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Review

Orečný Stanislav, 2022, *Zakorenení v Božom Slove, premenení Duchom Svätým / Rooted in the Divine Word, transformed by the Holy Spirit*, Monografia, Dobrá kniha, Trnava, 291 p.
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The individual history of human sanctification, insights into the spirituality of various religious societies according to their own charisma, spiritual movements, as well as spiritual life itself are without a doubt the topics that are not only interesting and important for theologians, religionists or consecrated persons. This is precisely why, despite the fact that I am a lay person, the newly published publication of Stanislav Orečný, a Slovak verbist working in pastoral and academic missions in the Philippines, caught my attention. I want to emphasize that the author presented an extremely valuable, very current and deeply grounded work as his contribution to the re-actualization of the spirituality of the Society of the Divine Word (abbrev. SVD), of which he is a member. In this way, he got to know perfectly and is constantly getting to know his spiritual family, especially through its spiritual-theological heritage. He went deep into its sources, where this religious society came from, explaining what theological pillars it stands on, in a highly innovative way.

The presented monograph presents the spirituality of SVD, re-actualizing it for the 21st century. In this way, it “revives” above all the possibilities of its mission in the everyday attitudes of a believer,

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a Catholic, and thus not only consecrated persons. The author provided a systematic discussion of spiritual life, which is inspired by St. Arnold Janssen's model of lived spirituality. These are the solid foundations on which the religious-missionary Society of the Divine Word stands. The work has a theological-theoretical significance, it provides an insight into one of the areas of development of spiritual theology. It sought a way to a spiritual return but also to re-actualization, to the restoration of the healthy roots of SVD spirituality through knowledge of the spiritual life of St. Arnold Janssen. However, the work also crosses the border of purely theoretical knowledge at the level of practical application of the spiritual path of SVD spirituality in its update for our current century. Spiritual life does not exist outside of God's action and is always a grandiose work of man's salvation. This inner movement of God unfolds through the history of a particular person, but it is also related to the needs and history of the world as such. The Society of the Divine Word is one of the younger religious communities within the Catholic Church (it was founded on September 8, 1875). The charisma and spirituality of its founder, St. Arnold Janssen (1837-1909) stands on three theological pillars, which he developed and deepened from the beginning of its foundation - (1) The mystery of the Holy Trinity, (2) The incarnate Word of God and (3) the action of the Holy Spirit. With these integrating cornerstones of one's own spirituality, SVD in the Catholic Church is distinguished from other spiritualities and spiritual movements. For example, Benedictine, Carmelite, Franciscan, Dominican, and Vincentian spirituality are also known, but each of them stands on its own principles and presents a different, diverse nature of God's gift. For example, with Jesuit spiritual teachings, or Ignatian spirituality, we associate and denote the spirituality of the heart, as was characterized already in the Middle Ages by the Jesuit Louis Lallemant (1588-1635). Salesian spirituality, on the other hand, emphasizes the elements - the spirituality of reason, piety and kindness - which is also a set of methods used in the education of young people. And in a similar way, we could compare the diversity of the Spirit's inspirations in other spiritualities as well.

The enormous gift of God's grace has one more important characteristic dimension in SVD spirituality - missionary. Verbist's spirituality is essentially missionary, it develops the proclamation of the faith and is a tool for its spread. The mission of the SVD is not confined within the theology of the religious community, but is intended for the whole world. The missionary mission presupposes the depth of the missionary's spiritual life, built on prayer, walking in the

light of God's incarnate Word and being guided by the Holy Spirit. Verbist's spirituality is thus given as a gift to a world that does not yet know Christ and needs the active proclamation of the kerygma. A good missionary and preacher of the faith is above all a just person who lives from his faith, from his deep relationship with God. He proclaims his faith mainly through the testimony of his own life in expressions of love. That is why the mentioned three pillars of the spirituality of the SVD missionaries are so essential. The new monographic publication of S. Orečný helps to complete the mosaic of knowledge of spirituality from the perspective of the founder's life and the entire SVD. It also deals with its re-actualization for our 21st century, thereby determining its important role towards the present. The structure of the content of the monograph corresponds to this intention of the author.

The first chapter presents **Integral view of the founder and the foundation and development of SVD up to the present day**. Through Arnold Janssen's biographical-spiritual profile, deep spiritual impulses, essential circumstances of life situations were captured, which inspired the founder on his own path of spiritual growth and prayer life, but later also led him to the founding of the SVD religious-missionary congregation. Spirituality and the birth of Arnold's spirituality is mainly attributed to the influence of the relationships already experienced in his family. It is perhaps just a usual remark in the biographies of saints, but in his case, S. Orečný looked in more detail at the individual elements of the influence of the family environment and the way of experiencing the closest relationships in the family. We must see that it is there that the strongest roots and beginnings of the overall spiritual direction of Arnold are. The author succinctly evaluates the influence of the family here: "The stage of birth and growth of the founder's spirituality points out that the root of his spirituality based on a deep and intimate relationship with God has its origin in his family, where he got a clear idea of how to live with God and how to serve him. During his studies, he deepened it even more through prayer, sacramental life, self-discipline and sensitivity to good Christian formation, especially to setting a good example through the testimony of his own life"² (Orečný,

² Citation in original language (Slovak): „Etapa zrodenia a rastu zakladateľovej spirituality poukazuje na to, že koreň jeho duchovnosti založenej na hlbokom a dôvernom vzťahu s Bohom má svoj pôvod v jeho rodine, kde dostal jasnú predstavu o tom, ako žiť s Bohom a ako mu slúžiť. Počas štúdia ju ešte viac prehĺbil modlitbou, sviatostným životom, sebadisciplínou a citlivosťou na dobrú kresťanskú formáciu, predovšetkým na dávanie dobrého príkladu svedectvom vlastného života“ (Orečný, 2022, p. 34).

2022, p. 34). This is how Arnold's persistently faithful and tenacious nature was formed, his pure character shaped by a life of prayer in firm trust in God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The personal spirituality of the founder later proved itself very well in overcoming many difficulties in the creation and approval of the SVD, in setting up its organization and managing its missionary activity. The current functioning, future life and further vision of the Society of the Divine Word in the 21st century are determined by the last general chapters, which are unsurpassed tools for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the integral renewal of the SVD. Four general chapters (abbrev. GC) with different focus are analysed in detail: GC in 2000 dealt with the topic of „prophetic dialogue“. In 2006, GC continued this theme as a „chapter on prophetic dialogue in the religious life of the SVD“. GC in 2012 opened the question of „interculturality“ in terms of its development. The last chapter was held in 2018 and was titled „chapter on spiritual rootedness“. It can be said that this chapter concentrated the most on the issue of verbistic spirituality. It established its starting points, which will also be authoritative for visions in the re-actualization of spirituality throughout the SVD.

The second chapter of the presented monograph is devoted to **Anchoring in the mystery of the Holy Trinity** from the point of view of Arnold Janssen's spirituality and also its re-actualization in SVD. From this starting point, the text of the thesis also historically evaluates the trinitarian accents contained in the SVD *Constitutions*. Trinitarian accents were examined according to how they were during the founder's life, then how the Trinitarian spirituality of SVD looked in the post-conciliar era, and finally how and what is emphasized in the current *Constitutions* (1983/2012). Not only the general principles of SVD's trinitarian spirituality are described here, but current challenges for the present are formulated according to P. McHugh's interpretation or they are specifically presented on the example of the founder's trinitarian prayers used until today. This is also an example of the concretization of the renewal of the trinitarian-spiritual dimension in the vision of the Society of the Word of God in the 21st century. The author summarizes it as follows: „Based on the analysis of P. McHugh's perception of the trinitarian spirituality of the Society, we can deduce that the author places the strongest emphasis precisely on deepening the trinitarian prayer in the spirit of the founder. The personal relationship to the triune God developed according to the founder's testimony in personal and communal spiritual life was and should remain a fundamental element of trinitarian spirituality. The creation

of authentic communities and the promotion of human dignity in the dimension of the trinitarian mystery also draw from this foundation"³ (Orečný, 2022, p. 126).

In the third chapter of the publication, entitled **Rooted in the Word of God**, the author presents the re-actualization of verbistic spirituality in relation to the Divine Word, again returning to the view of the relationship of the founder to the Divine Word, but also how Jesus Christ is understood as the Divine Word in the *Constitutions* and post-conciliar writings. Arnold's relationship to the Divine Word has a strong trinitarian foundation. The incarnate Word of God – Jesus Christ is the self-expression of the Holy Trinity. The chapter of the book interprets in detail the relationship of the founder of the SVD to the Word of God as a divine Person, which is concretely manifested through his respect for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Arnold therefore included respect for the Heart of Jesus among the established forms of piety and prayer, which made him close to all the widespread expressions of popular piety at the time. A part of Arnold's personal spirituality was also a deep respect for the Eucharist, because the Eucharist is also the sacrament of the Divine Word. Eucharistic spirituality has a key position in the spirituality of the Society. His eucharistic spirituality, formed even in the pre-conciliar period, represents a very striking conformity with the eucharistic theology of the later council. One could say that he was „ahead of his time“. It was not until the Second Vatican Council that the importance and position of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and its mission was presented, as Arnold Janssen did in the development of the eucharistic spirituality of the SVD. Such harmony in the eucharistic dimension can also be perceived in the current SVD *Constitutions*. The calls for the renewal of spirituality in the current SVD Society will therefore be a strong appeal for the renewal of the eucharistic dimension in the perspectives of the entire vision of renewal for the 21st century. I consider it extremely valuable to include a set of Arnold's prayers with some kind of instructions for their revival, use, i.e. updating them even in today's conditions of religious life in SVD.

³ Citation in original language (Slovak): „Na základe analýzy P. McHughovho vnímania trinitárnej spirituality Spoločnosti môžeme dedukovať, že autor kladie najsilnejší dôraz práve na prehĺbenie trojičnej modlitby v duchu zakladateľa. Osobný vzťah k trojjedinému Bohu rozvíjaný podľa zakladateľovho svedectva v osobnom a komunitnom duchovnom živote bol a má zostať základným prvkom trojičnej spirituality. Z tohto základu čerpá tiež vytváranie autentických komunít a propagácia ľudskej dôstojnosti v dimenzii trojičného tajomstva“ (Orečný, 2022, p. 126).

The author states very clearly: „Being devoted to the mystery of the Holy Trinity, worshiping and proclaiming this mystery were the heart and centre of the entire spiritual and missionary life of the founder. He also introduced this inner setting to his congregation. This brought unity and clarity to his whole spirituality and that of his Society. Only in understanding this trinitarian-spiritual perspective will we understand incarnational-christological and pneumatological spirituality, that is, spirituality focused on Jesus Christ as the Divine Word and on the Holy Spirit. These two spiritualities of the founder and SVD are a concrete expression of their trinitarian focus”⁴ (Orečný, 2022, p. 133).

The fourth chapter of the monograph is entitled **Transformed by the Holy Spirit**. In it, the author analyses the dimension of re-actualization of the spirituality of the Holy Spirit in SVD. The theological interpretation is based on the understanding of pneumatological spirituality from the point of view of spirituality and the relationship of respect for the Holy Spirit in the life of the founder Arnold Janssen. Pneumatological accents are also explored in the post-conciliar texts of the *Constitutions*. From these historical and contemporary (or current) sources, conclusions are drawn up for the necessary re-actualization in the visions of SVD pneumatological spirituality for the current 21st century. Arnold always turned to the Holy Spirit with great trust, warmth and deep respect. His life in the Holy Spirit and the richness of that life was especially evident in his prayers. In them he expressed the indestructible bond between God and man and the infinite joy of the Holy Trinity. The author therefore emphasizes: „Today’s pneumatological spirituality focuses on analysing and explaining the operation of the Spirit in several dimensions. The Holy Spirit is the creator and spreader of unity within the Church, especially between local churches and individual believers. The hierarchy and teachings of the Church serve its unity, but the main subject of unity is the Holy Spirit, therefore all Catholics (and all Christians) are called to trust the Spirit that was given to the whole Church. Such an attitude

⁴ Citation in original language (Slovak): „Bytostná odovzdanosť tajomstvu Najsvätejšej Trojice, uctievanie a ohlasovanie tohto tajomstva boli srdcom a centrom celého duchovného a misijného života zakladateľa. Toto vnútorné nastavenie vložil aj do svojej kongregácie. Toto vnieslo do celej jeho spirituality a spirituality jeho Spoločenosti jednotu a jasnosť. Len v pochopení tejto trojično-spirituálnej perspektívy pochopíme inkarnačno-kristologickú a pneumatologickú spiritualitu, teda duchovnosť zameranú na Ježiša Krista ako Božie Slovo a na Ducha Svätého. Tieto dve duchovnosti zakladateľa a SVD sú konkrétnym vyjadrením ich trojičného zamerania” (Orečný, 2022, p. 133).

simultaneously becomes a prerequisite for the Church's missionary activity and for its ecumenical and interreligious dialogue"⁵ (Orečný, 2022, p. 230).

The conclusion of the review of Stanislav Orečný's monograph can only be fully identified with the opinions of other precise reviewers of his scientific work in the field of theology. What I personally appreciate most about the reviewed monograph is the accessibility of this publication to a wider range of people interested in learning about the chosen topic. It would be a shame if the book remained unrecognized only on the shelves of a scientific library. It is written stylistically really clearly and very comprehensibly, despite the demand for precision that the theological topic requires. Finally, I would also like to appreciate the complexity of processing the view of SVD spirituality, which makes the work available for comparison with the knowledge of other spiritualities of religious societies in the Catholic Church.

⁵ Citation in original language (Slovak): „Dnešná pneumatologická spiritualita sa zameriava na analyzovanie a vysvetľovanie pôsobenia Ducha vo viacerých dimenziách. Duch Svätý je tvorcom a šíriteľom jednoty vo vnútri Cirkvi, zvlášť medzi lokálnymi cirkvami a jednotlivými veriacimi. Hierarchia a učenie Cirkvi slúžia k jej jednote, ale hlavným subjektom jednoty je Duch Svätý, preto všetci katolíci (i všetci kresťania) sú volaní dôverovať Duchu, ktorý bol daný celej Cirkvi. Takýto postoj sa stáva súčasne predpokladom pre misijné pôsobenie Cirkvi a pre jej ekumenický i medzináboženský dialóg“ (Orečný, 2022, p. 230).