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THE MEDIATING MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – SOME THEOLOGICAL MODELS

Key words: The Holy Spirit, Theology of mediation

1. Introduction. 2. The Second Paraclete. 3. The Holy Spirit in the Immanent Trinity. 4. The Holy Spirit in the Economic Trinity. 5. The Holy Spirit in the Church. The Unity of God's Action. 6. Recapitulation

1. INTRODUCTION

Man received from God free will and an immortal soul. However, after original sin, everyone needs God's grace to attain salvation. Everything that man does is weak, sinful, and imperfect. God's grace is not something deserved by man, this gift can only be received and developed by oneself. Christianity adopts precisely such a soteriology, which rejects the possibility of self-salvation¹.

Christianity shows God who fights for man, seeks his closeness, wants to support him on the way to salvation and to give him his love. The culmination of God's love is the moment of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Jesus Christ revealed Himself as the foretold Immanuel (cf. Is 7:14²). And after the resurrection, He promised to stay with His followers until the end of the world (cf. Mt 28:20). Christ's departure was connected with Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit, announced by Jesus, descended to recall and explain the Savior's teaching (cf. Jn 14:26)³, thus showing the way to God. For this is man's ultimate goal – union with God in eternity.

¹ The heresy of self-salvation was preached by Pelagianism. This view has been condemned by the Church (Cf. G. O'Collins, E.G. Farrugia, *Leksykon pojęć teologicznych i kościelnych*, trans. by J. Ozóg, B. Żak, Kraków 2002, 237).

² All quotes from: *The Jerusalem Bible. Popular Edition*, London 1974.

³ A discussion of the theology of the Holy Spirit as a Paraclete in the tradition of John can be found in: B. Stubenrauch, *Pneumatologia – traktat o Duchu Świętym*, trans. by P. Lisak, Kraków 1999, 103–106.

2. THE SECOND PARACLETE

The first mediator between God and men is Jesus Christ, who fulfills his mission through ontological mediation (Jesus has two natures, He is God-Man) and functional mediation (Jesus performs royal, prophetic and priestly functions)⁴. Hence, He is the first Paraclete. And the Bible also speaks of the second Paraclete – the Holy Spirit.

Raniero Cantalamessa draws attention to the evolution of the understanding of the word „paraclete” in relation to the Holy Spirit. In the first centuries of Christianity, the followers of Christ were accused before the courts, so they needed spiritual strengthening, the conviction that the Advocate, God’s defender, would bring them justification before God. Thus, we see a certain juridical dimension here. Moreover, it was remembered that the true accuser is Satan, who tries to accuse every person before God. Hence God gave His faithful a Protector – the Paraclete. Another dimension of the concept of „Paraclete” can be combined with the function of the Holy Spirit. He is the Comforter in the literal sense of the word. He serves the truth, teaches, reminds, bears witness, convinces, leads to the truth and prophecies⁵.

The truth about the second Paraclete is revealed to us by Sacred Scripture. We read in Ephesians: „Through him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father” (Ep 2:18). And also in the Letter to the Corinthians: „No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’ unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit” (1 Co 12:3). He who wants to attain salvation must confess faith in Christ, but the confession itself can only be done by the Holy Spirit.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE IMMANENT TRINITY

Karl Rahner distinguished in God between an Immanent Trinity and an Economic Trinity. The Immanent Trinity is the interior life of God, while the Economic Trinity is God’s action throughout the history of the world. The German theologian showed the interdependence of both ways of understanding the Holy Trinity, these paths complement each other.

Considering the mission mediating the Holy Spirit in the Immanent Trinity, it should be noted that the tradition of East and West has developed two different ways of interpretation (dynamic and static). The key to the Eastern tradition is the biblical-Greek interpretation, whose representatives are mainly: St. Basil the Great (†379), St. Gregory of Nyssa (†394/395), St. Gregory Nazianzus (†389/390) and St. Ambrose (†397). In this view, at the center of the Holy Trinity is the Person of God the Father, who is the basis of the unity of God. This option emphasizes the dynamic of the intimate life of God who is and acts in each of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Western tradition called „Alexandrian-Latin” was developed mainly

⁴ Cf. P. Kaczmarek, *Królowanie Chrystusa na ziemi – próba teologicznego uzasadnienia*, Studia Loviciensia, 22 (2020), 141–150.

⁵ Cf. R. Cantalamessa, *Pieśń Ducha Świętego*, trans. by M. Przeczewski, Warszawa 2003, 93–96.

by St. Augustine, who brought to the fore the issue of the unity of nature in the Holy Trinity. It was from the fact of this unity that St. Augustine derived the doctrine of the existence of the Divine Persons and their action. The concepts developed by St. Augustine became an important inspiration for the elaboration of the question of the mediation of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Trinity⁶.

St. Augustine showed the relations of the Divine Persons, which function in a very close relationship with each other. Therefore, even if we speak of the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Spirit, we must always speak of the one and only God⁷. For the Bishop of Hippo, the Father is Father for the sake of the Son, and the Son is the Son for the Father's sake. The Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is a relationship of love between the Father and the Son. At the same time, this „love” is not only the perfection of the relationship between the Persons of the Holy Trinity, but it constitutes the relationship itself. In this approach one can find the source of the concept of the mediating mission of the Holy Spirit. He is the perfect bond of love and thus is also the perfect mediator between the Father and the Son.

Dogmatic theology has developed different models of the mission mediating the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity. The panorama of this discussion is presented by G.M. Bartosik. He mentions Heribert Mühlen, Joseph Ratzinger, Walter Kasper and Hans Urs von Balthasar, supplementing their theories with the works of Matthias Joseph Scheeben, Maximilian Maria Kolbe and René Laurentin. Let us list the main theological theses of these theologians.

H. Mühlen distinguished the personal pronouns „I”, „you”, which indicate the existence of a particular person. He also included the pronoun „we”, which makes people not only talk to each other, but also speak together. This is a manifestation of their inner unity. Then he transferred these pronouns to the Persons of the Holy Trinity. According to Mühlen, God the Father is „I”, God the Son of God is „You” and God the Holy Spirit is „We”. The Holy Spirit is one Person in two Persons, the Father and the Son, He is the pure Gift that makes *communio* possible⁸.

Joseph Ratzinger, wanting to distinguish the Holy Spirit from Jesus Christ as Mediator, used the Italian term *Intermediario* for the Third Person of the Holy Trinity⁹. It is in the Holy Spirit that the Father and the Son give each other to each other. As J. Ratzinger writes: „The Spirit is a Person as unity, but this unity is a Person”¹⁰. Additionally, Ratzinger called the Holy Spirit as Love and Gift.

Walter Kasper uses the term „Medium” in relation to the Holy Spirit, giving it a Christological perspective. For this reason, he says of the Holy Spirit that he develops the mission of Christ, who is the mediator „in the Holy Spirit”. The Holy Spirit, who is love, unites and mediates in the intimate life of the Holy Trinity.

⁶ A detailed discussion of the relationship of the Divine Persons in the Immanent Trinity and the Economic Trinity can be found in: G.M. Bartosik, *Mediatrix in Spiritu Mediatore. Pośrednictwo Najświętszej Maryi Panny jako uczestnictwo w pośredniczącej funkcji Ducha Świętego w świetle teologii współczesnej*, Niepokalanów 2016, 116–117.

⁷ Cf. B. Stubenrauch, *op.cit.*, 148.

⁸ Cf. G. M. Bartosik, *op.cit.*, 122–135. Cf. B. Stubenrauch, *op.cit.*, 227–230.

⁹ Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Raport o stanie wiary*, in: J. Ratzinger, *Opera omnia*, vol. XIII/1, Lublin 2017, 148.

¹⁰ J. Ratzinger, *Kościół. Pielgrzymująca wspólnota wiary*, trans. by W. Szymona, Kraków 2005, 36.

Hans Urs von Balthazar was looking for understanding the inner life of the Holy Trinity in the history of salvation, that is, in the space and time in which God revealed Himself to man. The Holy Spirit as love can be understood in two dimensions. He is the loving relationship between the Father and the Son (subjective aspect), and he is also the fruit of this love, which makes him a concrete Person (the objective aspect). God has revealed Himself to man, who can thus contemplate the inner life of God. It is the grace of God himself given by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Matthias Joseph Scheeben, in his theological approach, referred to the Holy Spirit as „breath”. Using an analogy, he also compared this relationship to a kiss through which lovers express their love. Maximilian Maria Kolbe in his reflections started from the words given by Our Lady in Lourdes, who said to Bernadette Soubirous: ‘I am the Immaculate Conception’ (*Qué soy éra Immaculada Councepciou*). The founder of Niepokalanów decided that this is the name of the Holy Spirit, who par excellence can be called the Immaculate Conception. St. Maximilian was not afraid to say that the Holy Spirit „is the most holy, infinitely holy, immaculate conception”¹¹. René Laurentin, on the other hand, added to the definitions of the Holy Spirit proposed by other theologians such terms as „Communication between the Father and the Son” and „Anointing of their Unity”¹².

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE ECONOMIC TRINITY

The second dimension of the mediating action of the Holy Spirit is the Economic Trinity, that is, God acting in the history of salvation with particular emphasis on the mission of Jesus Christ on earth. Therefore, reference must be made to the public activity of the Son of God.

It is in the central events of the earthly life and death of Jesus Christ that we see the special action of the Holy Spirit. It suffices to recall the Incarnation, his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus’ public ministry, his death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit sustains the dialogue between the Father and the Son, communicates the will of the Father and is the Spirit of obedience in the Son. The Holy Spirit also connects God with His people, guiding the Church, doing the work of sanctification.

When Mary gives her consent to God, she becomes the Mother of God. This extraordinary miracle is accomplished thanks to the Holy Spirit. By the fact of the Incarnation, Jesus is true God and true man. It is heresy to claim that Jesus was adopted by God and that He is merely the human chosen one¹³. Another event in which

¹¹ M.M. Kolbe, *Pisma*, vol. 2, Niepokalanów 2008, 683. Maximilian notes: „Therefore the Father begets, the Son is begotten, the Spirit is conceived, and this is their essence, by which they differ from one another. And they are united by nature itself. Divine existence essential. The Spirit, then, is the most holy, infinitely holy, immaculate conception” (*ibidem*). More on this topic: P. Kaczmarek, „*Niepokalane Poczęcie*” czy „*Niepokalanie Poczęta*”? – św. Maksymiliana M. Kolbego propozycje interpretacyjne przesłania z Lourdes, *Studia Loviciensia*, 20 (2018), 109–119.

¹² More on this topic: G.M. Bartosik, *op.cit.*, 157–158.

¹³ The heresy of adoptionism is related to the views of Paul of Samosata in the third century. This heresy was reborn in Spain in the eighth century (cf. G. O’Collins, E.G. Farrugia, *op.cit.*, 14).

the Holy Spirit manifests Himself is the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan. We are dealing here with the theophany of the whole Holy Trinity. The Son is baptized, the Holy Spirit appears in the sign of the dove, and the voice of the Father is heard, confirming that Jesus is the beloved Son of God. The whole life of Jesus will be lived in communion with the Holy Spirit. God the Father sends the Son, and the Son sends the Holy Spirit, who after the Resurrection is to continue to lead the Church¹⁴. We can say with M. I. Alves: „From the tomb arises a new creation, a new humanity, whose head is Christ, a new man whose flesh is the new salvific community, the new Jerusalem. The soul of this body is the Holy Spirit, through whom ‘the love of God has been poured into our hearts’” (Rm 5:5)¹⁵.

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH

Modern theology devotes much space to the mediating mission of the Holy Spirit in the work of creation and in the life of the Church. Due to the limited volume of this article, we will recall only selected thoughts. We will try to pay special attention to the Christological perspective, seen analogously in relation to the Holy Spirit, that is, in ontological and functional mediation¹⁶.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church must, of course, be understood differently from the hypostatic union in Jesus Christ, but it is only through the Third Divine Person that the social organism of the Church can be kept alive and develop towards its spiritual fullness¹⁷. The Holy Spirit works in Christ and in communion with Him. The essence of Christianity is the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but this can only be done by the grace of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Co 12:3). We see the action of the Third Divine Person not only in the life of the Church, but in the whole created world, which is constantly sustained by Divine Providence. It is the Holy Spirit who builds man's relationship with God, but also acts in interpersonal relationships. If a person opens himself to the action of the Holy Spirit, he opens himself even more to Jesus Christ, he receives the necessary charisms, he makes better use of the grace of the holy sacraments that he receives. It can be said that he lives more fully the Church and also develops his natural capacities better. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, our sonship in God develops better in us – we are able to adhere more to God, to know Him and to follow Him, accepting His will.

Jesus announced his departure as a necessary condition for the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said: „It is for your own good that I am going because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you” (Jn 16:7). The proclamation of the Gospel is just beginning, the seed of God's word will be sown throughout the earth. And this work is to be done by the Holy Spirit, who inscribes in the dimension of time *chronos* the reality of *kairos*. An ordinary, chronological time, becomes a time of grace

¹⁴ Cf. C.F. Gomes, *Jezus a dar Ducha Świętego*, trans. by L. Balter, *Communio*, 43 (1988) 1, 10.

¹⁵ M.I. Alves, *Dam wam Ducha nowego*, trans. by L. Balter, *Communio*, 43 (1988) 1, 31.

¹⁶ Cf. G.M. Bartosik, *op.cit.*, 182–255.

¹⁷ Cf. Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Kościele*, no 8.

and salvation. W. Kasper directly connects the Holy Spirit with the functional mediation of Christ: „I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14:6). It is thanks to the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the way (the royal, pastoral function), the truth (the prophetic function) and the life (the priestly function)¹⁸.

Every believer can discover in himself these different dimensions of the realization of God’s call in the Church. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, the believer can follow God’s will, choose his vocation correctly, make the effort to discern and make the right decisions. In this way, man chooses Jesus – the right path (this is the royal, pastoral function). The realization of the prophetic function refers to the Old Testament, in which we find the sayings of the prophets announcing the coming of the messiah and the realization of great works of salvation. The presence of the Holy Spirit helps the Church to recognize correctly the signs of the times, to respond to the new questions of the world, to indicate a correct understanding of reality and events. Thanks to the Third Divine Person, the Church understands herself better and reads the signs of the times correctly. Understanding the past, he explains the present and shapes the future of the Church¹⁹. In this way, the Church rediscovers Jesus, the truth (this is the prophetic function). As far as the third type of mediation is concerned, the Holy Spirit fulfills the priestly function by enabling believers to offer their lives, to discover the meaning of suffering and to inscribe difficult experiences in the salvific sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which we live during the Holy Mass. It is an attempt to offer one’s life in sacrifice and to accept the spiritual fruits of the Passion of the Resurrection of Jesus – life (this is the priestly function).

6. THE UNITY OF GOD’S ACTION

God wants man to enter into dialogue with Him freely. The motive for such a relationship should be love, which is a sincere gift of the self. God enables man through the Holy Spirit to use the various gifts and not to be merely a passive recipient of God’s graces. As Piet Schoonenberg notes, charisms are aimed at cooperation between man and God, so they do not exclude the human factor in the realization of God’s gifts. Schoonenberg writes: „The Spirit of God takes possession of our human talents and renews them, sometimes evoking and giving life to new abilities and talents in our lives”²⁰. In a way, the „transmission belt” in the relationship between God and man is the Holy Spirit. You can say – „In the Holy Spirit the world has access to God and God has access to the world”²¹. An extraordinary exchange of gifts takes place, where God is the giver of love, and man can only respond to this love.

¹⁸ Cf. G.M. Bartosik, *op.cit.*, 235.

¹⁹ This is a reference to the words of Waldemar Chrostowski, who explained the function of the prophet in a similar way. „In recounting the past, the Israelites shaped the future, they were strongly oriented towards it, thanks to which their faith had a historical character, rooted in history” (W. Chrostowski, *Bóg, Biblia, Mesjasz*, Warszawa 2007, 207).

²⁰ P. Schoonenberg, *Duch Boży w historii zbawienia*, trans. by L. Balter, *Communio*, 43 (1988) 1, 79.

²¹ B. Stubenrauch, *op.cit.*, 88.

The Holy Spirit also helps to maintain an inner unity in man, who experiences a constant conflict between the spiritual and the corporeal. John Paul II writes: „In man, who is a dual being, there is a certain tension, a kind of struggle between the aspirations of the ‘spirit’ and the ‘body’. This struggle is due to the heritage of sin, it is its consequence and at the same time confirms it. It’s part of everyday experience”²². The Holy Spirit helps to restore to man what he lost through original sin, strengthens human spiritual strength, and helps man fight against sin.

Showing the individual roles of the Persons of the Holy Trinity in the work of salvation serves to bring out the truth that the unity of the Holy Trinity’s action should always be emphasized. Therefore, the Church is still the Church of Christ and not some new Church of the Holy Spirit. In this way, the Economic Trinity is not opposed to the Economic Trinity. There is always One God at work, who is in Three Persons.

The action of the Holy Spirit can be felt very directly, especially when the various charisms are revealed, but it can also act as if „in secret” when one does not realize it. It can be said that the Holy Spirit „also accompanies us anonymously, impelling us to serve and love mankind”²³. A great deal of sensitivity is needed to discern correctly when the action of the Holy Spirit is taking place in an event and through a particular person or community.

7. RECAPITULATION

Undoubtedly, the nature and manner of action of the Holy Spirit continue to challenge theologians to create theological models that would allow a correct reading of the specificity of the action and nature of the Holy Spirit. The issues presented above conceal many dogmatic nuances. It is always necessary to be aware that, on the one hand, „the mystery of the Trinity is at the same time what is most ineffable, because it is an unfathomable abyss whose comprehension surpasses all the intellectual capacities of man, with the help of which he knows the reality around him”²⁴. But on the other hand, as J. Królikowski adds: „if we grasp the fundamental meaning of what the mystery of the Holy Trinity is, then this mysterious and ineffable reality becomes a great and irreplaceable light, illuminating our everyday life and explaining the problems of our existence”²⁵. Certainly, especially in our time, we need the light of the Holy Spirit, a proper discernment in the Church, and also the ability to enter into the salvific sacrifice of Jesus Christ offered on the altars of the world.

²² Jan Paweł II, Encyklika *Dominum et vivificantem*, Watykan, 18.05.1986, no 55.

²³ P. Schoonenberg, *op. cit.*, 86.

²⁴ J. Królikowski, *Tajemnica Trójjedynego*, Kraków 2015, 115

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

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THE MEDIATING MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – SELECTED CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL MODELS

Summary

Jesus Christ, going to the Father, sent his disciples the Holy Spirit, who was to remind them and explain everything. The same Holy Spirit continues to act in the Church, sanctifying the Mystical Body of Christ. The first Paraclete is Jesus Christ himself, who undertook a salvific mission and became a mediator between God and people. The Holy Spirit sent by Christ is the second Paraclete fulfilling the mediating mission. The Holy Spirit works both in the Immanent Trinity (God’s inner life) and in the Economic Trinity (God’s saving action in history). Interesting in this context are the theological models developed by, among others, Heribert Mühlen, Joseph Ratzinger, Walter Kasper, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Matthias Joseph Scheeben, Maximilian Maria Kolbe and René Laurentin, whose concepts have been briefly presented in the above article. The mediating mission of the Holy Spirit is oriented Christocentric and is revealed during the most important salvation events performed by Jesus Christ (incarnation, baptism in the Jordan, proclamation of the Kingdom of God, death and resurrection). Moreover, the Holy Spirit sanctifies the Church, connecting people with God and people with each other. This action is inscribed in the ontic mediation of Jesus Christ, who has two natures – Divine

and human, and in the functional mediation of the Savior (royal, prophetic and priestly functions). Undoubtedly, the last decades have been characterized by a great revival among theologians who deal with pneumatology, especially in the dimension of the mediating mission of the Holy Spirit.

POŚREDNICZĄCA MISJA DUCHA ŚWIĘTEGO – WYBRANE WSPÓŁCZESNE MODELE TEOLOGICZNE

Streszczenie

Jezus Chrystus, odchodząc do Ojca, posłał swoim uczniom Ducha Świętego, który miał im wszystko przypomnieć i wyjaśnić. Tenże Duch Święty działa dalej w Kościele, uświęcając Mistyczne Ciało Chrystusa. Pierwszym Parakletem jest sam Jezus Chrystus, który podjął misję zbawczą i stał się pośrednikiem między Bogiem a ludźmi. Duch Święty posłany przez Chrystusa jest drugim Parakletem, wypełniającym misję pośredniczącą. Duch Święty działa zarówno w Trójcy Immanentnej (wewnętrznym życiu Boga) oraz w Trójcy Ekonomicznej (działaniu historiozbawczym Boga). Ciekawe w tym kontekście są modele teologiczne wypracowane m.in. przez Heriberta Mühlena, Josepha Ratzingera, Waltera Kaspera, Hansa Ursa von Balthasara, Matthiasa Josepha Scheebena, Maximiliana Marię Kolbego oraz René Laurentina, których koncepcje zostały w dużym skrócie zaprezentowane w powyższym artykule. Misja pośrednicząca Ducha Świętego jest zorientowana chrystocentrycznie i ujawnia się w najważniejszych wydarzeniach zbawczych dokonanych przez Jezusa Chrystusa (Wcielenie, chrzest w Jordanie, głoszenie królestwa Bożego, śmierć i zmartwychwstanie). Ponadto Duch Święty uświęca Kościół, łącząc ludzi z Bogiem i ludzi między sobą. Działanie to wpisane jest w pośrednictwo bytowe Jezusa Chrystusa, który ma dwie natury – Boską i ludzką oraz w pośrednictwo funkcyjne Zbawiciela (funkcję królewską, prorocką i kapłańską). Niewątpliwie ostatnie dziesięciolecie charakteryzują się dużym ożywieniem wśród teologów, którzy zajmują się tematyką pneumatologiczną, zwłaszcza w wymiarze misji pośredniczącej Ducha Świętego.

Słowa kluczowe: Duch Święty, teologia pośrednictwa

Key words: Holy Spirit, mediation theology

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