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MAN IN THE “SPLENDOUR OF DIVINITY.”  
THE HAGIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION  
OF “SPOUSAL LOVE” IN LINE WITH JOHN PAUL II’S  
THEOLOGY OF THE BODY

The article presents the theological interpretation of the phenomenon of spousal love in terms of examining its correlations with the call to holiness. This study belongs to the field of hagiological research aiming at developing a new concept that defines arguments in the Church’s strategy concerning the defence of every human life. The analysis concerns the statements and philosophical writings of Karol Wojtyła and then John Paul II on spousal love and the dependence of the person and his actions on the Truth and Good. The Christological-soteriological aspect of spousal love as conditioning the sanctification of the person has been indicated. The axiological conditions related to the Christological assumption have been termed as “the Splendour of Divinity,” identifying it with the space of the salvific influence on a person, sanctified by Christ’s spousal love and called to develop an ethos based on this love.

The phenomenon of “spousal love” is experienced in human life. It was John Paul II who initiated this theme during his Wednesday audiences held from September 1979 till November 1984 under the title “The theology of marriage and theology of the body.” The pope discussed various aspects of spousal love. First of all, he related spousal love to the theology of the body, the spousal meaning of the body and God’s love for man in Jesus Christ – his life and work (actions), crowned with the *Ecclesia*. John Paul II presented the human experience of spousal love as a source referring to the salvific mission of Jesus, realised on the foundation of

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divine love. The purpose of this study is to determine the hagiological content of John Paul II's concept of spousal love. How should spousal love be perceived in the perspective of the Christian ethos whose main feature is sanctity? The answer to this question will provide arguments to develop and strengthen the strategy of defending human life, the sanctity of which has many a time been confirmed by Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis. The theological analysis of John Paul II's statements referring to personalistic anthropology conducted as part of my hagiological research has allowed me to put forward a thesis that spousal love is God's presence among people, analogous to the radiation that embraces and penetrates the creation.

Being inspired by the main message of John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, the hagiological context of spousal love can be called the "Splendour of Divinity," in which man, having received the grace of salvation, lives and performs actions. This study undertakes a discussion on this thesis in the context of hagiological research. The first two points lead to a synthesis of the results of the analysis of the sources. Firstly, the justification of raising the issue of the "Splendour of Divinity" referring to the Splendour of Truth will be explained along with the aspects of the papal teaching appropriate to the subject of "redemptive love." The next points contain a synthesis of the information obtained from the analysis of the sources, including the answer to the question about the Christian call to holiness. Following John Paul II's thought, two aspects of spousal love will be discussed: Christological and ecclesiological, with reference to the Karol Wojtyła's personalistic anthropology as the basis for conclusions having a hagiological value.

## WHY "SPLENDOUR OF DIVINITY"?

John Paul II uses the analogy to splendour-light sketching the anthropological-personalistic structure of moral teaching documented in the encyclical on some problems of the Church's moral teaching beginning with *Veritatis Splendor* – the Splendour of Truth.<sup>1</sup> This Splendour shines in Christ – his person and act – revealing the heights of God's Love.<sup>2</sup> Man sees the harmony between the created reality and the uncreated reality in the light coming from God, i.e. in the splendour of the Absolute Truth.<sup>3</sup> Assuming the Splendour of Truth as presented by John Paul II in the theological interpretation of man's experience of faith has allowed

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<sup>1</sup> The analogy to splendour can be seen in the literary output of Karol Wojtyła, in his drama *Promienowanie ojcostwa* [Radiation of Fatherhood].

<sup>2</sup> John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (6 August 1993), 2, Vatican 1993 [further: VS].

<sup>3</sup> VS, 2.

me to discern the further horizon leading to discovering the sense of the human person and his/her actions as the “echo of a call from God” received in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

The reflection on the analogy to the Splendour of Truth made by John Paul II leads to formulating the concept of the term “Splendour of the Good.”<sup>5</sup> Only God is the Good,<sup>6</sup> while man accepting God’s call functions, acts and works in accordance with what the Splendour of Truth reflects.<sup>7</sup> John Paul II closely combines Truth and Good, as if in a divine stream embracing human reality. Following John Paul II’s understanding of what the Splendour of Truth is, and by analogy of the Splendour of the Good, allows me to generate a new concept the “Splendour of Divinity” from the papal theology of the body and teaching about spousal love. Although John Paul II did not use this phrase, what comes to our mind while interpreting the issue of spousal love in the hermeneutic key offered in *Veritatis Splendor* is the association of the human experience of spousal love with the “Splendour of Divinity” surrounding and permeating the human person.

## CATECHESIS ON “SPOUSAL LOVE”

The concept of man living in the “Splendour of Divinity” emerges from John Paul II’s concept of spousal love, and the sense of linking these two concepts begins in the Pope’s commentary on the biblical narratives of creation.<sup>8</sup> In the first description (Elohist), we are talking about mankind created in the image and likeness of God as male and female (cf. Gen 1:27-28). In the second description (Yahwist), man is depicted as experiencing solitude and as one who only in the unity between man and woman experiences satisfaction and joy. According to the papal narrative, only another human beings – their presence, closeness and recognising as person

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<sup>4</sup> VS, 7.

<sup>5</sup> K. Parzych-Blakiewicz, M.A. Kopiec, *Conscience in the light of the Truth and the light of the Good in the context of the necessary correlation of religious studies and natural sciences*, “Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne” 34 (2019), pp. 75–76. [DOI: 10.14746/pst.2019.34.05]. The conception of the “Splendour of Good” has been developed in the teaching of Benedict XVI and Francis, see: K. Parzych-Blakiewicz, M.A. Kopiec, “*Sumienie eklezjalne*” w blasku Prawdy, *Dobra i zbawienia*, “Teologia w Polsce” 12 (2018) 2, pp. 143–159.

<sup>6</sup> VS, 12.

<sup>7</sup> K. Parzych-Blakiewicz, M.A. Kopiec, *Conscience in the light...*, pp. 75–76.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, [Catecheses given during general audiences] [further.: Catecheses]: 7 November 1979, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19791107.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19791107.html), 14 November 1979 <[http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19791114.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19791114.html), 21 November 1979, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19791121.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19791121.html).

not living beings (animalia) – gives man a sense fulfilment in the community.<sup>9</sup> According to Wojtyła, this experience of recognition results from love – love gives “recognition”<sup>10</sup>; love is as if God’s ray without which the biblical Adam would not recognise the proper sense of the female’s being and existence.<sup>11</sup> Love, according to Karol Wojtyła and later John Paul II is a peculiar splendour illuminating the personal horizon. In this splendour, human begins to recognise the truth about himself, about God, about other people and things. Being loved by God – who is Love (cf. 1 Jn 4:8), and whom Christ reveals – man is able to recognise the sense of all the things around: people, things and events – the whole history of mankind.<sup>12</sup>

Saint John Paul II calls “spousal love” the love that Jesus embraces the Church and the love he teaches by his words and deeds.<sup>13</sup> He compares it to the love depicted in the Song of Songs and the Book of Tobit.<sup>14</sup> The Song of Songs allows him to teach on the desire to be with a beloved person until forgetting himself. The Book of Tobit leads him to indicate the decision of his total personal self-giving, expressed by the decision to share a life together. By embedding spousal love on these two assumptions: the desire of another person and the attitude of pro-existence for her,<sup>15</sup> in his catechesis John Paul II reveals the power of love, which has the power to redefine human life. Spousal love – on account of its connection with the dynamics of the gift, to which John Paul II points – frees a person interiorly from the constraint of his/her own bodies.<sup>16</sup>

John Paul II does not limit spousal love only to marital relations – they are admittedly classic, but it is about the personal condition of a particular person, which is revealed in the act of sacrifice and total self-giving. Following the course of thinking set by the Saint Pope, we note that the salvific sacrifice of Christ is the

<sup>9</sup> Cf. K. Korobczenko, *Problem aktualizacji oblubieńczego sensu ciała w teologii ciała Jana Pawła II*, “Forum Teologiczne” 10 (2009), pp. 115–133.

<sup>10</sup> See: K. Wojtyła, *Pieśń o Bogu ukrytym*, in: id., *Poezje i dramaty*, Kraków 1979, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup> The original thought of Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II) penetrates all kinds of statements uttered by the Great Pole, i.e., scientific works, teachings and literary works, which has been proven in the doctoral dissertation of Fr Tomasz Bondzio, entitled *Wiara i życie. Teologiczno-egzystencjalna interpretacja doświadczenia religijnego w dziele Karola Wojtyły*, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, Lublin 2020 [typescript].

<sup>12</sup> Cf. VS, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Catecheses: 4 July 1984, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1984/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19840704.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19840704.html)

<sup>14</sup> Catecheses: 23 May 1984, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1984/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19840523.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19840523.html).

<sup>15</sup> GSan, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Catecheses: 16 January 1980, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1980/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19800116.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1980/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19800116.html).

paradigm of the human act having a pro-existential value.<sup>17</sup> In the Pope’s teaching, the Christian marriage is portrayed as a reality indicating a transcendent dimension.<sup>18</sup> This view allows us to see a universal message about the power of spousal love, which reveals itself in the fulfilment of Christ’s work of salvation in the human person.<sup>19</sup> The love of the Messiah – the Saviour – touches the creation with power that saves and transforms the person. It affects man’s existence generating an ontic change that brings about the *rebirth* (cf. Jn 3:5). It transforms the human existence, giving it a horizon that shows the perspective of living with God and in God, i.e. living in the splendour of Truth and Good.<sup>20</sup>

John Paul II’s catecheses on spousal love are filled with concern about forming believers, especially young ones, in the image of Jesus Christ – his person and deeds – meaning the whole work that socially defines Jesus including the personalistic foundation of the Ecclesia.

According to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, ecclesiality defines the universal call to holiness,<sup>21</sup> combining three aspects in the call: the soteriological activity of the Church, the anthropological condition of human sin and the eschatological creation and history. In the papal catechesis the concept of spousal love and concepts directly related to it (the theology of the body, the spousal sense of the body) are presented as specific tools that direct young people and mature spouses to form an ethos of marital love, in accordance with the requirements of God’s law and human possibilities. Well-functioning marriages are the support and anchor of life in society. The papal catechesis straightforwardly refers to individual life, but in a broader perspective it has a social sense: the ecclesial one and the secular one that results from it, developed in the papal concept of the “civilisation of love” and the “culture of love.”<sup>22</sup> For this reason, one should

<sup>17</sup> Catecheses: 13 January 1982, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19820113.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19820113.html).

<sup>18</sup> See: R. Martin, *Sakrament małżeństwa świętą więzią miłości*, trans. P. Kawalec, in: Jan Paweł II, *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Sakrament. O Jana Pawła II teologii ciała*, ed. T. Styczeń, Lublin 1999, p. 289; K. Lubowicki, *Duchowość małżeńska w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II*, Kraków 2005, p. 29ff.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. GSane, 5, 22.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. K. Parzych-Blakiewicz, M.A. Kopiec, “*Sumienie eklezjalne*”..., pp. 150, 156–157.

<sup>21</sup> *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium*, 39–42, [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Letter to families Gratissimam sane* (2 February 1994), 13, in: The Holy See [online], access: 10.01.2020, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_let\\_02021994\\_families.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_02021994_families.html) [further: GSane]: “[...] the family is the centre and the heart of the civilization of love.” See: Z. Gleaser, “*Rodzina centrum i sercem cywilizacji miłości*”. *Jana Pawła II przesłanie do rodzin i o rodzinie w kontekście listu do rodzin “Gratissimam sane”*, in: *Matrimonio et Familia. Z problematyki małżeństwa i rodziny*, ed. P. Landwójtowicz, Opole 2016, pp. 53–56.

take into consideration the connection of spousal love according to John Paul II's theology of the body not only with familiology, but also with the social teaching of the Church.

## THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE HUMAN PERSON BY CHRIST'S SPOUSAL LOVE

In the theology of the body, John Paul II portrays Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church. The Pope integrates this aspect into the catechesis on marriage as the sacrament of Redemption, i.e. the fruit of "Christ's spousal love."<sup>23</sup> He describes the Sacrament of Matrimony as the one that assumes Christians into "Christ's spousal charity."<sup>24</sup> Following the teaching of Saint Paul (cf. Eph 5:25f), the Pope shows the similarity between the integration of Christ with the Church and the integration of persons in marital life. It is the interpersonal unity: total, intimate, embracing the whole being and existence, indissoluble.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the most appropriate word that could express the specificity of the act of salvation in the Church through the sacramental service is "love" that is focused on the spousal relationships.<sup>26</sup> Jesus as the Bridegroom "reveals the essence of God and confirms his immense love for mankind."<sup>27</sup> The salvific sense of God's love is most meaningfully illustrated in the Sacrament of Matrimony and consecrated celibacy because of their element of spousal love that predisposes a person to pro-existence.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, Christ's spousal love, as integrating the Divine Person of Christ with the person of the believer and as a redemptive act, should be seen as sanctifying the members of the Church.<sup>29</sup>

The direction set out John Paul II's catechesis indicates that Jesus' spousal love is directed to the Church, linking all members with a kind of mysterious bond. In the ecclesial community, the baptized man becomes the mediator of God's Love

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<sup>23</sup> The sacraments of the Church are fruits of Christ's spousal love, including marriage – see Catecheses:13 October1982, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19821013.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19821013.html).

<sup>24</sup> FC, 13,51.

<sup>25</sup> FC, 20; GSane, 19.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor hominis* (4 March 1979), 18, Vatican 1979 [Further: RHm].

<sup>27</sup> GSane, 18.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. RHm, 21.

<sup>29</sup> GSane, 19; cf. A. Sarmiento, *Powołanie do świętości i małżeństwa*, in: Jan Paweł II, *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Sakrament. O Jana Pawła II teologii ciała*, ed. T. Styczeń, Lublin 1999, p. 284.

in the Only Mediator – Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup> So spousal love has a Messianic character since it is the love that comes – as if flows – from God through man, firstly through Christ and then through a person anointed by the Holy Spirit, i.e. Christified through the sacraments of the Church. Jesus Christ, because of the hypostatic union harmonised creation with the Father infinite, the Creator uncreated. He enabled the human person to be a mediator of God's Love, i.e., he introduced man to the dynamics, space and splendour of his spousal love. He embraced, filled and reformed or reprogrammed a particular human person to correlate with his person and acts. That is why a Christian is Christified, i.e. a person prepared to fulfil the messianic mission towards the whole world and creation. The Messianic mission, i.e. Christ's mission, is thus to fill the world with the "splendour" of God's love: to practice the "spousal love" of Christ, present in the human act revealing and transmitting the Love of God Himself. The function of an intermediary of God's love puts man in the position of holding the source of God's love, of being directed to others and to the creation. The mediator causes the spread of the "radiation" coming from God; he continues and functions in the "splendour" of Divinity that also embraces others. In the writings of Karol Wojtyła and later of John Paul II, the phrase "Splendour of Divinity" does not occur, instead we can find the phrase "holiness." This phrase, as one of Wojtyła's classic concepts, will help us better understand the meaning of the "Splendour of Divinity" referring to the human existence and Christian ethos, whose fundamental feature is being holy (*hagios*).

John Paul II's vision of man is Christological, which means that man is constituted in the Divine image and likeness according to the Son of God, and oriented to growing mature in this likeness. Perfect humanity is revealed in Jesus Christ – in his person and deeds.<sup>31</sup> Only God is holy, and people have a leaven of holiness as a gift of the Creator, incorporated into the foundations of the human being.<sup>32</sup> Holiness is a gift – a grace; having it one can and should do "something" with it; one should not waste it but should work "somehow" on it. That "somehow" is a variant of the attitude of love that binds people together in a community and

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<sup>30</sup> "[...] Le parole citate mostrano con grande plasticità in che modo il Battesimo attinge il suo significato essenziale e la sua forza sacramentale da quell'amore sponsale del Redentore, attraverso cui si costituisce soprattutto la sacramentalità della Chiesa stessa, "sacramentum magnum." [istotne znaczenie i moc sakramentalną czerpie chrzest z owej obłubieńczej miłości Odkupiciela, poprzez którą konstytuuje się przede wszystkim sakramentalność samego Kościoła: *sacramentum magnum*"] – see Catecheses: 27 October 1982, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19821027.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/audiences/1982/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19821027.html).

<sup>31</sup> RHm, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J. Bajda, *Konsekracja ciała w aspekcie powołania osoby*, in: Jan Paweł II, *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Chrystus odwołuje się do „początku”*. O Jana Pawła II teologii ciała, ed. T. Styczeń, Lublin 2001, p. 188.

expresses itself in the human ethos. Here the focus is on spousal love because it indicates the foundation of the human being, as the inspired author implicitly states it in Gen 1:25–28. John Paul II perceives the holiness of the human person as Christ-like – the human person has no chance to be fulfilled in holiness without Christ and apart from him.<sup>33</sup>

## MATURING IN HOLINESS THROUGH SPOUSAL LOVE

John Paul II's conception of spousal love points to a specific mysticism of marital encounter revealing the spousal sense of the human body. It testifies to the *hagios* conditioning of corporality and marital relations: the sanctifying function of marital relations.<sup>34</sup> The Pope specifically contemplates this holiness as an element that explains that the sanctity of the human body is focused on announcing to the world that Christ's spousal love has been revealed. It is in marital relationships that the *hagios* dimension of human corporeality in its basic, holistic and general sense becomes more noticeable. That is why, according to John Paul II, the spousal sense of the body is also present in the solitude of the consecrated life since in self-offering to God, the spousal value of the love of Christ, who offers himself to the Church in the Eucharist, is visible.<sup>35</sup> The life of solitude on account of the kingdom of God, as being related to a special grace – vocation, confirms the spousal sense of the body, emphatically pointing to the vertical dimension of the dynamics of spousal love. According to John Paul II, spousal love implies a total personal self-giving, which is self-sacrifice; this attitude conditions the final fulfilment.<sup>36</sup>

In order to show the hagiological sense of spousal love in the Pope's theology of the body, one should refer to the key combination of the terms “person and act.”<sup>37</sup> Karol Wojtyła shows that the person is inseparably connected with the process of performing an action and of creating that take place in the conditions arising from the “radiation” of values.<sup>38</sup> According to the personalistic anthropology proposed by Karol Wojtyła, the human person lives in the splendour of absolute Truth and Good.<sup>39</sup> This is revealed in the actions of the person as the fruits of the human ex-

<sup>33</sup> RHm, 7.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. FC, 51, 56, 66.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. John Paul II, *Apostolic exhortation “Vita Consecrata”* (25 March 1996), 59, Vatican 1996.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. M. Pokrywka, *Antropologiczne podstawy moralności małżeństwa i rodziny*, Lublin 2010, p. 192f.

<sup>37</sup> On the basis of the personalistic anthropology of Karol Wojtyła's book *Osoba i czyn* [The Acting Person] (1969).

<sup>38</sup> VS, 40, 41.

<sup>39</sup> K. Parzych-Blakiewicz, M.A. Kopiec, *Conscience in the light...*, p. 76.



istence characterised by subjectivity. The person, according to Cardinal Wojtyła, is a dynamic being, and thus is a living being, and not only an existing being. This concept is most evidently developed in his teaching on the theology of the body. In his subjectivity the human person is conditioned in its materiality – "In this activity the body expresses the person."<sup>40</sup> Accepting the ontic fundamentals of the human person the Pope explains the specific man's similarity to God, exactly in the corporal-spiritual construction.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, two dimensions are essential in spousal love: vertical and horizontal. Love "happens," love touches and transforms the person; love causes that the transcendental dimension permeates the temporal-spatial dimension. The two-dimensionality means the holistic commitment of the person in being for another person – it is "pro-existence" (horizontal dimension), which results in *communio* (based on participation, mutual supportive actions of its members). The God's image and likeness in the human person makes it possible to draw from the divine source: the Absolute Truth and Good. It enables the person to accept his or her calling to perform actions and tasks that express the absolute dimension of values. The dynamics of spousal love causes the human person to mature in the Good and the Truth, towards the paradigm of the perfect humanity of Jesus Christ, until the final fulfilment, i.e. holiness.<sup>42</sup>

All the views – John Paul II's christistic-hagiological vision of the person begins in his philosophical concept of man as an axiologically conditioned person. Man is a person, and the person indicates the category of existence and action. According to Karol Wojtyła's personalistic anthropology, "person" and "act" are inseparable. The status of the person means sensitivity to the absolute values of Truth and Goodness, which are accessible in the dimension of existence exceeding the space-time structures, verifiable by means of measuring tools in laboratories. The person is axiologically conditioned, which means that he or she "must" take a stand on the values: Absolute Truth and Good; the person lives among values – values are the person's world.<sup>43</sup> As a subject, the person expresses himself outside, in his creativity, intentional action, making gestures, creating informative symbols – messages. The person's expression, revealing his attitude to values in the absolute dimension, is "act" – the person expresses himself in actions. Therefore, the "act" is a carrier, an exemplification of values, and at the same time

<sup>40</sup> Catecheses: 31 October 1979, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19791031.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19791031.html).

<sup>41</sup> Catecheses: 14 November 1979, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19791114.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19791114.html); 20 February 1980, [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1980/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_19800220.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1980/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19800220.html).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. FC, 34.

<sup>43</sup> J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, Kraków 1998, p. 109; idem, *Myslenie wedlug wartosci*, Kraków 1982, pp. 407–408.

a testimony of its author's reference to values. Karol Wojtyła explains that actions arise as a result of the person's subjective existence; here the person depends on the absolute Good, which means that the person either recognises it, accepts it and implements it in his actions, or rejects the Good, which will be coded into his actions as well. As a result, we are dealing with good or bad actions. Further, the quality of an action affects the development or degradation of the acting subject, i.e. the person of the author. Each action is related to some intention that means the person's attitude towards values. Therefore, all actions are axiologically verifiable and as such they belong to the moral category.<sup>44</sup>

These philosophical assumptions provide fundamental elements to explain how to understand human holiness. In the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul II states that human life is sacred from its beginning.<sup>45</sup> This sacredness is understood as the value of each person. Jesus Christ shows the value of every person and reveals God's love in his person and actions. In defining holiness in relation to the human person, the Pope points to the uniqueness and limitless of God's love for man.<sup>46</sup> Human holiness is realised in a dialogue with God who calls to "fullness of life" exceeding the dimensions of earthly existence.<sup>47</sup> The call to holiness is unconditionally applicable to every person, from every nation, epoch and culture. It is a possibility for participating personally in the Absolute Fullness, whose preparation stage is temporality. The sanctity of the person is revealed in his ethos. In John Paul II's teaching, there is a motif of corporeality associated with the Incarnation and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The philosophy of Karol Wojtyła points to the correlation between corporeality and the transcendental (non-corporeal) dimension. The action of the human person expresses this relation. On the one hand, actions reveal intentions and axiological choices of the person as a subject, and on the other hand they sustain (or degrade) the person. In other words, actions form a person in the hagiological dimension. In human experience, this dimension is felt as well as created and developed in spousal love, which should be considered here as a category of personal existence in the history of salvation.

## CONCLUSION

Spousal love according to the theology of the body taught by Saint John Paul II directly concerns the sphere of marital life. The Pope draws his attention to the

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<sup>44</sup> See J. Koperek, *La concezione personalistica della coscienza*, Lublin 2009, p. 67ff.

<sup>45</sup> John Paul II, *Encyclical "Evangelium Vitae"* (25 March 1995), 2, 5, Vatican 1995 [further: EV].

<sup>46</sup> Cf. EV, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. EV, 2.

element of the depth of interpersonal ties in the intimacy of relationships and the completeness of mutual self-giving in the attitude of pro-existence encompassing all life. He understands the human experience as a phenomenon in order to explain the theological question of Christ’s spousal love as constituting the essence of God’s saving action. According to John Paul II, the concept of spousal love, the action of Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church, has a salvific sense implemented in the pro-existential attitude, directed towards achieving the highest good by the human person (cf. Jn 3:16).<sup>48</sup> According to the classical approach to theological questions, the subjective state of salvation is identical with the individual state of the sanctity of the human person. In this perspective, Christ’s spousal love – in the thought of John Paul II – is essential for the Christian ethos, which, according to the conciliar concept of the Church, is the realisation of the call to holiness. The fulfilment of this call is the acceptance of God’s grace, which was won for man by the saving action of Jesus Christ, and man’s cooperation with it.

Christ’s spousal love reveals itself as the quintessence of Truth and Good, permeating all the created reality. In the perspective of the papal catechesis on spousal love, the salvific work of Jesus Christ is the penetration of all creation and human being with the Splendour of Truth and Good. Members of the Church, by virtue of their sacramental relationships with Christ, become intermediaries of this saving love. The Sacrament of Matrimony is the ecclesial space in which the fundamental sense of Christ’s spousal love for the Church is revealed, and the consecrated solitude strengthens the message about the theological value of this love.

The hagiological profiling of the concept of spousal love serves the Church (in research and pastoral work) to help the faithful carry out their call to holiness (in accordance with the encouragement of Pope Francis, expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate* promulgated on 10 April 2018). John Paul II’s teaching on man as the human person, constituted in the image of God as male and female, and on the Christification of the human being is a certain educational programme to develop one’s holiness. Assuming John Paul II’s perspective, one cannot think of spousal love without the category of holiness – spousal love belongs to holiness since love exists in the *hagios* dimension.

In the Christian ethos, whose main feature is holiness, spousal love appears as a divine light, splendour or radiance that permeates the human person and human reality. This penetration takes place in the ecclesial space where Jesus as the Church’s Bridegroom – his person and actions – saving people by his most perfect love is the foundation of the Ecclesia, dynamising the ecclesial re-

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. RHm, 8.

relationships (ad intra and ad extra), based on love, generating the pro-existential, soteriologically oriented, Christian attitudes. Christ's spousal love predisposes a Christian to become a mediator of salvation in the Mediator, and this mediation becomes effective through the Christian ethos, comprising two dimensions of interpersonal relations: vertical and horizontal. A Christian matures in this ethos reaching holiness in the vertical dimension and mediating in Christ's spousal love through his personal attitude of love, aiming at becoming a complete gift in pro-existence.

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**Keywords:** spousal love, theology of the body, sanctity, Truth, Good

## CZŁOWIEK W „BLASKU BÓSTWA”. HAGIOLOGICZNA INTERPRETACJA „MIŁOŚCI OBLUBIEŃCZEJ” WEDŁUG JANA PAWŁA II TEOLOGII CIAŁA

### Streszczenie

W artykule przedstawiono teologiczną interpretację fenomenu miłości oblubieńczej pod kątem zbadania korelacji z tematyką dotyczącą powołania do świętości. Opracowanie należy do obszaru badań hagiologicznych, którego celem jest przedstawienie argumentu w kościelnej strategii obrony życia ludzkiego. Analizie poddano wypowiedzi papieskie i pisma filozoficzne Jana Pawła II/ Karola Wojtyły na temat miłości oblubieńczej oraz zależności osoby i czynu od Prawdy i Dobra. Wskazano na chrystologiczno-soteriologiczny aspekt miłości oblubieńczej jako warunkujący uświęcenie osoby. Uwarunkowania aksjologiczne powiązane z założeniem chrystologicznym nazwano Blaskiem Bóstwa, utożsamiając to z przestrzenią oddziaływania zbawczego na człowieka, który zostaje uświęcony miłością oblubieńczą Chrystusa i powołany do rozwijania etosu opartego na tej miłości..

**Słowa kluczowe:** miłość oblubieńcza, teologia ciała, świętość, Prawda, Dobro