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Love, Mercy and Social Justice in the Context of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński's Personalist Concept of Social Life

Abstract: The article's subject discusses love, mercy, and social justice from the perspective of Christian personalism presented by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. The author's interpretation of source materials aims to present the above values as fundamental Christian virtues of a complementary nature, shaping the good of the human person's goodness, both in the individual and social dimension. In the personalist-praxeological sense, both love, mercy, and social justice, understood as attitudes that which mean commitment and fidelity, are formed primarily in the Christian reality of everyday life, particularly with regard to one's family and nation. The author of this article asks whether the aretology of Cardinal Wyszyński's personalist concept of social life can be applied to the specific realities of the contemporary social life. The answer to such questions is extremely important, especially in the context of the currently proclaimed "ideological pluralism," characteristic of present-day postmodern culture, which emphasizes the moral ambivalence of "liquid" postmodernity.

Keywords: love, mercy, social justice, personalism, postmodernity, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński

Introduction

In the Christian theological sense, love, mercy, and social justice are not opposed to each other but are complementary. After all, the fundamental task of these virtues is to serve man. The above values have as their object "the good of the person." For justice, "good" is first and foremost an object that must be appropriately distributed. On the other hand, the "object" of love and mercy is "the good of

the neighbor” without any divisions or limitations. In concrete action, these virtues complement each other. Likewise, Christians should act justly but based on love and mercy.

In addition to justice, the modern world, therefore, needs love, as well as mercy, which wants good for the neighbor – even when it does not receive any remuneration for it, and no legal sanction can enforce it. How precious grace, pity, and mercy can be, everyone can experience when he/she imagines him/herself in the hands of a ruthless man. Love for one’s neighbor manifests itself outwardly in specific actions, but its primary purpose is to bear spiritual fruit in the temporal and supernatural dimensions. This power of merciful love, however, flows from the Holy Spirit, who enables Christians to keep the most important commandment: “love one another as I love you” (cf. Jn 13:31–35).

Nevertheless, the question about love is asked by contemporary people who significantly experience its deficit. Modern culture very often equates the concept of love with pleasure and complacency. In this context, love seems to be the sum of the experiences. Therefore, the intensity of these experiences exposes, whether it is a “great” or just “fleeting” love. That is why it seems so essential to restore this concept to its proper designation.

Yet, love and other accompanying virtues, as concepts of great depth of meaning, are the subject of interdisciplinary analyzes. In the axiological aspect, the above ideas are related to goodness. However, in the theological aspect, they relate to the authenticity of God Himself.¹ But love in the “gift-love option” with its ethical dimension has social implications. It is inherently related to the process of shaping values essential for the entire public life of a person, which is also conditioned by a specific theological and philosophical anthropology. To understand the dynamics of love, mercy, and justice in the social aspect, one will look at the above ideas from the perspective of theology, philosophy, and social sciences in terms of the personalist concept of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński.

All the same, love, charity, mercy, and social justice are by their very nature dialogical and alterocentric, i.e., they are directed

¹ Cf. A. Podsiad, *Słownik terminów*, 514.

towards other people and are, therefore, pro-social. Despite all the limitations of human existence, the virtues mentioned above are the permanent basis of social life in all its dimensions: family, neighborhood, professional, social, and national, state, as well as international. However, they are a prerequisite for smaller and larger communities' everyday functioning and their calling and meaning from the personalist perspective.² "Thus, the human person is a central value, both on an individual and social level. Man is a person, he is a rational and free being: he is the master of creation."³

1. The Viewpoint of the Christian Tradition

According to the Church's social teaching, Christians cannot remain indifferent to the world's lack of justice. There are several natural and religious reasons for this. Thus, Cardinal Wyszyński strongly emphasized the organic relationship between justice, love, and mercy, presenting the Christian concept of social life. These values are necessary, but only together can they contribute to the introduction of genuine justice in interpersonal relationships. Justice itself, detached or set against love (as is the case in Marxism), leads to much human suffering. However, love without justice is a "pseudo-love." Therefore, only together can they oppose various forms of socio-political harm.⁴

On the theological and biblical level, love and mercy are considered the free and undeserved "turning" of God to His creation. In this context, however, love and mercy are understood not so much as an attribute of God's essence but as a "feature" related to grace: an expression of His essential love, perceived from the perspective of salvation. God manifests His mercy by turning His closeness to the suffering people and His gracious and forgiving kindness to sinners. As a result, love and mercy manifested a certain tension towards social justice. If justice provides everyone what is due, it is evident

² Cf. S. Kowalczyk, *Człowiek a społeczność*, 200.

³ S. Wyszyński, „Społeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona,” 61.

⁴ Cf. R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life*, 341–342.

that such devotion on God's part is always unearned and flows from mercy, which is the measure of justice.⁵

However, the category of "love," especially charity, understood as an ambiguous concept in the context of social justice, is commonly reduced mostly to emotional feelings. Though, in light of realistic philosophy, love, as an essential attribute of a man's personal life, can be realized only by observing the entirety of human existence from the perspective of "being" for the other person. Therefore, it determines the relational status of man, and by entering deeply into the structure of his personal being, it motivates a man to give himself with all his personal endowments to another person and, at the same time, contributes to the co-creation of good in him.⁶ "In the hierarchy of values, God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth is at the forefront, then – man as a fruit of God's love, and then – the material world, which is given to man to subject the earth to himself."⁷

⁵ However, some theologians polarize love, mercy, and justice. In the words of Anselm of Canterbury, but also in the contemporary thought of Charles Barth, justice almost necessarily tends to condemn the sinner. Scholasticism has traditionally distinguished the "inherent" qualities belonging to God as a being in himself (non-complexity, infinity, eternity, immutability) and "related" ones, which are revealed in God's works towards creatures (wisdom, kindness, providence, justice, mercy). By analogy with the spiritual faculties of man, it was said that the qualities of wisdom and providence have their place in God's mind and that kindness, justice, and mercy are related to His will. Mercy is understood here as giving good to man by God in order to lead him out of weakness and deficiencies. Without violating God's changelessness, mercy, therefore, implies some form of compassion. Theological tradition speaks of God's mercy as infinite virtue, as it is an attribute of God's infinite nature and the fruit of His endless love. It is the primary motive for God's action perceived in the contemporary world. So, God's mercy is an attribute, not just a state of compassionate mind. Cf. M. Bernyś, „Miłosierdzie jako przymiot Boga,” 44–58.

⁶ Cf. W. Chudy, "Krąpiec Mieczysław Albert," 43–48.

⁷ S. Wszyński, "Najważniejszą wartością na świecie jest człowiek," 962. The very nature of God is love, mercy, as well as wisdom, justice, and goodness. And so, since we say: 'good with goodness, which is God', or 'wise with wisdom,' which is God – because the goodness of which we are good is a kind of participation in God's goodness. And the wisdom of which we are wise is a kind of participation in God's wisdom – so also the love of which we love our neighbor is a kind of participation in God's love. Cf. M. Graczyk, "Miłość miłosierna," 191–193.

Therefore, “being for another,” understood in this way, means that a person is “happy in himself” in so far as he lives for another person.⁸ One discovers a similar meaning of love in the optics of Christian personalism. The more so because “apart from man, there is no personality, there is no reason, there is no freedom.”⁹ Hence, the spiritual-corporeal nature of a human being expressed in his free and rational action is a constitutive quality of man.¹⁰ As a result, the human person is an “integrated oneness,” a permanent, amalgamated being, despite his complexity. In this sense, he unifies and integrates numerous activities and features as their subject, substrate, and cause.

The spiritual element in man performs a visible sign of God’s closeness to the material world. Through the body, a human person connects with the surrounding world, is a part of it, lives and acts in it, is subject to its laws, and occupies a unique position in the entire temporal reality. In other words, a human being is its master: he organizes it, gain control of it, transforms it, and uses it for his life and development. The body, however, as a material element, is also a kind of bridge connecting the reality of the material world with God.¹¹

In the social aspect, the human person exists only by “turning” to the other person. Moreover, Cardinal Wyszyński’s personalist vision of social life places at the center of his analysis a man who, as a person, “is a rational and free being, is the master of creation.”¹² In

⁸ As Cardinal Wyszyński pointed out: “Man is a social person – *persona socialis* – that is, he has a social nature, social disposition, and social aspirations. Ancient Roman lawyers said it was simply *ius innatum* or ‘innate law’. Man brings it with him” (“Nie dać sobie wydrzeć ziemi!,” 269).

⁹ S. Wyszyński, “Społeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona,” 61.

¹⁰ Cf. S. Wyszyński, “Uświęcenie pracy zawodowej,” 200.

¹¹ Cf. C.S. Bartnik, *Chrześcijańska pedagogia narodowa*, 187.

¹² S. Wyszyński, *Społeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona*, 61. In his considerations, Wyszyński states: “The main creator of culture is the human person understood as the main subject of history, the highest value and the most religious reality of this world.” (Wyszyński. “Konstytucja Pastoralna,” 118). As an essential subject, expressing himself through an immaterial and immortal soul, it is realized through conscious and free action that actualizes the possibilities contained in its nature. This fact explains such spiritual activities as cognition, love, and freedom. “Apart from man, there is no personality, and there is no rationality, there is no freedom.” (Wyszyński, “Społeczność przyrodzona i nadprzyrodzona,” 61).

other words, man, although inscribed in the earthly reality, becomes a part of it. Still, his spiritual and bodily structure, personal dignity, and supernatural calling make him appear as a being that surpasses the entire created world. However, it turns out to be a place where the human person, understood as the principal subject of all creative activity, can realize his personality as well as achieve his right goal and destiny. A man created in the womb of the world is the subject of the world, a history tending towards infinity. He is the king of creation, but also his servant as well. He is left not only in the dilemma of truth-error, freedom-alienation, happiness-unhappiness, but most of all, the moral dilemma of good and evil. In this sense, morality turns out to be a new dimension of being, and it determines man: it constitutes him, makes him, verifies, and fulfills him. In morality, a man turns out as a person.¹³ In other words, “to be is to love.”¹⁴

A human person can then understand and comprehend himself only through another person – a man can find himself only in another person. Thus, the human person exists only to the extent that “I exist for the other.” The approach presented above exposes the pedagogical dimension of love: one that must mature to be a gift to another. “And all communities must be of human measure. All of them must have as part of their very foundation the rights and obligations of the human person, for that person to feel comfortable in them, as one would feel in a well-tailored garment. Hence, social life forms cannot be built differently, only according to the human person’s characteristics. Whenever social institutions and forms of social life collide with rights and obligations, the character and nature of the human person, they often become a torment.”¹⁵

¹³ Cf. C.S. Bartnik, *Teologia kultury*, 91.

¹⁴ Cf. E. Mounier, *Wprowadzenie do egzystencjalizmów*, 37.

¹⁵ Wyszyński, “*Pacem in terris*,” 124. John Paul II brought out this thought in a letter to families entitled *Gratissimam sane*: “The ethos” of personalism is altruistic. Within its reach, a person cannot only become a gift to others but also finds joy in it (cf. John Paul II, Letter to families *Gratissimam sane*, no. 14). The conviction about the originality of the human being and his incalculability to the world oscillates around the understanding of man as a person-subject of all social activity. Therefore, it should be stated that subjectivity, on the one hand, emphasizes the dignity of the person and their autonomy, highlighting the person’s position

In the context of the above reflection, therefore, the personalist concept of love seems essential. As it expresses in its various manifestations, the depth of Christianity revealed in the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. The commandment to love God and neighbor – invariably through the ages up to the present day – is a reference point for the deepest humanism, exposing at the same time the ideal and goal of human functioning in the complex reality of social life.

Cardinal Wyszyński underlines that the human person should be viewed as of “intrinsic value,” as well as a subject related to transcendence. Therefore, a man should be affirmed for himself. “Man as a social person is directed by the Holy Trinity to social life with other people. They are so necessary for him to exist and fully develop that man stops in his development without coexistence with people.¹⁶ “The Gospel – according to the Primate – establishes a true parity of humanity, measuring the value of man with the intentions of the Creator.”¹⁷

In other words, to love man means to affirm his distinctive dignity in the creative and salvific dimension, which fits in with his understanding of the “personalist norm.”¹⁸ Thus, in defining human involvement in social life in the perspective of merciful love, two fundamental facts should be taken into account: (1) that man is

in relation to the surrounding reality. On the other hand, it captures the inner experience and man’s experience, in which he finds his “I” as the one who has and rules himself. It is an experience of self-possession and self-control in which he experiences that he is a person. Therefore, the concept of subjectivity is not only about the metaphysical objectification of man as the subject of all reality but also about showing man as a subject experiencing the fact that he is a subject, that is, his subjectivity. Cf. K. Wojtyła, “Podmiotowość,” 24–28.

¹⁶ S. Wyszyński, “Społeczna krucjata miłości,” 225.

¹⁷ S. Wyszyński, “O pokoju na ziemi,” 679.

¹⁸ Cf. S. Wyszyński, “Jasnogórskie zobowiązania...,” 303–304; id., “Ojciec nasz,” 29; id., “Kościół wspólnotowórczy,” 149; id., “Krzyż na szlaku Warszawy,” 16–20. The above statements refer to the concept of Karol Wojtyła, who emphasized that whenever a human person is an object of action, it must always be remembered that he cannot be treated as a means to an end, as a tool. Still, however, it should be borne in mind that he himself has or should have a purpose. Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, 29–30.

called to live in truth and love¹⁹; and (2) each person realizes himself through the sincere gift of self.²⁰

The love-oriented human personality is a gift inherited from God, who is love (cf. 1Jn 4:16). Hence, by the Creator's will and by this priority, the entire material order is subject to a man, and his tasks include temporal and eternal goals. From the perspective of the personalist concept of love and mercy, man is dominant everywhere and obtains primacy around. In this context, therefore, a thing cannot dominate the person. The economy over humanity and the person's superiority requires the humanization of the social order, in which man always has priority.

2. Theological Deconstruction or "Modern" Contestation?

From practically the mid-sixteenth century, the relationship between love, mercy, and justice still seems to be a relevant, controversial, and fateful issue of Western moral theology.²¹ Nevertheless, the vital question is: how, on the one hand, can one avoid despair in the face of the seriousness of human sins? On the other hand, how can one also avoid a sloppy and sentimental look at God and His merciful love, which is the foundation of social justice? As Cardinal Wyszyński states: "At all levels of the human structure, starting from the nature of a person's personality, through his family life, social, professional,

¹⁹ In an address to Warsaw's artistic circles, the Cardinal states: "Christ is in a dispute over the high dignity of man. When he was accused of being made God, he said: The Scriptures say of you – «You are Gods, and you are stumbled that I have called myself the Son of God» (cf. Jn 10:34). In today's era of destructive behemoths, people need to be reminded – you are gods" (S. Wyszyński, "Wieczne oporny," 249).

²⁰ Cf. S. Wyszyński, "Prymat człowieka na globie," 43.

²¹ Cf. R. Ficek, "(Post-) Modernity," 52–59. Opinions on this matter are divided. The prevailing view, however, equates the birth of modernity with the rise of capitalism and the dynamic process of modernization of the Western world that began in the mid-16th century and continued until the end of the 1960s. In this perspective, "postmodernity" would cover the period from the 1960s to today. However, its symptoms would be visible much earlier. Cf. A. Huysen, *After the Great Divide*, 3–64.

national, state, international, and human coexistence – at all levels of modern construction, the following are constantly repeated: truth, freedom, justice, and love. Only at this cost can humanity develop normally.”²²

Nonetheless, many contemporary proponents of postmodernist philosophy and theology reject the need for a code of ethics as an ethical heteronomy that violates the human right to moral choices, describing them as an ethical heteronomy that violates the human right to moral choices. However, their position is not the same as rejecting the need for morality in human life. Nevertheless, they believe that morality is only possible down to the dimension of personal belief – an individual “ethical” view.²³ Regardless, postmodernity is an attitude of distrust towards reason, the consequence of which is the elevation or even deification of the emotional sphere of a human person. Thus, morality cannot be a product of human rationality but is an internal-emotional experience. “The moral self has no foundation,” but it rests on the “moral impulse.” As a result, morality explained in the context of emotivism has a clearly irrational profile.²⁴

The Catholic Church proclaims God’s mercy and encourages people to practice works of merciful love (almsgiving). But this call to mercy raises some serious internal conflicts. In this sense, love, mercy, and compassion are called into question by many different circles in contemporary society as well as the Church and reduced to the so-called “ideology of inconsistent people” who fear any kind of

²² S. Wyszynski, “*In principio erat Verbum...*,” 58.

²³ Though, the question arises: what is the source and nature of moral experiences and decisions? One of the most prominent representatives of postmodernism, Zygmunt Bauman, in his deliberations on morality, combines quite different themes: ethical emotivism, Kantism, and Lévinas’ phenomenology (cf. Z. Bauman, *Etyka ponowoczesna*, 49). While Kant spoke of the “categorical imperative,” Bauman uses a slightly different language and mentions the “moral sensitivity” or “moral skill” of man. However, they both share the conviction that a person has the internal ability and need to make moral decisions. Though, while Kant treated moral imperatives as acts of human will, Bauman favors emotivism. He characterizes “moral phenomena” as irrational, aporetical (which is supposed to result from the ambiguity of human situations), and irrational. Cf. S. Kowalczyk, “Etyka postmodernizmu,” 334.

²⁴ Cf. Z. Bauman, *Etyka ponowoczesna*, 87–89.

socio-political conflict. This understanding of mercy individualizes solidarity and, therefore, directs the needy to the grace of the rich people's willfulness. Furthermore, mercy humiliates its beneficiaries and is ultimately unfair. In the face of such a severe and widespread criticism of mercy, the challenge for the entire Church is to abide firmly in the faith in God, which was revealed in Jesus Christ, who is Incarnate Merciful Love. In this context, it is essential to overcome the "false" form of merciful love that leads to opposing this virtue with social justice.²⁵

Certainly, merciful love as God's perfection, in which all qualities constitute His essence, is equal to justice, as well as wisdom, goodness, and providence. However, as a quality that characterizes God's action, it is the greatest because it gives the highest being to the lower beings. Mercy is the greatest perfection in being supreme, without being to submit himself through love. It is clear when compared with a man whose "essence of perfection" and the highest virtue is love, which links it with the highest being. In this sense, justice is subject to merciful love because whatever God does for creatures, He does it according to the proper order that constitutes justice. But since this order was accepted by God entirely voluntarily, in its establishment, one must also see God's infinitely merciful love, which surpasses justice.

Therefore, Wyszyński's personalism is critical of any position that diminishes Christianity to a charitable doctrine built on sentimentality. Shallowing, lessening, and suppressing such fundamental concepts

²⁵ However, with the advent of the welfare state guaranteeing social security in the 19th century, it began to seem that mercy as the primary social virtue lost its importance. From then on, merciful love was associated with arrogance, false pity, or camouflage of neglected structural reforms. In Marxism, in particular, it was repeated that the poor do not need charity but justice. There is some truth in this, although it must be added that even where the state has institutionalized the right to social welfare to a large extent, there is plenty of room for spontaneous and willing help, which in many cases cannot be replaced. The most critical misunderstandings that falsify the dimension of mercy include the purely individualistic or only spiritual understanding of it, devoid of social reference, and the belief that the works of mercy have lost their importance, except for helping developing countries. Cf. Benedict XVI, *Deus caritas est*, no. 26; R. Ficek, *Christians in Socio-Political Life*, 343–345.

as sin, judgment, anger, and the cross in understanding suffering gave rise to a sentimental and mesmerizing view of God and His essence (e.g., love, mercy, justice, truth, etc.). Therefore, human love, compassion, and social justice, which does not tremble before God's Holiness, His righteousness and judgment, become a distorted caricature of classical concepts known from the Bible, Christian tradition as well as an everyday experience.²⁶ To avoid despair and breakdown, repentance, and resolve to improve should be softened with the reality of God's mercy. "There are no situations that God cannot change; there is no sin that He cannot forgive if we just open up our hearts to him."²⁷

"The issue of Christian morality, therefore, extends to all areas of human life."²⁸ In the context of the mutual conditioning of the complex structures of human life, one should speak of the social dimension of moral renewal, which becomes the opposite of sin's social extent. Moral renewal is realized in the community of the Church, "where the responsibility for the faith and love is born. Through faith and love, we become capable of confessing Christ to people and of social love."²⁹ The personalist vision of social life presented by Cardinal Wyszyński is not limited to theoretical analyzes of complex social

²⁶ Cf. S. Wyszyński, "Miłosierdziem budujemy," 786. Deliberation on God's mercy in the Trinitarian dimension takes on a Christological character because its fullest revelation is the mystery of the Incarnation, which culminates in Christ's death and resurrection. Here, too, is the basis for an ecclesiological reflection on God's mercy, since the Church, being the fruit of the Paschal Mystery, not only proclaims and confesses it, not only tries to recall and imitate it but also implements it and makes it present as a sacrament of salvation. In this sense, God's merciful love is continuously revealed to the world. Ecclesiological reflection must find its continuation in sacramental consideration. By analyzing the most profound nature of the sacrament revealed in Christ's presents in the liturgy, one comes to the mystery of God, the Father of Mercy. It is predominantly factual in Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Reconciliation, in which there is a personal encounter with the merciful and forgiving Christ. It is in forgiveness that God's merciful love for man is most revealed. Mercy and love, expressed in the forgiveness of sins, is also the most obvious proof of God's omnipotence. Cf. R. Forycki, "Czas i czasy miłosierdzia," 331–341.

²⁷ S. Wyszyński, "O rozwoju ludów," 4.

²⁸ S. Wyszyński, "Duch Ewangelii," 807.

²⁹ S. Wyszyński, "Jakiej chcecie Polski?," 490.

issues. Simultaneously, it emphasizes that Christians' involvement in the world becomes an essential dimension of their life vocation. Christians' dynamic activity to transform and repair human socio-political structures also acquires particular importance from this perspective.

Beyond doubt, mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. Therefore, all of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love. The Church "has an endless desire to show mercy."³⁰ In the Church's social teaching, thus, mercy and justice belong together. In Christian life, love, mercy, and social justice remain united but marked by inevitable tautness and apprehensions. However, it makes life more productive, instead of suggesting harmony that cannot yet exist (eschatological tension). Just as justice and mercy are attributes of God and are not mutually exclusive, but complement and perfect, so an attitude of mercy leads to greater justice.

3. Jesus Christ as Incarnated Love and Disfigurement of His Messianic Mission

A vital inspiration sounds wholesome and good, yet it would appear that the negation of Christian ethics is an evil and destructive force of the so-called "anthropologically incomplete" ideologies and atheistic concepts straight from the Enlightenment era, as well as the 19th and 20th centuries.³¹ The ideological remains of these concepts seem to be

³⁰ Cf. Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, no. 24.

³¹ The consequence of negating merciful love in the human attitude is both Nietzschean immoralism and egocentrism, as well as the Marxist idea of class struggle. As part of the vitalist-biological concept of life, some (Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Friedrich Nietzsche) rejected mercy, seeing it as a weakness or even an obstacle to human development. For example, for Nietzsche, morality based on the idea of merciful love is the morality of weak people who lack self-esteem and dignity. In this context, merciful and compassionate love is understood as a sign of man's fall, lack of the will to fight, hatred, cruelty, and strength. The crimes of the Nazi and communist regimes, however, exposed what ultimately led to such

still very influential today. Therefore, it is worth recalling and warning contemporary theologians against the easy and uncritical return to the terminology of the Judeo-Christian tradition, however, used in the context of current (post) modernist philosophical-theological discourse. Terms such as guilt, concern, fear, conscience summons, resoluteness, authenticity, moral fall, for example, in the thought system of Martin Heidegger as well as his followers and antecedents, have little to do with the depth of their original Christian meaning.³²

The source of the binding power of conscience and the values that shape it (love, mercy, social justice, etc.) are recognized, identified, and accepted as God's commandments, whether written or natural. Consequently, the commandments are by their very nature, not empty: they are intrinsically related to the world of values. In this sense, the personalist vision of morality upholds these values. The highest value is God Himself, holiness, God's name, Sunday understood as Lord's Day, parenthood; human life; marriage, etc. There are many material and spiritual values, etc. The above "herald" speaks and commands not in its own name but – absolutely respecting human freedom – in God's name.³³

an approach to mercy and God's love detached from social justice. Cf. M. Ure, "Politics of Mercy," 56–69.

³² Cf. H. Jonas, "Heidegger und die Theologie," 323. According to Heidegger, the myth of a creative, rational subject, constituting the sense of reality, probably finally vanishes: the thinking subject drifts, "happens" and can only interpret "this being" only "under his protection." The same things apply to attempts to build ethics based on atheistic Marxism, existentialism, structuralism, or pessimistic agnosticism. In these currents of thinking, however, there are foundations of numerous controversies with open propositions of Christian ethics and integral moral theology. Cf. J. Tarnowski, "Filozofia współczesna," 12.

³³ As an act of merciful love, mercy consists of living together with the good, identified with a human person and his dignity. The attributes of mercy understood in this way are participation in the good of a person, reciprocity of experience of this good, equating people while maintaining their ontological distinctiveness and faithfulness to the person. In its full and proper form, mercy is realized in the relation of God towards man. Analogously, however, it is recognized in relations between people who imitate God "rich in mercy." Participation in the good of the person and his dignity, which is an essential attribute of the Christian idea of mercy and love, is possible only when characterized by reciprocity. Hence, merciful love in all human relationships is always a mutual process. The reciprocity of the good

Conscience and fundamental values rooted in Christian morality do not exist in an impersonal void. They also refer to the moral law. According to Cardinal Wyszyński, the eternal God's law is the highest and final norm of morality. God's plan for man is, therefore, a transcendent moral norm, external to man, because human nature, created by God, imitates, and participates in God's nature.³⁴ In other words, human nature is the essential norm of morality. Hence comes the term "natural moral law," which cannot in any way be equated with physicalism or biologism. It is a law referring to the fact of creation and salvation of man and, at the same time, to the existence of rationality and freedom (so it does not work deterministically).

Among the categories of personal rights, a vital role is played by the right to social love, which is expressed in the fact that every human being in social life should be treated fairly and with love and kindness. The full implementation of this right in social life, according to the Primate, would mean the full implementation of all other human rights.³⁵ Nevertheless, the whole teaching of Primate Wyszyński places the most significant emphasis on the moral life of a person and his deed – *praxis* – which is a means of sanctifying the world. The multifaceted issue of human rights also revolves around practical goals. On the one hand, Primate Wyszyński called for the protection of rights and enabling Polish citizens to take full advantage of them, which he persistently and relentlessly carried out throughout his primacy. On the other hand, his activities led to educating people

experienced in mercy is the basis of human equality and solidarity and is the way to authentic justice. Without the specific compensation brought by mercy and love, however, the struggle for real social justice can become inhuman (*summum ius summa iniuria*). Merciful love is the source and perfection of justice because it is its culmination. The specific forms of mercy and love include shaping the imagination of these virtues concerning other people. That is the attitude of conversion towards a person and supporting him. The above requirements relate to a large extent to the recognition of mercy in Catholic social teaching. The awareness of the inability to remedy all human miseries makes us turn to the Father of Divine Mercy in trusting prayer and devotion. However, it directs the reflection on mercy and love to the field of Christian spirituality. Cf. S. Wyszyński, "Uniwersytet katolicki," 186–187; id., "Do rodziców," 173; id., "Orędzie o prawie do nauczania religii," 317.

³⁴ S. Wyszyński, "Mater plorans," 198.

³⁵ Cf. H. Waśkiewicz, "Prawa człowieka," 8–9.

in full awareness of their rights – including duties – teaching them how to exercise them – and, if necessary, how to demand their respect and create appropriate conditions for their implementation.³⁶

Though, the right to social love is inseparable from God's holiness, expressed in the messianic mission of Jesus Christ – Love incarnate. Therefore, considering God's righteousness, His response to sin and evil is resistance, disapproval, disgust, as well as a holy aversion to anything that is against God's will. The Scriptures refer to this answer as "the wrath of God" (cf. Eph 2:3; Rom 1:18; Rev 14:10–11; Jn 3:36).

Nevertheless, in the Bible, God's wrath does not imply violent rage or wrathful intervention, but rather His resistance to sin and injustice. Anger is, then, an active and dynamic expression of the "holy identity" of God-Love. For this reason, the message of judgment cannot be omitted from the announcement of the Old or New Testament, nor should it be misinterpreted and diluted. God's holiness corresponds to God's justice. In summary, silencing or suppressing God's anger, judgment, and holiness, in short, God's righteousness, turns "the message of God's mercy" into a "message of cheap grace." Thus, he does not discover the greatness of mercy revealed in the messianic mission of Jesus Christ.

Thus, it is with great concern to observe attempts to reduce the gospel message of Jesus of Nazareth to the level of philanthropic activity only.³⁷ Nowadays, even in wide circles of faithful people, the image of Christ who demands nothing and never chastises is often propagated – who, in his attitude, seems to be "politically correct" and apathetic, accepting everyone and everything literally. In other words, the only role of the Teacher of Nazareth in this approach seems to be the affirmation of all manifestations of human activity, without taking into account any axiological context.³⁸

The Gospels' Jesus Christ is totally different: demanding, not tolerant of evil, brave, and heroic. Jesus, portrayed in terms of someone who wants to satisfy all human whims, is an entirely false opposite of the Master of Nazareth. Therefore, the depreciation of

³⁶ Cf. S. Wyszynski, "Odpowiedzialność–obowiązki–prawa," 949.

³⁷ Cf. S. Wyszynski, "Kościół nie walczy z władzą," 646.

³⁸ S. Wyszynski, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, 46.

the biblical idea of “God’s judgment” is consequently associated with a misunderstanding of the essence of sin, and hence, the need for Christ’s redemptive work.³⁹ “Therefore, even to the earthly world today we need the revelation of the sons of God (Rom 8:19) who would bring the values of Christian morality into our daily, temporal and material life, whom Jesus Christ, the Son of the “Heavenly plowman” and the sower of the Gospel of truth and life, holiness will be blessed by and grace, justice, love, and peace.”⁴⁰

Shaping the “spirit” of peace understood in this way requires a fundamental transformation of religious and moral attitudes, leading to conversion. Only on the desired conversion path can the prospect of adequately used interdependence open up to humanity. Therefore, according to the Primate, the Church’s active involvement, mainly as a teacher and educator, is necessary for this respect. For this reason, the Church works to ensure that God’s peace is in human hearts, that through the human spirit, they may enter the family, social relations, and the life of the whole nation.⁴¹ Based on her highest moral authority, the Church can show humanity how to obtain peace and, through educational and social activity, to realize it. This is expressed above all in the Church’s insistent striving for universal brotherhood and all people’s unity in Christ.

According to the Primate, the presence of Christ in the world is the hope of the human family; recognizing His presence among us is our blessing.⁴² Thus, humanity’s full rehabilitation depends primarily on God-Man’s rehabilitation in personal, family, and national life. Only such a vision of social life in the local and international dimension can lead to the unification of all social structures, where justice, permeated with the spirit of forgiveness and mercy, will create a great “human family” of the world community.

In the context of such a severe deception of the mission of Jesus Christ that trivializes the question of “judgment,” one can never understand the seriousness of sin and, therefore, the need for Christ’s

³⁹ S. Wyszyński, “Nie trzeba się bać,” 767.

⁴⁰ S. Wyszyński, “Człowiek we wspólnocie Kościoła,” 820.

⁴¹ S. Wyszyński, “Przed Soborem Watykańskim II,” 182.

⁴² S. Wyszyński, “Prymat osoby nad rzeczą,” 715.

redemptive work to overcome it. This last point exposes the enormity of God's grace, which can be called "God's logic." It is the "logic of the cross" that is not expressed in suffering and death, but rather in love and the self-giving that brings fullness of life. "The greatest work of God in the supernatural order is a man. Created in the image and likeness of God, although less than the angels but crowned with glory and honor by the Creator, a man stands between heaven and earth as King and Ruler of the earth and as an heir of heaven. In this context, the value of the human person is conditioned not only by his divine origin, likeness to God, but also shown concerning the mystery of the Holy Trinity as well as the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption through Jesus Christ."⁴³

Nevertheless, the real revolution that radically changed life based on merciful love was brought about by Jesus Christ through His work of death and resurrection. The heroism of the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection transforms the human person into a being called to be a participant in God's life. Therefore, the Gospel is a message about God's enormous grace, which has its source in the redemptive work of Christ. The Church, which is holy but does not reject sinners, invites everyone to avail themselves of the sacramental act of forgiveness and healing which, through God's saving grace, allows everyone to pursue holiness in the perspective of "new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1).⁴⁴

4. Justice and Mercy as Aspects of God's Love

The topic of social justice in the theological and biblical context is traditionally approached concerning the eschatological issues of God's judgment, "anger," and holiness. However, social justice is considered here in the context of God's mercy, which is a fundamental characteristic of the essence of the one and loving God. In other words, both mercy and justice – as well as "God's anger," faithfulness,

⁴³ S. Wyszyński, "O katolickiej woli życia," 34.

⁴⁴ Cf. S. Wyszyński, "O chrześcijańskim wyzwoleniu," 286; id., "Kim ma być człowiek," 743–746; id., "Modlitwa do Chrystusa," 783–785; J. Lewandowski, *Eucharystia*, 59–67.

forbearance, etc. – are only aspects of God’s Love. This is particularly important for the personalistic ally understood God-man relationship. “Equipped by the best Creator with the riches of the mind, will and heart, elevated above the plant and animal world with beauty, dignity, and virtues of body and soul, a man in all his nature, in his attitude, in his aspirations and destiny is the king of creatures and a blessing on the earth.”⁴⁵

Participation in God’s creative work results in discovering the high rank that a man has in the entire created world. As a person who is the subject, purpose, and meaning of all socio-economic life, he has an unquestionable primacy in all temporal reality through which he completes the work of creation. Therefore, the personalist nature of socio-economic activity requires responsibility for the human person’s individual and social development and the proper shape of man’s relationship to the world and the world to man.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ S. Wyszyński, “O katolickiej woli życia,” 34.

⁴⁶ In this context, Christians’ commitment to social justice based on merciful love should be seen as a vocation that imposes a real obligation. In the religious and moral life and mission of a Christian, merciful love is the norm of behavior. It is Christ’s will that man not only experience God’s mercy and love but also do it to others. Thus, a Christian’s life is realized on the basis of the moral norm of love for God and neighbor, a particular form of which is merciful love, i.e., mercy. However, it should be emphasized that love cannot be replaced by mercy because there is no reciprocity between God and man in this dimension, and the answer to His mercy is love. Mercy is thus a part of love because of the human condition involved in the sinful reality of the temporal world. But this is part of love as not all creation is currently cornered by evil. Nevertheless, the contemporary interpretation of mercy is characterized by deepening the personalist dimension of the relationship of mercy to love, mainly under the influence of the encyclical *Dives in misericordia* by John Paul II. Previously, mercy was distinguished from love, and now there is integration and even identification of these two realities. Mercy is an inner shape, an indispensable dimension, a way of revealing and fulfilling love. The motive and existential justification of merciful love understood in this way is a “neighbor in need.” It requires an ethos of mercy, which is being merciful throughout life. The personal nature of mercy flows from the depths of the mystery of its revelation, which is Jesus Christ. It is not just a concept but a thoroughly personal category. Christ, however, revealing merciful love, not only speaks of it but, above all, personifies it Himself. Cf. A. Nossol, “Personalistyczno-humanistyczny aspekt,” 48–51; P. Warchoł, *Milosierny Bóg*, 117–235.

On the other hand, the soteriological perspective reveals that the salvific dimension determines the value of this sphere of human life. An essential aspect of the vision of commitment to the social life understood in this way becomes the evangelizing and sanctifying function, enabling the transformation of a man and the world based on the Gospel's values. Thanks to this, human involvement in transforming the temporal reality is included in the sacrum sphere.

In this sense, love, charity, and mercy are "greater" than justice. They are greater in the sense that they are primal and fundamental. Love conditions justice, and ultimately justice serves love. In other words, the very love of God, given His essentially holy nature, implies His justice. In this way, God's judgment and "anger" are essential aspects of His love. Therefore, the analysis of human involvement in earthly life, carried out from the human person's personalist vision, emphasizes his central place in the world's entire reality. Man as "Homo Dei" in the ontical, moral, and praxeological sense becomes the subject, creator, and goal of the whole socio-economic life. Simultaneously, socio-economic activity is the plane through which the human person expresses himself, creating his life, and fulfilling his entire vocation.⁴⁷

On the one hand, there is no true love of God without God's response to human evil, which is an offense against God, His holiness. In this sense, God's wrath and judgment are inscribed in the personalist vision of a genuinely personal relationship between man and God. However, the lack of "God's wrath" against wickedness would be a lack of care and, therefore, a lack of love.

Thus, faith's Christian attitude cannot be merely declarative, but "requires works lest it is dead."⁴⁸ Involvement in public life – especially in a complicated socio-political situation – requires Christians to "[...] have a living, heroic faith."⁴⁹ Its essential complement is "[...] the spirit of sacrifice and fraternal service."⁵⁰ According to Cardinal

⁴⁷ Cf. S. Wyszynski, "O chrześcijańskim wyzwoleniu," 19; C.S. Bartnik, *Chrześcijańska pedagogia narodowa*, 187.

⁴⁸ S. Wyszynski, "W obronie religii," 547.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Wyszyński, “we have common tasks and common duties. [...] They are not easy. That is why you have to have character and strive for character; you have to work it out, have the will to effort, toil, and sacrifice.”⁵¹

These are the elements that shape and profile social love in Christ. “It reminds us of the attitude of Christ who sacrificed Himself on the cross. He taught us service by kneeling at the feet of his disciples and washing them. And he established love as the first and most necessary law on which all building can and should be based: love for God and from it is drawn love for brothers, children of God. If it is to be effective, this social and brotherly love must not be absent from the program of national education.”⁵²

Primate Wyszyński clearly emphasizes the social justice system. He thinks it necessary to consider – apart from the legal, exchange, and distributive justice – also social justice, the specific feature of which is the opposition to various forms of economic exploitation and social harm. The motive for this is the feeling of “universal brotherhood” (resulting from the Christian idea of love of one’s neighbor), the natural consequence of which is the need for social solidarity. Its specificity is not limited to overcoming existing tensions and canceling social harm, but also to implementing progress directed at the soteriological dimension.⁵³

Justice understood in this way is primarily related to the state’s duty towards its citizens, especially towards those who are less able to cope independently in society, for which it is necessary to seek

⁵¹ S. Wyszyński, “Tajemnica więzi z ojczyzną,” 487.

⁵² S. Wyszyński, “W obronie religii,” 547.

⁵³ Referring to the Thomistic thought, it should be noted that at the root of all justice, there is an alternative justice, the commands of which are a direct consequence of equal dignity for all persons. Much space in the teaching of the Cardinal is occupied by legal (officially authorized) justice, which he often equates with social justice. Its essence consists of directing the human person so that he consciously strives *ad bonum communitatis*, which is to become the goal of his just action. The principle of distributive justice, in turn, demands a fair distribution of social benefits and burdens. Since the separation thus understood concerns individuals directly, it has the character of individual bestowing or burdening. Cf. R. Iwan, *Polska, ale jaka?*, 40–41.

solutions guaranteeing fundamental economic equality. Its main postulates are the defense of employees' social rights, rights to work and fair pay, retirement pension, access to knowledge and culture, as well as participation in the workplace's economic benefits. In this context, social justice expresses the most fundamental goal of any personalistically understood community: the *bonum commune* (common good). For that reason, *bonum commune* is also the formal cause of human societies.⁵⁴

It is realized both in the general human scope and in specific state communities, having an internal and external element. The first element characterized by ontological and axiological specificity is the set of values enabling the development of a human being as a person. The second, of a socio-institutional nature, are the structures and institutions that facilitate this development. The "common good" as the human person's protection and the values enabling his harmonious development is made concrete in love dictates. Therefore, the implementation of its assumptions must not undermine the human person's dignity and requires selecting appropriate structural and institutional measures. Thus, both the community's good in terms of collectivism and the individualistically understood "good" of individuals should be considered contrary to the personalistically understood "common good."⁵⁵

Thanks to the supernatural motivation to engage in solving the world's problems, love and mercy reach the most fundamental dimensions of Christianity. God Himself is the fullness of love and compassion. Jesus Christ is their human embodiment and the guarantor of effectiveness. Thus, love and mercy become a proposal

⁵⁴ Cf. S. Wyszynski, "O chrześcijańskim wyzwoleniu," 18–19; S. Kowalczyk, *Współczesny kryzys*, 55.

⁵⁵ "The Fatherland and its prosperity cannot be built by only one social class, even if animated by the best intentions, ideals, abilities, experiences, and merits. You cannot put all the other layers of the nation aside. It will always be incomplete work and sometimes even dangerous if the Homeland, country, and state's responsibility are limited to a limited number of hands. All hands must make their efforts. All hearts must love; all minds must make efforts so that we can talk about the balance of work, in the sense of rights and obligations in the Homeland" (S. Wyszynski, "Przywódca ludu rolniczego," 23–24).

to the world, sensitizing it to recognize violations of human dignity and stimulating it to commit to building just structures of social life.⁵⁶

Although Cardinal Wyszyński, in his teaching, does not clarify the definition of justice, it nevertheless lies at the basis of social life's morality and determines its normative character. Justice, being the fundamental foundation for the principle of social equality and demanding respect for each person's rights, becomes not only a duty of social life but, above all, an individual and social imperative of man.⁵⁷

In other words, the importance and superiority of love over justice seem to be a sign of the entire revelation that is realized precisely through mercy. It is an essential point because it reveals that God does not require that justice be satisfied before He begins to love man. Instead, it is love that turns into mercy when necessary to go beyond the strict norm of justice. However, that mercy and justice are the manifestations of God's highest form of love is most clearly revealed in the mystery of the cross.

5. Justice and Mercy in the Context of Crucified Love

God's mercy and justice, the source of which is God's love, are most fully manifested in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross. In other words, Eternal Love, Mercy, and Justice meet on the cross on which the "Salvation of the World" is hung. "By participating in the work of creation, cooperating with God's providence, we experience

⁵⁶ Cf. S. Wyszyński, "Miłosierdziem budujemy," 789; id., "Aktualność «Kazania na górze»" 969; P. Nitecki, *Socjalizm, komunizm i ewangelizacja*, 114–115.

⁵⁷ Referring in his considerations to the Thomistic concept of social justice, the Primate states: "[...] when one penetrates into Thomas' thinking, one perceives the desire for social equalization. This law establishes the norms of justice, but the reality overflows in the framework in which the 'iustitia' – justice operates and postulates something more: Thomas' aequitas – equity. Where the 'iustitia', which can sometimes be a torment, can no longer be remedied, righteousness must come to the rescue. The point is that the law should not so much secure public order as the ability to guide people; that it would be 'ordinatio rationis' – the rationality of the law, so that a man covered in the force of the law would understand that over the eternal natural law, sometimes described as 'ius rationis' God's law prevails. This can happen through the rationality of the law – 'ordinatio rationis' in the field of law and social order" (S. Wyszyński, "Prymat osoby nad rzeczą," 716).

the joy of working, cooperating in redemption – we experience its toil and burden. We worship God in both of these works. The work of redemption for humanity was accomplished once, on the cross. From then on, all redemption flows only from the cross. The most heroic work, even if it overturns the world from scratch, will not redeem us. But work – undertaken out of love for God – wins God and heaven for us.”⁵⁸ Thus, the Divine Mercy, which is finally revealed on the cross, allows the sinner to live anew in the supernatural realm perspective – even though he did not deserve it. Moreover, the message of mercy gives man hope against all hope (Rom 4:18).

The question remains, however, how does God’s mercy interact with His justice? How does His “wrath of God” coexist with God’s love? In the Letters of St. Paul, we read that, “God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath” (Rom 5:8–9).

In this biblical light, then, one can easily understand why the cross of Jesus Christ is the final revelation not only of God’s holiness but also of the fullness of justice and love since justice is based on love. In other words, in the passion and death of Christ – that is, in the fact that the Father did not spare his own Son, but “made him a sin for us” – absolute justice is expressed because Christ passes through His passion and cross because of the sins of humanity. It is even an “excess” of justice because human sins are “atoned” by the sacrifice of the God-Man. In this sense, God’s justice is excessive or disproportionate because justice serves mercy and God’s mercy is beyond measure, which is another way of relating to the immensity of God’s grace.⁵⁹

“Just as all creation is turned to its Creator, so also the spiritual creature must turn its life to God voluntarily – the First Truth and the Highest Good. Thus, the growth of the individual is a summary of our responsibilities. Moreover, this harmony of nature, enriched by personal and responsible effort, is called to go above and beyond. By being grafted onto Christ, the Redeemer, a man begins a new

⁵⁸ S. Wyszynski, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, 356.

⁵⁹ Cf. S.J. Stasiak, “Sprawiedliwość Boża,” 269–289.

flowering process, joins a certain transcendent humanism that brings him the highest fullness: this is the highest goal of personal development, from which no man is exempt.”⁶⁰

6. Towards the Mystery of Redemption

The redemptive work of Christ not only brings justice to a person contaminated by original sin and living in the space of sinful social structures but also – through the creative and saving power of God’s love – restores the creative ability to the human person, thanks to which he has again access to the fullness of life and holiness that comes from God. Thus, redemption entails the revelation of mercy in all its fullness. Put simply, the Cross of Christ not only gives God full justice. It is also a revelation of merciful love – the revelation of a love that opposes the source of evil in human history: sin and death.

In terms of involvement in earthly life, the transcendence towards Absolute Love and Justice, expressed through building the “common good” and community of goods, acquires not only a social but also a historical character. Through involvement in the earthly life, a man transcends the boundaries of his temporal, limited existence, reaching entire generations. Therefore, the fruits of human activity last in specific effects and whole processes of consequences, creating the history of civilization’s progress and development.⁶¹

However, the ultimate meaning and most significant value of human creative activity are achieved in the human person himself. “Man is a weird and wonderful being. Although based on the earth, but directing his efforts towards heaven, a person’s actions and purpose connect earth with heaven.”⁶² For this reason, the life and action of Christians are always carried out in the conviction that they are in an eschatic reality. Although human creative activity is not the usual process of continuing temporal action into an eternal one, it does

⁶⁰ S. Wyszyński, “Rodzina–Naród–społeczeństwo,” 690.

⁶¹ Cf. S. Wyszyński, “Budowanie Wrocławia,” 109–117.

⁶² S. Wyszyński, “Kształtowanie kultury,” 438.

seem to be the basis for bearing everlasting fruit from a supernatural perspective.⁶³

Appealing to love, integrally bound with charity, mercy, and social justice, allows us to maintain the genuinely universalistic and personalist character of human “temporal” activity. The form of Christian commitment understood in this way also becomes an essential dimension of evangelization, which always remains the proclamation of the message of love and justice. Highlighting the human person’s subjectivity and promoting it at the same time throughout social life allows us to create a socio-political action program that, by opposing all forms of totalitarian domination, will allow for the elimination of significant social differences and the resolution of existing conflicts.⁶⁴

However, this requires “restoring the truth” about man, which, seen in the light of the Christian creative and salvific vision, can lead to full liberation: the true freedom and faithfulness of God’s children (cf. Gal 5:1). According to Cardinal Wyszyński: “[...] contemporary aspirations to find the right language between people in love and peace arise from the fact that humanity in its development, through terrible experiences, defeats, torments, pains, disappointments, and catastrophes, has reached one belief, that the salvation of the human family is an even greater love of the truth so that we can do the truth in love, an even greater love of the freedom of God’s sons, which we want to respect in ourselves and others, and an even deeper understanding of love, expressed even without words, without declarations, but with deeds.”⁶⁵

In other words, the temporal dimension of human life and existence as a means for modern man to satisfy his needs and secure his proper dignity also become the fundamental way of fulfillment, both in the natural and supernatural dimensions. Thus, from a personalist perspective, earthly life involvement confirms the full and authentic

⁶³ Cf. S. Wyszyński, “In principio,” 56–68.

⁶⁴ As Cardinal Wyszyński emphasizes: “Christ constantly reminds us that justice is not enough, even if the greatest, we need even greater than all – love. One goes to true peace through justice married with love” (“Chrystusowa odnowa społeczeństwa,” 475).

⁶⁵ S. Wyszyński, “Aby byli jedno,” 273.

extent of human transcendence. It allows man to look at his life as a gift of God that transcends the limitations of mortality. Therefore, the world cannot obscure God Himself from man, nor can it stand in the way of his comprehensive self-development or self-realization.

Nevertheless, the theological-dogmatic reflection on God's love, mercy, and social justice invariably turns into a heated discussion in the context of eschatology. Nowadays, eschatology, which emphasizes the role of God's mercy, is utterly different from the vision of retribution and equalization that prevailed in the traditional sense. Emphasizing God's mercy in eschatological matters allows people to look to the future with hope and optimism. Expectation and anticipation of meeting a just and merciful God in the perspective of "a new heaven and a new earth" should dynamize the entire earthly existence of man. Although the world carries a specific risk for fulfilling the Christian vocation, it also becomes a unique challenge for, as Wyszyński emphasizes, "*Ex Deo nati*: those who are born of God!" (Jn 1:13).⁶⁶

Conclusions

The analysis of the problem of Christian activity in the socio-economic dimension, presented in the teaching of Cardinal Wyszyński, places his innovative reflection in the plane of the theology of earthly reality. Therefore, involvement in the economy becomes a fundamental dimension of human relations with the world, expressed in the mutual process of co-shaping both the human person and the earthly reality, the environment of his life and development. Presenting this reality in God's perspective, the Creator and Savior, allows us to look at this aspect of human activity as an essential dimension of the human vocation, revealed in the reality of the existing world.

Rooting the presented reflection primarily in biblical revelation and Catholic social doctrine – supported by the knowledge of other scientific fields, as well as a right orientation in the historical, socio-economic, and political transformations of that time – creates an original concept showing the socio-economic dimension of human

⁶⁶ S. Wyszyński, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość społeczna*, 52.

involvement in the perspective of God's economy of salvation. This is important, especially in the context of the country's specific socio-political situation, dominated by Marxist ideology which, by promoting an apparent cult of work and progress as the supreme goal, degrades all other human dimensions and activities and, ultimately, man himself.

The personalist concept of involvement in the economy, presented by Cardinal Wyszyński, reveals human socio-economic activity from the perspective of the mystery of God, the Church, and salvific events. Therefore, man, by cooperating in the work of creation, participates in the innovative mystery of God, additionally confirmed by Jesus Christ, who manifests Himself in the Church. Thus, man's creative socio-economic activity becomes the plane of his meeting with the person of the Creator and Savior.

The earthly reality level finally becomes the point where man's personal world meets the world of matter. Hence, all the products of economic activity are not treated only in terms of marketing but are a revelation of the human person in material reality. Through creative activity understood in this way, man defines his personality, revealing the truth about himself. The personalist outline of Cardinal Wyszyński's teaching, emphasizing the vital dimension of human involvement in earthly life, is understood primarily in terms of a personal vocation that each human being is endowed with. Its implementation becomes the essential task of every human being, which is of fundamental importance both in the natural and supernatural dimensions.

Miłość, miłosierdzie i sprawiedliwość społeczna w kontekście personalistycznej koncepcji życia społecznego Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego

Abstrakt: Przedmiotem niniejszego artykułu jest ukazanie miłości, miłosierdzia i sprawiedliwości społecznej z perspektywy personalizmu chrześcijańskiego prezentowanego przez Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego. Dokonana przez autora interpretacja materiałów źródłowych ma na celu ukazanie powyższych wartości jako fundamentalnych cnót chrześcijańskich o charakterze komplementarnym, kształtujących dobro osoby ludzkiej – zarówno w wymiarze indywidualnym, jak też społecznym. W rozumieniu personalistyczno-prakseologicznym, tak miłość, miłosierdzie, jak i sprawiedliwość społeczna – ujmowane jako postawy oznaczające zobowiązanie

i wierność – kształtowane są przede wszystkim w przestrzeni chrześcijańskiej rzeczywistości życia codziennego, zwłaszcza w wymiarze rodziny i narodu. Autor artykułu stawia pytanie, czy aretologia personalistycznej koncepcji Kardynała Wyszyńskiego może być aplikowana do konkretnych realiów współczesnej rzeczywistości życia społecznego? Odpowiedź na tak postawione kwestie jest niezwykle istotna, zwłaszcza w kontekście głoszonego obecnie „pluralizmu ideowego” charakterystycznego dla współczesnej kultury postmodernistycznej podkreślającej moralną ambiwalentność „płynnej” ponowoczesności.

Słowa kluczowe: miłość, miłosierdzie, sprawiedliwość społeczna, personalizm, postmodernizm, Kardynał Stefan Wyszyński

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