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Review: Father Czesław Parzyszek SAC *Znaczenie nowej ewangelizacji dla odnowy współczesnego świata* (Importance of New Evangelization for the Renewal of the Modern World), Apostolicum, Ząbki 2012, pp. 381

The evangelical teaching of the Church is a work undertaken in response to the indication of Jesus Christ Himself before the Ascension: “Go out and teach, then, all nations” (Mt 28:19). “Make disciples to yourselves,” Jesus of Nazareth asked. The proclamation of the Gospel message fulfils the fundamental duty of evangelization, both for yourselves, others, and the world. Indeed, the same Gospel fits within it, but it is continuously addressed to new listeners, under new circumstances, and often in new places, using new tools, techniques and methods. These characteristics seem to exhaust the concept of the new evangelization.

The issue of the new evangelization is particularly relevant in the contemporary teaching of the Church, especially since the time of John Paul II. Pope Benedict XVI even established the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization, separating it as a body completely independent from other Vatican dicasteries. Pope Francis upheld these changes. Together with the ministry of all three Popes, it became more clearly interested in substantive issues and took on a form of seeking practical solutions. It is also more widely present in the official teaching of the Church. The presented study is part of this trend and constitutes yet another reflection on the new evangelization, its signs and pastoral message.

The author of the presented book is a professor at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw and the Higher Seminary in Ołtarzew. He is a Pallottine and an outstanding expert on the issues of the new evangelization and the theology of apostolate. He is the author of many articles, sketches and elaborations, as well as several books. These include, among others *Nowa*

ewangelizacja – drogą Kościoła do nadziei. Refleksje w oparciu o nauczanie Jana Pawła II (New Evangelization – the way of the Church to hope. Reflections based on the teaching of John Paul II) (Ząbki 2010), *Życie konsekrowane w posoborowym nauczaniu Kościoła* (Consecrated Life in the Post-Council teaching of the Church) (Ząbki 2007), *The New Evangelization as a Remedy for Dechristianization* (Warsaw 2012), *Nauka Wincentego Pallottiego o apostołstwie świeckich w świetle konstytucji Soboru Watykańskiego Drugiego “Lumen Gentium” i dekretu “Apostolicam Actuositatem”* (The Doctrine of Vincent Pallotti on the Apostolate of the Laity in the light of the Constitution of the Second Vatican Council “Lumen Gentium” and the decree “Apostolicam Actuositatem”) (Lublin 1970). It is worth noting that the presented book was published as the 14th volume in the well-known series “Biblioteka Instytutu Teologii Apostolatu” (Library of the Institute of Apostolate Theology) (Warsaw–Ołtarzew).

The book opens with the table of contents (pp. 5–7) and the list of abbreviations (pp. 9–12). In turn, the whole is divided into eight chapters, and these into two or three subsections.

The first chapter is entitled *Przemiany we współczesnym świecie* (Transformations in the Modern World) (pp. 23–61). It presents a complex picture of the contemporary world and the urgent need for its renewal. The essential elements of the new evangelization are the subject of the next chapter of Fr. Parzyszek’s study (pp. 62–95). First, this is a question about the path towards the concept of the new evangelization, which also has theological foundations. Finally, the questions concern the goal of the new evangelization.

The next chapter focuses on *Możliwości urzeczywistnienia nowej ewangelizacji* (Possibility to realise the new evangelization) (pp. 96–130). The author rightly asks about the subject of the new evangelization to indicate how its works can be accomplished. It is obvious that the conditions and means of this realization are also crucial. Fr. Parzyszek addresses *Kierunki nowej ewangelizacji dla odnowy świata* (Directions of the new evangelization for the renewal of the world) in the next part of his study (pp. 131–169). It is the fundamental truth of the new man in Christ that is essential. Only after having learned about it can we speak about a new society. The author also points to the building of a civilization of love.

The fifth chapter, as the title indicates, presents *Podstawowe “areopagi” nowej ewangelizacji* (Basic “areopagi” of the new evangelization) (pp. 170–259). Family, youth, education, professional work, culture, media, Internet, social and political life, ecumenism, migration, religious movements and communities, schools of the new evangelization, and parish are – in the order proposed by the author – the primary places for the realization of the new evangelization.

Maryja – Gwiazda nowej ewangelizacji (Mary – Star of the New Evangelization) is another chapter of the study by the Pallottine researcher (pp. 260–280). The author points first to the relationship between Mary and the Word of God, and then with the Holy Spirit. *Maryja a wspólnota Kościoła* (Mary and the community of the Church) are another Mariological issue.

The seventh chapter is quite specific, and to some extent, it reflects its title: *Lineamenta – dokument przygotowawczy Synodu Biskupów ds. nowej ewangelizacji* (Lineamenta – the preparatory document of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization) (pp. 281–300). Following this document, Fr. Parzyszek proposes to indicate the following detailed issues:

- the fundamental goal of the Synod;
- *Times of the New Evangelization*;
- *Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ*;
- *Introduction to the Christian experience*.

The last chapter of the study is entitled: *Nowe dokumenty dotyczące dzieła nowej ewangelizacji* (New documents concerning the work of the new evangelization) (pp. 301–317). The author recalls *Porta Fidei – podwoje wiary* (Porta Fidei – the door of faith) by Benedict XVI and the Note of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with pastoral guidelines for the Year of Faith.

The book closes with the conclusion (pp. 318–327). Apart from the Scriptures, the bibliography is divided into the following parts: documents of the universal Church, papal teaching, documents of the Holy See, and literature on the subject (pp. 328–366). In alphabetical order, Papal teaching includes Benedict XVI, John XXIII, John Paul II, and Paul VI. A summary in English (pp. 367–369), Italian (pp. 370–372), German (pp. 373–375), French (pp. 376–378), and Russian (pp. 379–381) has also been added to the publication. Each of them contains a short introduction and a table of contents previously provided in Polish. This right procedure is becoming increasingly popular in Polish publications, thus allowing for a schematic presentation of the work in question.

The presented work may be a significant contribution to the correct understanding of the new evangelization and the need for its realization to authentically renew the modern world and the community of the God's People of the New Covenant. It seems that this issue still entails numerous insinuations or even ambiguities. The articulated expectations appear even more clearly in the context of the then upcoming XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which was held on the theme of "New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith." An additional advantage was probably also the Year of Faith announced by Benedict XVI on October 11, 2012.

In this context, the author rightly emphasizes that:

The major issue (...) of the dissertation will be the significance of the new evangelization for the renewal of the secularized contemporary world. Its author has been interested in this subject for many years; therefore he decided that there was an urgent need to reach the most profound contents of the new evangelization – strongly emphasized by Blessed John Paul II, and especially Benedict XVI (p. 20).

John Paul II, today a saint, spoke a lot about it almost from the beginning of his pontificate. However, it is Benedict XVI who introduced it into the reality of life and various ministries of the Church. The Holy Father Francis also points to other elements, which are even more intriguing because of their Latin American inspiration. In the presented book, this richness of the popes' prophecy resounds relatively interesting.

It seems that the author has correctly read the essence of the message of the new evangelization and its primary and at the same time, practical orientation. What is essential, he also skillfully systematized its manifestations. Moreover, not only does the proposed content discern the signs of the times, but also it is open to culture and constitutes the correct discernment of the future. The entire cultural thread is vital here, as it is not possible to abstract from the whole environment, a kind of *Sitz im Leben*.

In all his research analyses, the Rev. Prof. Parzyszek aptly and creatively indicates

how the new evangelization fits in with the renewal of the modern world and what efforts must be made to bring this rather desacralized world, which has been given to Christians, closer to Christ so that they may acknowledge Jesus as the Saviour – the only source of hope (p. 22).

It seems that the content and methods of the new evangelization can be particularly useful here. What is only required here is more exceptional creative courage and at the same time openness to the breath of the Holy Spirit.

The attempt at systematizing the “areopagi” of the new evangelization appears interesting. There are many of them, and they are highly diverse. Unfortunately, they are often overlooked or underestimated. It is good that the family, the prime ecclesial and human community, came first. In fact, it can become an instrument of the new evangelization that goes towards other “areopagi” indicated by the Rev. Prof. Parzyszek. Through the family, as a special *communio personarum*, the renewal of the contemporary world can take place.

It is a family that has a creative influence on almost all other spheres of human life, both in the personal and community dimensions.

It is particularly important that the author analyses three essential and at the same time the latest Church documents: *Lineamenta na XIII Zwyczajne Zgromadzenie Ogólne Synodu Biskupów* (Lineamenta for the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops), the apostolic letter *Porta Fidei* proclaiming the Year of Faith and *Nota Kongregacji Nauki Wiary* (Note of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) connected with the aforementioned Year. At the time of editing the book, those were the most recent and leading documents in the presented subject matter. It can be seen, therefore, that Fr. Czesław Parzyszek follows the teaching of the universal Church on an ongoing basis and tries to scientifically analyse, discuss, and effectively bring it closer to a broad audience. The latter mission is worthy of special emphasis and recognition.

Introductions and summaries of individual chapters are a right procedure. That makes it much easier to read individual fragments of the book. Also, the general introduction recalls in an academic form the essential introductory elements, such as the description of the research method or the source database and the dissertation scheme, which deserve a positive assessment.

The rich list of abbreviations may trigger the question of why the Polish abbreviations of the documents of the Second Vatican Council have been abandoned. Unfortunately, bibliography raises much more questions. Reference is made to some items several times (pp. 329, 330, 338, 339). The documents of the Holy See should be systematized according to the precedence of the Congregation and other Vatican offices (pp. 345–346). The Vatican observes the above even with pedantic precision.

What is more, questions are raised by the inclusion of, among others, *Apostolorum successors...*, the document of the Congregation for Bishops (p. 346), *Rapporto finale...* (p. 360), the text *II Polski Synod Plenarny...* (The Second Polish Plenary Synod) (p. 352) or *Pielgrzymka Apostolska...* (Apostolic Pilgrimage) in the literature on the subject (p. 358). As is sometimes the case, the three dictionaries should instead appear in footnotes as sources of terms (p. 362). The abbreviation “KolCom” is described in various ways (pp. 348–349, 357). In many places, no pages were given (p. 347). The alphabetical layout is strange (p. 352). There are also relatively few letter errors (pp. 12, 342, 346, 362).

The footnotes are valuable bibliographical references, but in many places also additions and expanding details. That is a proper methodological and formal procedure. It is a good thing that the author loyally and often points out that his reflection clearly refers to earlier publications or thoughts of other

authors. However, it makes the book a reprint in some parts. Unfortunately, the footnotes also contain inaccuracies or omissions (pp. 61, 213, 274).

Reflection on the renewal of the modern world cannot first omit the renewal of the Church itself, the pilgrim people of God's New Covenant, and the Divine-human community. Unquestionably, it means the consciousness of sinfulness, especially of the people of the Church, both clerics and laypeople, but one cannot solely focus on it. It appears that this thread does not resonate clearly enough. Although the theme of the book seems to be limited to the renewal of the world, at the same time the whole work of the new evangelization in its source touches upon the truth of religious faith, as Benedict XVI indicated even if only by announcing the Year of Faith. Thus, the category of living faith with its traits of trust is becoming a specific key to the whole problem or at least its numerous aspects.

The richness of reflection that Fr. Prof. Dr. hab. Czesław Parzyszek SAC proposed in this study is a continuation of his earlier extensive dissertation *Nowa ewangelizacja – drogą Kościoła do nadziei. Refleksje w oparciu o nauczanie Jana Pawła II* (New Evangelization – the way of the Church to hope. The reflections based on the teaching of John Paul II). Not only does the author capably use its content but he also takes up several new topics, and significantly deepens the existing ones, primarily through a relatively abundant reference to the teaching of the Holy Father Benedict XVI. That is a crucial asset of the presented study.

Reading the book gives the impression that the contemporary offer of the new evangelization is oriented primarily towards Latin culture. Its reference to other continents is poorly visible, while it is where a wide variety of differentiation, including cultural and moral, exists, and other value systems and religions, as well as numerous struggles of faith, mainly personal, individual, apply. In fact, Church's offer still addresses this wide field quite marginally, especially if one were to look for concrete proposals. Sometimes one gets the impression that it lacks the necessary ecclesial courage. The then expected Roman Synod might give new impulses and hopes here. The meeting of the new evangelization with the evangelizing missionary service will be interesting – and it already is.

This publication could have been a good introduction in the Polish religious community to the expected deliberations of the then announced Synod of Bishops in Rome on the new evangelization. It is undoubtedly an interesting material, especially when confronted with the proposed *Lineamenta*. Moreover, the confrontation between the of Fr. Prof. Parzyszek's study and a later synodal *instrumentum laboris*, next a document, probably a post-synodal exhortation that Benedict XVI is likely to publish, is noteworthy. In the reflection on the new evangelization, the presented study is an important and beneficial tool that sets out significant perspectives.