerning the person of Jesus Christ to raising questions such as: what actually is the relationship between the christological tenet and the Bible? and what is the relationship between biblical christology in its various stages of development and the person of Jesus Himself? How strongly is the organisation and activity of Church based on Jesus’ teachings? In this context, it is significant that the esteemed title of ‘Christ’ in recent literature, to a great extent, has been replaced with the personal name ‘Jesus’. This linguistic process shows a spiritual process of great significance – an attempt to focus on not only the teachings of Church, but also the true historical figure of Jesus.” [trans. A. Ć.]

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Ratzinger (cf. J. Ratzinger, *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*, p. 203) made the above demure targeting “the Pannenberg circle”, a group of scholars gathered around a Lutheran theologian Wolfhang Pannenberg who by using the method of “christology from below” took as the starting point for the study of christological mystery not the divinity of the Son of God but the humanity of Jesus from Nazareth. This way he tried to prove christology on the basis of historical facts (cf. W. Pannenberg, *Grundzüge der Christologie*, Gütersloh 1966, def. 23). Cf. J. Ratzinger – Benedykt XVI, *Na początku Bóg stworzył...*, pp. 25–27.

## THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST AS THE FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTOLOGICAL MEDITATION

Investigation into the verity of existence, its character and primarily, the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ has solid foundation in the New Testament. Particularly important for the analysis of the basics of christological meditation are evangelical mentions of Jesus praying to His Father. They comprise the first level of interpretation His filial relationship with the Father as well as its soteriological, pneumatological and ecclesiological implications<sup>10</sup>.

Earthly activity of Jesus of Nazareth undoubtedly provoked its witnesses to rise questions regarding the identity of a man who *unlike the scribes, [...] taught them with authority* (Mk 1:22)<sup>11</sup>. Gospels reflect the atmosphere of that time, repeatedly presenting those who ask about Jesus but also the Teacher Himself who wants His disciples to answer His question *who do people say I am?* (Mk 8:27). The answer given by His disciples implicates that an attempt to find the right category among those generally applied in the Law and history of the chosen people is unsatisfactory and non-effective: *John the Baptist, others Elijah, others again, one of the prophets* (Mk 8:28)<sup>12</sup>. Only the later Peter's avowal sets the fundamental for christology reference – Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed one, the Christ (cf. Mk 8:29)<sup>13</sup>.

Joseph Ratzinger notices however, that the Peter's confession does not allay the doubts regarding understanding of Jesus' nature and His mission. The German theologian emphasises that at the time of Jesus, the understanding of the name "Messiah" was indeed ambiguous and the term itself did not, at that time, have any of the connotations crucial for Christology<sup>14</sup>. An important argument in favour of the above statement is present in primitive Church process of increasing simplification and concentration of the names assigned to Jesus as His titles. The title "Christ" which Peter uses towards Jesus, in the light of Gospel, becomes the nucleus of Theological optics, although it is still surrounded by "an area of complementary

<sup>10</sup> Cf. A. Nossol, *Wprowadzenie*, in: J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 7; cf. J. Ratzinger, *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 131, translated into English as: J. Ratzinger, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, San Francisco 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Biblical verses from: *The New Jerusalem Bible*, New York–London 1985.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Ratzinger (already as Pope Benedict XVI) discussed Peter's confession in more detail in the first part of his trilogy "Jesus of Nazareth". Even though it is a popular science text, the author's statement proves and elaborates on the validity of the postulates presented over twenty years ago in "The God of Jesus Christ. Meditations on the Triune God". Cf. J. Ratzinger – Benedykt XVI, *Jezus z Nazaretu*, part 1: *Od chrztu w Jordanie do Przemienienia*, Kraków 2007, pp. 241–254, translated into English as: J. Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, New York 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 15.

interpretations”, highly marked with Old Testament understanding<sup>15</sup>. The process of concentration eventually resulted in using titles proper for the figure of Jesus: Χριστός – Κύριος – Θεού Υιός. In the end, as can be seen in Matthew, in Peter's confession (Mt 16:16), we are introduced to the title “Son” which regardless its simplicity is the hermeneutical key to understanding the others, becomes the basic confession<sup>16</sup>.

The fact that the Four Evangelists use the term “Son” indicates the relationship between the Father and the Son. This is not by any means a literary device that with its almost mythical descriptions would take the reader's attention away from the desire of understanding the historical truth about Jesus, but rather placing Him in the heart of the experience gained by those who see Him pray both in a lonely place near Capernaum (cf. Mk 1:35), in the hills near the Sea of Galilee (cf. Mk 6:46) as well as soon before His arrest in the land called Gethsemane (cf. Mk 14:35–39)<sup>17</sup>.

A very detailed analysis which proves that Jesus taught and did everything in unity with the Father was performed by one of the evangelists – Luke<sup>18</sup>. Three elements which depict this relation and, at the same time, manifest the activity of the Holy Trinity can be found in a pericope in Luke describing Jesus' baptism (cf. Lk 3:21–22). They are of the following: the first element is Jesus' prayer: *when [He – G. Ć.] was at prayer*, second is the activity of the Holy Spirit: *heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in a physical form, like a dove*, the third element is the acknowledgement from the Father: *'You are my Son; today have I fathered you.'* The pericope poses as a prophecy of the later work of Jesus in the crucial moments of His earthly activity. In the following fragments Luke confirms the applicability of the rule *intimate prayer – important occurrence*: selection of the Twelve Apostles (cf. Lk 6:12–16), Peter's confession (cf. Lk 9:18–21), teaching about the Lord's Prayer (cf. Lk 11:1–13), the prophecy of the denial of Peter (cf. Lk 22:32–34) and the prayer on the Mount of Olives (cf. Lk 22:39–46). Joseph Ratzinger encapsulates that what Luke says in the Gospel can be summarised in the following words: “who Jesus is can only be known having seen Him pray”<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, the foundation of christological reflection is found. It implies the necessity of entering the Jesus' contemplation, building a relation

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<sup>15</sup> Joseph Ratzinger (cf. *ibidem*, p. 15) enumerates seven biblical titles referring to Jesus: prophet, priest, Paraclete, angel, Lord, Son of God, Son.

<sup>16</sup> However, Joseph Ratzinger (cf. *ibidem*, p. 16) underlines that if the Church reduces to these words all of the complex tradition, trying at the same time to assign complete simplicity to the truths of Christianity, then this is not, in fact, a simplicity of simplification and concentration.; cf. J. Ratzinger, *Theologische Prinzipienlehre. Bausteine zur Fundamentaltheologie*, München 1982, pp. 17–22; cf. J. Ratzinger, *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*, pp. 224–237.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Ratzinger proposes the above thesis in his book “Der Gott Jesu Christi” (cf. J. Ratzinger, *Der Gott Jesu Christi. Betrachtungen über den Dreieinigen Gott*, München 1976, pp. 66–68).

<sup>19</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 18.

with the Father and becoming a participant of His most intimate moments, finding the sense of the divine filiation. Thus, everything that can be said about Jesus is an interpretation of His prayer. Coming to this realisation implicates the necessity of cooperating with Jesus who prays to His Father, of “following Jesus”<sup>20</sup>.

The message included in the Gospel of John confirms the above conclusions based on the analysis of the narrative of the Synoptic Gospels. The premissal *Logos* – word of God is revealed to the world in the figure of Jesus Christ who is sent to earth to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God and His redemptive work through Jesus. John presents Jesus primarily as the Son of God and claims that his aim in the Gospel (cf. Jn 20:31). Jesus declares Himself the Son of God in the very end of His public activity (cf. Jn 10:36) and this act becomes the reason for His prosecution and, in result, crucifixion (cf. Jn 19:7). Joseph Ratzinger points out that, in fact, John’s message in the Gospel does not add anything to what the synoptic gospels say about the crucial for the process of stating the identity of Jesus relation Son – Father, but it does make them clearer<sup>21</sup>.

## CHRISTOLOGICAL SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN “COMMUNIO”

Experiencing Jesus’ prayer and active participation in it is crucial for experiencing Jesus Himself but also for the cognition of the nature of the Church which is strongly concentrated on His figure. Participation in this prayer is essentially unifying and Church-forming. The above conclusion is a result of the analysis of the pericope of Peter’s confession (cf. Mt 16:13–20). Ascribing the title “Christ” to Jesus results in laying the foundation of the Church. The community with Peter as the rock is gathered around his avowal, associates itself with it. Joseph Ratzinger highlights the details present in the above pericope edited by Luke (cf. Lk 9:18–21)<sup>22</sup>. Peter has realised that the main aspect of the figure of Jesus is His relation with the Father. He saw Jesus returning from His prayer, found the sense of faith.

The most unifying sense of prayer appears the moment Jesus invites the disciples to use the term *Abba* (cf. Mt 9:6) which in itself conveys the feeling of intimacy and tenderness. The Church, thereby, became a part of the relation between the Father and the Son<sup>23</sup>. The possessive pronoun “our” used by Matthew intensifies the above belief because accepting common Father is inseparably connected with accepting the Son.

Two dimensions of communion within the mystery of God’ existence: the relation of the Father and the Son as well as the merging of two natures – divine and

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.

human of Christ are a christological implication for ecclesiology. It is not possible to understand what the Paul's "body of Christ" is (cf. 1 Cor 10:16)<sup>24</sup>, without the participation of a human in the mystery of Incarnation in the sense that this is participation which Joseph Ratzinger describes as "the involvement of a human in communion between people and God, in communion which is the incarnation of the Word"<sup>25</sup>. The German theologian points out that the unity of the disciples whom Jesus invited to call to God *Abba* was an inseparable result of the gift of Himself present in the Eucharist<sup>26</sup>. The effect of this sacramental unification of God and people is described in the First Epistle to Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 10:16–17). Joseph Ratzinger directs the reader's attention especially to the semantic meaning of Paul's commentary: the sharing in the blood and body of Christ is the Greek *κοινωνία*, which is Latin *communicatio*<sup>27</sup>. The dialogue between those who receive the Eucharist and God is, therefore, intimate and specific for divinization but not exclusive: "communion with Christ is understandably also a unity of those who belong to Him"<sup>28</sup>.

Joseph Ratzinger continues his analysis of "communio" in reference to the fragment of the Acts of the Apostles in which Luke presents Church as Christian commune in which people "[...] remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers" (cf. Act 2:42)<sup>29</sup>. The German theologian emphasises that this does not concern a systematic explanation of concepts because the basic aim of Luke's ecclesiology is to present the dynamics of the development of arising church, starting with the descent of the Paraclete<sup>30</sup>. It is His activity that allows finding the three acts in which, as the author claims, the early church was created. Thus there are: pneumatological ecclesiology<sup>31</sup> – Joseph Ratzinger highlights the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the birth of the Church,

<sup>24</sup> Cf. W. Wójtowicz, *La Chiesa come communio nell'ecclesiologia di Joseph Ratzinger*, Roma–Koszalin 2010, pp. 35–40.

<sup>25</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 84.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Kościół. Pielgrzymująca wspólnota wiary*, Kraków 2002, p. 69, translated into English as: J. Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church As Communion*, San Francisco 2005.

<sup>27</sup> *The blessing-cup, which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ; and the loaf of bread which we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? And as there is one loaf, so we, although there are many of us, are one single body, for we all share in the one loaf.* (1 Cor 10:16–17). Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 84; Benedict XVI elaborates on this statement in his encyclical on Christian love. Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus caritas est*, AAS 98 (2006), pp. 217–252.

<sup>28</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 85.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Kościół. Pielgrzymująca wspólnota wiary*, pp. 53–55.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Città del Vaticano 1993, n. 747; see also J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 69.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. A. Czaja, *Kościół jako komunია w Duchu Świętym. Koncepcja kardynała Józefa Ratzingera*, in: *Ratio et relevatio. Z refleksji filozoficzno-teologicznych*, ed. J. Cichoń, Opole 1998, pp. 351–368.

dynamic ecclesiology of salvation history – the cardinal brings our attention to Catholicity which is understood as a continuation of the history of the chosen people, and finally, liturgical ecclesiology – which highlights the significance of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in the act of praying<sup>32</sup>. All the above elements are complementary to the original thesis stated by Joseph Ratzinger, according to which “communio” which is strictly related to referring to the church as “the body of Christ” is not possible to accept without claiming the necessity of constantly connecting Jesus to the Church, accepting that it is Him who makes the Church, and coming to Him because only this way the centre is Christ and His gift of love<sup>33</sup>.

## CHRISTOLOGICAL CULT OF THE CHURCH

Liturgy is Jesus’ act. Because it actualises His gift of salvation – the sacrifice that He was for the sins of humanity, we can see the Son of God in it. Therefore, Joseph Ratzinger pays a lot of attention to the Church itself, especially the Eucharist. Evangelical pericope by the synoptic evangelists which describe the crucifixion of Jesus are all preceded by narratives concerning Jesus’ intense prayer, in which He directly addressed the Father, on the night before the Passion (cf. Mt 26:36–44; Mk 14:32–42); Lk 22:40–46). The German theologian underlines that in the moment of agony, Mark and Matthew associate with Jesus verses from the Psalm 22: *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*, which is a cry of the martyred and “Just One”<sup>34</sup>. He also mentions that those who were standing by the cross did not understand these words: *‘The man is calling on Elijah’* (cf. Mt 27:47), *‘Listen, he is calling on Elijah’* (cf. Mk 15:35). On the basis of the above fragments Joseph Ratzinger concludes that this mortal cry of Jesus, the words of the prayer uttered at the moment of His death have become for Christians the most profound commentary that Jesus Himself gave to His death<sup>35</sup>. Yet, the German theologian mentions one more crucial element included in the narrations of Matthew and Mark: they both demonstrate that in order to fully understand the sense of Jesus’ prayer, one must analyse it within the reality of faith<sup>36</sup>.

Psalm 22, which contains the above words of Jesus, was for the early Christianity the earliest christological text of the highest significance. It includes the prayer for food for the poor and expresses the hope for people to *return to Yahweh* (cf. Ps 22:27–28). The German theologian notices in here a very clear reference to the mystery of Eucharist: God will give food to the poor and faithless people will

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 70.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *ibidem*.

become part of the Church born through His death on the Cross<sup>37</sup>. The promise conveyed by the psalmist becomes at that moment the word of Jesus. It is a reality which realises and actualises itself in the Church and her liturgy – the centre is Jesus and the salvation.

The above mentioned act is performed “through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ”, it is a doxology, a prayer through which the Church becomes a part of what Jesus gives to the Father, praises Him and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. There are two notions that can be distinguished: ascending – the worships of the Father by the Son, and descending – receiving the grace as a result of the Offering. It seems right then to follow Joseph Ratzinger back to the analysis of Paul's First Epistle to Corinthians (cf. 1 Cor 10:16–17). The German theologian in his attempt on explaining the efficacy of the Eucharist makes reference to the teaching of Saint Augustine, for whom the above mentioned fragment of the letter of the Apostle of Nations to the people of Corinth is the basis for his theological thought. “Through eating this bread, we ourselves become what we eat”<sup>38</sup> – says the bishop. In “Confessiones” he elaborates on the above thought: “this Bread is the food that the strong eat”<sup>39</sup>. Hence, the ascending aspect of Liturgy is the yearning to participate in Jesus' love, turning to Him, seeking unity with Him. The descending aspect is the complete transformation of a human, his assimilation with the Bread that he takes, the complete absorption in the body of Christ and eventually salvation<sup>40</sup>. In his conclusions of these processes, Joseph Ratzinger says that the result of the above transformation is the breakup of the human “I” for the sake of a new “us” – the unity of humans with Christ, and everyone who belongs to Him<sup>41</sup>. The act of feeding the “poor” which changes the entire earthly reality becomes fact.

Liturgy evinces also one more dimension of christological mystery – all that concerns the unity of Jesus the mediator and Jesus the High Priest. In the Church nothing can substitute the ultimate sacrifice of the Son of God, nothing is as fruitful, and anything in any different form than *in persona Christi* cannot actualise It. This statement, coming from the sphere of soteriology, conditions the accurate perception of the main message remaining in liturgy: “due to the immersion in Paschal Mystery [...], we receive the gift of becoming children, thus [together with Christ – G.Ć.] we can pray «Abba, Father!»” (cf. Rom 8:15)<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. R. Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium II*, Freiburg 1977, pp. 494–498; see also J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> J. Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche*, München 1954, p. 28.

<sup>39</sup> Augustyn, *Wyznania*, Kraków 2006, p. 185, translated into English as: Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, New York 1960.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Tajemnica Jezusa Chrystusa*, p. 84.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. *ibidem*, p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, AAS 56 (1964), n. 6.

## CONCLUSION

A proper summary of the above analyses is achieving a synthesis of what the testimony of Scripture says about Jesus, the word of God and His historical figure and what the tenets say. According to Joseph Ratzinger, the cognition of the christological mystery and confessing that Jesus is Christ is achievable through meditation of evangelical descriptions of His prayer. This does not stay in opposition to the systematic exposition of Christology but, in fact, fully validate its content, and allows to eliminate those assumptions which do not follow the relation of the Father and the Son described by John and the synoptic evangelists.

The historical inheritance of the Church includes the testimony of communities which used to pray as Jesus taught them to, so they celebrated Eucharist, just as He commanded His followers in the Cenacle during the last supper before His death. Significant is the fact that a unified testimony of crystallisation of the term assigned to Jesus as the Redeemer with the fundamental Peter's confession has survived. From this point, Christ is the body of faith which allows the communion with the Father.

*Homoousios* – a term which poses as the base for christological dogma is a synthesis of two cultures: Hebrew and Greek. However, there is nothing new behind this term – it is nothing else but a testimony of Scripture about Jesus' prayer, conveyed in philosophical-theological language. Christological meditation is not just a practical addition for the theologian's devotion but a priceless tool in the process of uncovering the central theological mystery – the mystery of Jesus Christ.

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## JOSEPHA RATZINGERA KONCEPCJA MEDYTACJI CHRYSOLOGICZNEJ JAKO CENTRUM WIARY I TEOLOGII

### Streszczenie

Panorama teologii po Soborze Watykańskim II uległa zasadniczym zmianom, które poza treścią sporów i dociekań prowadzonych przez teologów przede wszystkim objęły jej strukturę. W zakresie chrystologii odeszło się od prób podjęcia nowego wykładu objaśniającego tajemnicę unii hipostatycznej oraz innych wiadomości o Chrystusie na rzecz kontrowersyjnych dociekań dotyczących stosunku świadectwa biblijnego do historycznej osoby Jezusa. Odwrócono zatem kierunek właściwy teologii – prawdy o Chrystusie poszukuje się poza Objawieniem.

W artykule została dokonana próba apologii medytacji chrystologicznej, dzięki której, według Josepha Ratzingera, „klasyczne formuły Soboru w Chalcedonie występują we właściwym kontekście”. Płaszczyzną refleksji będzie również chrystologia jako interpretacja modlitwy Jezusa, więzi Syna z Ojcem, która w Misterium Paschalnym staje się centrum wiary Kościoła. Podjęta została próba zbadania problemu współczesnego rozumienia jedności Jezusa historii i Chrystusa wiary oraz odpowiedzi na pytanie o charakter tajemnicy chrystologicznej celebrowanej w liturgii.

**Keywords:** Christ, Paschal Mystery, christological meditation, history, faith

**Słowa kluczowe:** Chrystus, Misterium Paschalne, medytacja chrystologiczna, historia, wiara