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Ut unum sint: New Areas of Spiritual and Pastoral Ecumenism

Abstract: Care for Christian unity is part of the nature of the Church. Many years after the ecumenical movement began, signs of disappointment are appearing. The doctrinal dialogues and official meetings are still taking place, but spiritual and pastoral ecumenism is increasingly needed. It manifests itself not only in joint prayers but also in an actual exchange of spiritual gifts, pastoral inspirations and cooperation in many areas of the church and social life.

New aspects of such ecumenism have appeared. They take the form of various spiritual trends going beyond the boundaries of churches and communities (prayers, music, spiritual gifts) as well as a search for sources and guidelines for spiritual life that other traditions can offer. In particular, the new shape of ecumenism may be seen in Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. Therefore, the broadly understood Catholic charismatic renewal has a special place in the work for Christian unity. People must walk together, accompany one another, be hospitable and work for the benefit of others. Only then can the Holy Spirit lead the followers of Christ to unity.

Keywords: spiritual and pastoral ecumenism, Evangelical spirituality, Pentecostal spirituality, charismatic renewal

Ecumenism has become an inherent part of the contemporary Christianity. It is a great delight to see how much has been accomplished in the dialogue within post-Reformation communities as well as between Catholics and various Protestant confessions and Christians of the Eastern traditions. All this was possible thanks to the opening of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement after the Second Vatican Council. Later, the Teaching Office of the Church defined in greater detail the rules to be followed by the Catholic Church in promoting Christian unity.

Various multilateral discussions between theologians as well as numerous prayer meetings and other joint efforts in many areas demonstrate how much has been done so far. However, ecumenism seems to somehow have lost its momentum and show signs of discouragement. Another difficulty is the rather sceptical, or sometimes clearly hostile, attitude to ecumenism shown by some local Orthodox churches, conservative Catholic communities or Evangelical Christians. It is therefore reasonable to ask about the sense and outlook of ecumenism, as it concerns the lives of Christians and the *oikoumene*, that is, the whole inhabited world.¹

A search for answers to the problem raised should focus on the contemporary Christian spirituality, as various trends, practices and directions more and more strongly go over the borders of Churches and ecclesial communities. In particular, this can be seen in Evangelical and Pentecostal spirituality and contemplative prayer. Spontaneous prayers, new Christian music and evangelization projects are becoming an increasingly strong bond between the baptized, irrespective of what confession they belong to. While the doctrinal dialogue should not be devalued, it is spiritual and practical ecumenism that seems a necessity now. We need to be aware of the way we have come so far as well as of the possibilities of exchanging spiritual gifts and of new ways of working towards unity of all Christians.

1. The way ecumenism has come so far

The 20th century was a specific time for ecumenism. The movement for Christian unity originated in Protestant communities and spread across other denominations. A significant step in the process was the opening of the Catholic Church to the inter-Christian dialogue, something John XXIII and the teaching of Vatican II considerably contributed to. The wealth of prayers, talks and other joint activities have brought major spiritual benefits to the entire Christian family. The development of ecumenism so far indicates its three key aspects, namely doctrinal, spiritual, and practical.

¹ The term *ecumenism* comes from the Greek *oikoumene*, which means the inhabited world and combines two words: *oikos* (a dwelling place) and *oikeo* (to inhabit).

1.1. Doctrinal dialogue

A moment of major importance was when the Catholic Church joined the ecumenical movement. The Second Vatican Council's *Decree on Ecumenism* was a milestone in this respect. It discussed in considerable detail the intellectual dimension of ecumenism. In the first place, it called for dialogue on theology in order to correct misconceptions about Christians from other communities as well as to better understand one another and look for ways to foster unity.² Attention and kindness were seen as necessary for that purpose.³ The ecumenical context should also be present in the university-level theological studies.⁴

These recommendations of Vatican II were put into practice in various official inter-ecclesial dialogues held and developed basically on a bilateral basis, but also among greater number of participants. Some of them were of great significance and bore good fruit. For example, a dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Lutheran World Federation led to the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*⁵ on 31 October 1999. The document was adopted by

² Ecumenism is understood as “every effort to avoid expressions, judgements and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult; then, dialogue between competent experts from different Churches and Communities. At these meetings, which are organized in a religious spirit, each explains the teaching of his Communion in greater depth and brings out clearly its distinctive features. In such dialogue, everyone gains a truer knowledge and more just appreciation of the teaching and religious life of both Communions. In addition, the way is prepared for cooperation between them in the duties for the common good of humanity which are demanded by every Christian conscience...” THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *Decree on Ecumenism* [further: DE], 4.

³ “We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required, and this must be pursued with a sense of realism and good will. Catholics, who already have a proper grounding, need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background.” DE 9.

⁴ “Sacred theology and other branches of knowledge, especially of a historical nature, must be taught with due regard for the ecumenical point of view, so that they may correspond more exactly with the facts. It is most important that future shepherds and priests should have mastered a theology that has been carefully worked out in this way and not polemically, especially with regard to those aspects which concern the relations of separated brethren with the Catholic Church. This importance is the greater because the instruction and spiritual formation of the faithful and of religious depends so largely on the formation which their priests have received.” DE 10.

⁵ It is worth noting that the *Declaration* was preceded by the *Justification by Faith* (1983) report of the Roman Catholic—Lutheran dialogue in the USA and *The Condem-*

the World Methodist Council (in 2006) and the World Communion of Reformed Churches (in 2017). The *Declaration* does not, of course, resolve all the doctrinal differences but is an important point of reference for promoting unity. The Catholic-Anglican dialogue should also be appreciated, as it has led to the drafting of many joint documents,⁶ which is a good outlook for further work on key issues, despite the serious challenge of the ordination of women permitted by the Anglican Church.

Particularly important is the dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and various eastern Churches. On the one hand, there are contacts with the Ancient Churches of the East, focused on ecclesiology, Eucharist, collegiality, christological concepts (particularly in the dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East) and cooperation, which is necessary, especially in the Middle East. The key points in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Byzantine Orthodoxy are the Church's structure, sacraments, and ways to build unity. The basic documents in this respect are *The Mystery of the Church and the Eucharist in the Light of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity* (1982), *Faith, Sacraments and the Unity of the Church* (1987), *The Sacrament of Order in the Sacramental Structure of the Church, with Particular Reference to the Importance of the Apostolic Succession for the Sanctification and Unity of the People of God* (1988), and *Uniatism: Method of Union of the Past, and Present Search for Full Communion* (1993). Another significant document is the Balamand Declaration (1993), which condemned proselytism by Catholics and Orthodox people. The communities of eastern Catholics are definitely a bone of contention for many autocephalous Orthodox Churches.⁷

Finally, the talks between Catholics and representatives of some Evangelical denominations need mentioning. The dialogue is by no means easy, as the Evangelical communities differ radically from one another, with many of them operating at the national or local level only, and also because many Evangelical Christians are rather distant and aloof about ecumenism. However, theological contacts do exist and are aimed at getting to know each other, defining the terms used (e.g. baptism, baptism in the Holy Spirit, sacraments-ordinances, pious practices), or clarifying con-

nations of the Reformation Era—Do They Still Divide? (1986) study by the Evangelical and Catholic theologians in Germany.

⁶ Examples of Roman Catholic—Anglican documents include *Salvation and Church* (1986), *The Final Report* (1982), *Church as Communion* (1991), or *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* (2005). For more, see S. NOWOSAD, MIĘDZYNARODOWA KOMISJA ANGLIKAŃSKO-KATOLICKA: “Życie w Chrystusie: Moralność, Komunia i Kościół (No. 59—77).” *Forum Teologiczne* 13 (2012), pp. 201—219.

⁷ This can clearly be seen in Central and Eastern Europe, where there have been plenty of disputes among the Greek Catholic Churches, especially the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

troversies (e.g. in the Catholic Marian devotions or Evangelical expressions of faith). A good example of tangible results of the dialogue between Catholics and Pentecostals⁸ are two documents: *Perspectives on Koinonia* from 1989 and *Evangelization, Proselytism and Common Witness* from 1997 or a Catholic—Evangelical document on the Word of God, Tradition and the Church in the work of salvation.⁹ Also important in this evangelical trend is the dialogue with the growing number of New Charismatic Churches.¹⁰ The talks between the Roman Catholic Church and the Baptist World Alliance have resulted in the drafting of a report *Called to Witness to Christ*.

These and other dialogues¹¹ are still very important and should not be discontinued, even if various tensions or serious doctrinal difficulties arise. A dialogue will always lead to a better understanding and mutual respect.

1.2. Spiritual ecumenism

A spiritual dimension is obviously necessary, as it is Jesus Christ who unites all the baptised. Therefore, it does not suffice to offer theological solutions only, but Christians should stay together before and with the Lord. Spiritual ecumenism is not only a matter of piety but concerns the entire Christian life.

What is fundamental is that the baptized truly live the Gospel and experience personal conversion. A sincere close relation with God will

⁸ It is worth recalling that 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the official Catholic—Pentecostal dialogue. See DICASTERO PER LA PROMOZIONE DELL'UNITÀ DEI CRISTIANI: *Cattolici e Pentecostali riflettono su kerygma/predicazione e vita Cristiana*, <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/news/2022/2022-07-15-cattolici-e-pentecostali-riflettono-su-kerygma.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

⁹ See *A Report of the International Consultation between the Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance (2009-2016)*. “Scripture and tradition” and “The Church in salvation”. *Catholics and Evangelicals explore challenges and opportunities*, http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/evangelici/dialogo/documenti-di-dialogo/2016-_scrittura-e-tradizione--e-la-chiesa-nella-salvezza--cattol/testo-in-inglese.html [access: 10.08.2022].

¹⁰ See THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY: *The Characteristics of the New Charismatic Churches*, <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/pentecostali/conversazioni-con-le-nuove-chiese-carismatiche/the-characteristics-of-the-new-charismatic-churches.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

¹¹ See F.R. GARRAPUCHO: “Międzykonfesyjne dialogi ekumeniczne. Bilans historyczny.” *Symposium* 16(1) 2007, pp. 67—79.

always lead to closeness with other people. It is hardly surprising then that daily prayer, daily Bible reading, staying united with the community (within a given Church), participation in community prayer and sacraments (ordinances) contribute to the growth of faith and individual bond with Christ and are a basis for promoting unity with those Christians who define various doctrinal concepts differently and express their faith using different rites. However, the unity of Christ does not rule out diversity, which can be “reconciled diversity”¹². This requires conversion by each individual and community.¹³

This is what the Second Vatican Council recognised as the heart and soul of ecumenism: “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from renewal of the inner life of our minds, from self-denial and an unstinted love that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way. We should therefore pray to the Holy Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others, and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity towards them. [...] All the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the Gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice. For the closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love.”¹⁴ This transformation involves defeating the sin and any evil, which are the deepest sources of

¹² “Peace is possible, based on our confession that Jesus is Lord and on our evangelization along this path. It is possible. Even by showing that we have differences — this is obvious, we have differences — but that we desire to be a reconciled diversity. We should not forget that phrase, but say it to everyone: reconciled diversity.” FRANCIS: *Address*. Pentecost Vigil of Prayer, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170603_veglia-pentecoste.html [access: 4.03.2021].

¹³ “We proceed along the road leading to the conversion of hearts guided by love which is directed to God and, at the same time, to all our brothers and sisters, including those not in full communion with us. Love gives rise to the desire for unity, even in those who have never been aware of the need for it. Love builds communion between individuals and between Communities. If we love one another, we strive to deepen our communion and make it perfect. Love is given to God as the perfect source of communion — the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit — that we may draw from that source the strength to build communion between individuals and Communities, or to re-establish it between Christians still divided. Love is the great undercurrent which gives life and adds vigour to the movement towards unity. This love finds its most complete expression in common prayer. [...] Even when prayer is not specifically offered for Christian unity, but for other intentions such as peace, it actually becomes an expression and confirmation of unity. The common prayer of Christians is an invitation to Christ himself to visit the community of those who call upon him.” JOHN PAUL II’s Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*, 21.

¹⁴ DE 7.

division, but also practising the act of forgiveness. At the same time it requires a change of mentality, which allows for searching for unity and makes it possible to treat other Christians like true brothers and sisters in Christ. The process also involves overcoming prejudice and opening the hearts and minds to other people who believe in Jesus. The process may not be easy at times, but there is no alternative.

Spiritual ecumenism cannot take place without prayer — “This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and merits the name, *spiritual ecumenism*.”¹⁵ In this spirit, every year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, dating back to 1908, is held. Initially, these events’ aim was to give Protestants of various denominations an opportunity to be together, but since Paul VI’s pontificate they have also been participated in by Catholics (although days of prayer for Christian unity have been organised by the Catholic Church since 1894). Another milestone was in 1966, when the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat, later transformed into the Pontifical Council, for Promoting Christian Unity began preparing biblical and prayer materials for the event. Since 1975, that task has been carried out by individual groups of Christians from different countries. The common prayers and joint celebrations, guest preaching, and interesting evangelization and formation initiatives are true good spiritual fruit of the “ecumenical weeks”. Also, other gatherings of Christians in various circumstances, whether of global or local nature, have become common. However, the official events have been losing momentum and new ways of reviving the spirit must be looked for. Spiritual ecumenism should in the first place be put into practice in local communities, parishes and churches. Grassroots meeting and prayer projects carried out by leaders of communities are also very valuable. The climate of the prayer of praise and sharing the Word of God in a more relaxed atmosphere brings together Catholics and Evangelical Christians. These initiatives are supported by the Global Christian Forum and respective national forums.

1.3. Relations and cooperation

Eventually, practical ecumenism, manifesting itself in the care for mutual relations and possible cooperation, is necessary. Undoubtedly,

¹⁵ DE 8.

a harmonious co-existence of Christians of different denominations is fundamental for their getting to know each other, sharing the joys and hardships of everyday life, being friendly and respectful of other people's important events, circumstances, and experiences.¹⁶ That everyday experience is what was named the "ecumenism of walking together", which should always precede the "ecumenism of thinking together". Pope Francis aptly put it when speaking to Catholic members of the charismatic renewal: "Today Christian unity is more urgent than ever, Christians united by the power of the Holy Spirit, in prayer and in activity on behalf of the most vulnerable. To walk together, to work together, to love one another, and together to seek to explain our differences, to come to agreement, but as we keep walking! If we stop walking, we will never come to agreement. So it is, because the Spirit wants us to keep walking."¹⁷ When Christians share their lives and focus on serving one another, they will create deep unity. But if they centre around doctrinal differences, a wall of suspiciousness and distrust will grow between them. Cooperation does not mean that the differences are to be undermined, but rather that they are properly placed in the context of the work for unity.

To support one another in the "walking together", Christians should truly work together. The cooperation should in the first place focus on bearing witness of faith and hope.¹⁸ This is particularly important in this post-Christian world. An unequivocal testimony about the value of faith and relation with Jesus Christ is necessary for these truths to be heard by non-practising or non-religious people. At the same time, a multidimensional cooperation between Christians of various denominations is needed. The Second Vatican Council positively encouraged that by saying: "Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them, and it sets in clearer relief the features of Christ the Servant. This cooperation, which has already begun in many countries, should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place be it in

¹⁶ A good example here may be the respect for other churches' calendars. A good practice is for Catholics to refrain from working outside on Good Friday in respect of the feelings of Evangelicals and other Protestants, and for Protestants to do likewise on Corpus Christi. Such gestures are particularly important in places where people of different confessions live.

¹⁷ FRANCIS: *Address*. Pentecost Vigil of Prayer, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170603_veglia-pentecoste.html [access: 4.03.2021].

¹⁸ "Before the whole world let all Christians confess their faith in the triune God, one and three in the incarnate Son of God, our Redeemer and Lord. United in their efforts, and with mutual respect, let them bear witness to our common hope which does not play us false." DE 12.

a just evaluation of the dignity of the human person, the establishment of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit, or also in the use of various remedies to relieve the afflictions of our times such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, housing shortage and the unequal distribution of wealth.”¹⁹ Working together on social problems and challenges posed by the civilisation is a natural duty of Christians. On the one hand, it means offering real support for those in need, and on the other it brings individual communities closer together. However, it cannot boil down to the charity or educational aspect only. What is increasingly needed is cooperation in helping Christians who are persecuted or live in areas where they cannot freely practise their faith or where the living conditions are harsh. It is also difficult to spread the positive message of the Christian faith in the more and more secularised societies, with their attitudes to such issues as life of the unborn, sexual ethics, gender, and human rights.²⁰

However, evangelization projects carried out jointly by Christians of different denominations remain a real challenge. They still raise a lot of doubts and concerns, especially about inviting the evangelized to particular communities where they could grow their faith. It should be noted, though, that more and more people do not practice faith at all — they live without God and do not hold Christian values in high regard. Giving witness of Jesus Christ and preaching the kerygma, also together with other Christians, are therefore a necessity.²¹

2. Spirituality as a form of ecumenical rapprochement

Beside the doctrinal dialogue and the related structural ecumenism (i.e. ecumenism at the level of the superiors and official structures), there

¹⁹ DE 12.

²⁰ A good example here may be the “Dignity of persons and respect for life” conference held by the Polish Christian Forum, <https://pfch.wsts.edu.pl> [access: 23.06.2021].

²¹ “It is my hope that this important anniversary will strengthen these bonds and renew your zeal to proclaim, as missionary disciples, the joy of the Gospel in the ecclesial community and in society as a whole. In this way, bearing witness to the Lord’s prayer that all may be one (cf. Jn 17:21), you will be able to help our brothers and sisters experience in their hearts and lives the transforming power of God’s love, mercy and grace.” FRANCIS: *Message to the Members of the Commission for Catholic-Pentecostal Dialogue*, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2022/documents/20220708-messaggio-dialogopentecostale.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

is the ecumenism of spirituality, which has been growing in significance. In particular, it encompasses the broadly understood Evangelical spirituality²² and contemplative spirituality, and offers a real space for meeting others and exchanging spiritual gifts.²³

2.1. Spirituality based on choosing Christ

In the Evangelical spirituality, and eventually in the entire Christianity, the initial personal experience of Jesus Christ is fundamental. This is particularly stressed by the Protestant tradition, especially that related to various awakening movements, which is closely connected with the witness of the apostolic Church: “Become a believer in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, and your household too” (Ac 16,31). As Benedict XVI aptly put it, “Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.”²⁴ A similar thought was voiced by bishops gathered at the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops’ Conferences: “The very nature of Christianity therefore consists of recognizing the presence of Jesus Christ and following Him. That was the marvellous experience of those first disciples, who upon encountering Jesus were fascinated and astonished at the exceptional quality of the one speaking to them...”²⁵ Therefore, spirituality should be broadly seen as a way of life, encompassing all its aspects, rather than be reduced to particular piety. The external expressions are secondary and should result from each person’s choice of Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

In Evangelical communities, such an act precedes the baptism with water and involvement in the church’s life. There, you can be baptised only after you reach the age of accountability and subscribe to the creed.

²² The English term “Evangelical” used herein should be translated into Polish as *ewangelikalny* rather than *ewangelicki*. The former is used to describe the communities and spirituality of the so-called free Churches or some Catholic movements focused on renewal of the Church, whereas the latter relates to the historical Reformation, especially Lutheran and Reformed, churches.

²³ See P. SAWA: “Duchowość ewangelikalna — szansa dla ekumenizmu.” *Studia Oecumenica* 16 (2016), pp. 253—275.

²⁴ BENEDICT XVI’s Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est*, 1.

²⁵ Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and CARIBBEAN BISHOPS’ CONFERENCES: *Concluding document*, No. 244.

The decision to live with Jesus Christ and walk the way of conversion always comes first. In historical Churches, where children are baptised, the faith of the Church and the parents is first, and the grace of life with God grows together with the Christian life. However, there is a clearly growing tendency in the Catholic Church to organize various evangelization retreats which end with the participants' taking a decision to follow Jesus Christ as their personal Lord. That act is rooted in the baptism and other sacraments. Things are similar with the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. For Pentecostals, the experience comes after the creed, conversion, and baptism with water. For Catholics, baptism in the Holy Spirit is sort of an update of the first baptism and confirmation. Putting the differences aside, we can see how important it is for Christians to personally choose Jesus Christ. When such a conscious act is not performed, Christianity is boiled down to a religious system and does not bring all the fruit promised in the Bible.

2.2. Evangelical spirituality

Besides the central event of personal experience of Jesus Christ's presence and entrusting one's life to Him, there are other important features of the Evangelical spirituality. Defining them is by no means easy though, mainly because of the diversity of the communities and their doctrines. However, the main indispensable features of Evangelicalism include focus on the Bible (explaining the world with the Scripture), focus on the Cross (emphasizing the role of the Cross, leading to strong Christocentrism), convertism (need for personal conversion) and activism (importance and necessity of evangelization).²⁶ All these values are important to Christians. The problem does not lie in formulating these parameters but in interpreting them and shaping spirituality based on other elements. To precisely define the doctrinal aspects and to get to know other ecumenical partners' points of view are the tasks of participants of the theological dialogue, whereas in the everyday life context it is important to promote unity based on what is common. Focus on the Scripture in personal and community prayer as well as in any pastoral activity is fundamental. In the Catholic

²⁶ See N. MODNICKA: *Małe świąty polskiego ewangelikalizmu. Studium z antropologii interpretatywnej*. Łódź 2013, pp. 21–24; Z. KARCZEWSKI: *Ewangelikalizm*, www.teologia.protestanci.org/artykuly/art71.php (16 August 2016); Z. PASEK: "Wspólnoty ewangelikalne we współczesnej Polsce." In: *Ewangelikalny protestantyzm w Polsce u progu XXI stulecia*. Ed. T.J. ZIELIŃSKI. Warszawa—Katowice 2004, pp. 13–49.

Church reading the Bible by the faithful is more and more common, with meditation on the Word becoming a daily spiritual practice. In this way biblical mentality and proper spiritual sensitivity are formed, facilitating encounters with other Christians, especially of the post-Reformation traditions. In particular, this is done by people participating in the Church renewal movements and groups, for example the Neocatechumenal Way (focused on the tripod: Liturgy — Word of God — Community), Light-Life Movement (with its Bible-based retreats and daily Tent of Meeting practice), various communities relying on charismatic renewal (promoting reading of the Scripture), and St. Andrew Schools of Evangelization (with Biblical courses). Retreat centres promoting meditation, *lectio divina* and biblical formation also play an important role. They all help to discover the power of the Word of God and Jesus Christ's real presence in various circumstances of human life, which — besides exegesis and biblical theology — are a life-giving dimension of the biblical culture. In this way, the Catholics' interest in the Scripture is growing, which translates into actual opportunities to meet other Christians, especially those to whom the heritage of the Reformation is dear.

By putting the Bible first, the baptised live their lives with Christ in the centre. Jesus Christ, as the fullness of Revelation and the only Saviour, unites all Christians. Defining the *Solus Christus* principle anew remains a challenge. Being a Reformation principle, it determines Protestant theologies and spirituality. However, a Catholic voice on this matter might be significant too. Although there is basically no comprehensive study of that issue by the Catholic side, certain specific guidelines can be found in some statements. There is no doubt that the Catholic dogmatic theology emphasizes the central role of Christ in the salvation. "Any sort of allegations that the Catholic theology does not recognize Christ as the only Saviour and questions the absolute gratuitousness of His grace, offering salvation to the fallen man's freedom, are unjustified."²⁷ It is manifested in a properly shaped spirituality, in particular liturgy. Jesus Christ is the way to the Father and a glorification of Him — as exposed by the frequently used phrase "Through Christ our Lord". At the same time, a sound Catholic devotion, including popular piety, naturally puts Christ in the centre. Some devotional distortions, though, may obscure the orthodox direction — for example, when the worship of Virgin Mary or the saints is excessive or when people adopt theologically uncertain theories and practices. Therefore, the reforms introduced by Vatican II and later concerning

²⁷ A.A. NAPIÓRKOWSKI: *Bogactwo łaski a nędza grzesznika. Zróżnicowany konsensus teologii katolickiej i luterkańskiej o usprawiedliwieniu osiągnięty w dialogu ekumenicznym*. Wydawnictwo Salwator: Kraków, 2011, p. 172.

prayer and opening of the Church to various renewal movements contribute to real Christocentrism. Keeping all this in mind, it is easy to see the specific areas where Catholics and Christians of other, especially Protestant, denominations could come closer together. This may translate into joint prayers and actions, including evangelization.

Acknowledgment of Jesus Christ's central role is closely connected with conversion, which is rooted in the choice of Christ as the Saviour and Lord and is expressed in holding biblical values and conscious development of spiritual life, affecting one's daily life. As noted by Tadeusz Zieliński, "to the awakened Protestants, the Church should be a community of authentic Christians, where a follower of Christ and other faithful are to praise God, accept His Word, support other Christians and engage in missionary work. In such a community, founded on Jesus Christ, God has united all His believers..."²⁸ To Evangelicals, this is connected with conscious baptism with water by individual persons. In the case of historical Churches, especially the Catholic Church, conversion relies on being baptised, usually in infancy, and means a conscious opening to the dynamics of the sacrament.

The fourth pillar of the Evangelical spirituality is involvement in the community life and evangelization work. Every member of the community of the baptized should be active and responsible. In Evangelical communities, members regularly take part in celebrations and other church meetings, financially support the church (in many cases by paying the tithe), undertake religious formation (in home groups, at Bible study meetings) and serve the community of the faithful or engage in evangelization projects (e.g. evangelization in the streets). In Catholic communities, believers participate in the liturgy and care for their local parishes. In particular, members of various religious movements and groups show responsibility for their local churches. They also have a more or less formalized spiritual formation, support their parishes financially, and take part in charity projects. The Church renewal movements are in large numbers involved in New Evangelization, putting into life the truth that the Church exists to evangelize and that this is its ultimate essence.²⁹ These New Evangelization forms create opportunities for Catholics and Protestants, especially Evangelicals, to meet, be inspired and work together.

²⁸ T.J. ZIELIŃSKI: *Protestantyzm ewangelikalny. Studium specyfiki religijnej*. Wydawnictwo Naukowe ChAT, Warszawa 2013, p. 215.

²⁹ "The presentation of the Gospel message is not an optional contribution for the Church. It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved. This message is indeed necessary. It is unique. It cannot be replaced." PAUL VI: Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 5.

2.3. Affective spirituality

The spiritual (religious) experience³⁰ is important to all Christians. Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler define it as follows: “Experience is a form of knowledge which originates from direct perception of impressions coming from the (internal or external) reality beyond our control. [...] Since the presence of what is experienced attests itself, experience is accompanied by eminent certainty...”³¹ It cannot be reduced to a feeling or emotional experience, then. A religious experience is about meeting God here and now, with the encounter having an impact on self-assessment in the context of what is supernatural and gives life its ultimate sense.³² This inner experience is not generated by a man, for instance, with his thinking, but is God’s gift. Eventually, this is about an inner certainty and an experience of being loved by God, as well as about receiving the gift of salvation from Jesus Christ for free, which leads to spirituality understood as a personal relation between God and man. Each Christian tradition attaches key significance to that experience, but shows different ways to achieve it. For Catholics and Orthodox, sacramental life and permanent living in sanctifying grace are essential. For Protestant Christians, spiritual life is based on a voluntary act of faith, strengthened with the Word of God and the sacrament of Lord’s Supper. The theological dispute is about the possibility of experiencing God’s presence directly. According to traditional theology, there must be an intermediation of liturgical and sacramental signs, whereas the post-Reformation, and especially Evangelical, approach focuses on subjectivity of experience.

The issue of experience seems a very important one, especially in the time of searching for new ways to promote unity among Christians. Evangelicals emphasize the role of internal experience, which however cannot be reduced to a simple emotionality.³³ Nevertheless, a personal experience

³⁰ Psychologists of religion believe that rather than speaking of “an experience of God”, which is difficult to verify, define and show, we should rather speak of a “religious experience”.

³¹ K. RAHNER, H. VORGRIMLER: *Mały słownik teologiczny*. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa 1996, k. 108—109.

³² “Therefore, spiritual experience includes the experience of transcendence, where a man in the holistic horizon intuitively (in a pre-experience) sees himself as relying on what is different, and on things and the world as a subject of his thoughts and actions...” H. VORGRIMLER: *Nowy leksykon teologiczny*. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Verbum. Wydawnictwo Księży Werbistów, Warszawa 2005, p. 71.

³³ “A feeling is a basic way to experience and a strong and different from thought movement touching the very centre of psyche (heart, soul), which can be expressed emotionally, verbally and in the body language.” H. VORGRIMLER: *Nowy leksykon teologi-*

in its broad sense is essential. That is why sometimes we mention *sola experientia* as the fifth post-Reformation principle. This does not mean a focus on emotionality though. All Christians acknowledge the significance of affects in spiritual life and religious experience.³⁴ It is not characteristic of the charismatic spirituality only. This affective dimension is an inherent part of the human nature and can be seen both in traditional and new forms. In fact, liturgy in the historical Churches has a strong emotional charge, just like spontaneous prayer of praise and new Christian music. The ways of expression are of course different. Nonetheless, an interaction is possible, with the traditional forms offering a testimony of order and the spontaneous (Evangelical) ones showing the role of heart and expression of inner feelings. Reflection is necessary in both cases. Therefore, the accusations that in Catholicism spirituality is focused on the intellectual and volitive dimension of faith and that Evangelical Christians reject theology and a rational reflection on faith and experience are false. It is worth remembering that an authentic religious experience, "being an inner self-testimony of supernatural reality (grace), can take place for human beings, or for humanity as a whole in its faith-history, only if it is accompanied by an objectifying, conceptual reflection."³⁵

2.4. Eastern spirituality

No discussion of the spiritual way to achieve unity among Christians can omit Eastern spirituality, in particular the spirituality of the Desert Fathers and the Byzantine tradition. This is all so more important in the light of a renaissance of interest in these sources of spiritual growth.

First, the way of the desert should be briefly described. The fathers of the first ages looked for silence, peace, and solitude. By doing that they meant to get closer to God but also to get to know and come to terms with themselves. Prayer and struggle with passions and secret desires helped to achieve that. The ultimate goal was to awaken one's heart to

czny. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Verbinum. Wydawnictwo Księży Werbistów, Warszawa 2005, p. 402.

³⁴ Being moved and touched, which has its source in the thought, is an important element of religion. The emotional ability to experience cannot be created, but it can surely be suppressed with false asceticism (over-intellectualized theology, suppression of feelings and intuition in the Church, etc.).

³⁵ KARL RAHNER, HERBERT VORGRIMLER: *Mały słownik teologiczny*. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa 1996, k. 109.

consciously experience God's presence and love. That school of life has its followers also in contemporary times. The testimonies of contemporary Eastern monks' lives and in particular the more and more widely available writings of the Desert Fathers have an influence on Western Christians, whether Catholics or Protestants, as well as on people who have abandoned their faith or are not baptized at all. Things are similar with the broadly understood constant prayer, whose origin traces back not only to the desert but particularly to the Athos hesychasm.³⁶ To illustrate that we can mention various meditation centres, which also have ecumenical features. A good example here are the Polish Benedictine monasteries — in Lubiń (training in non-discursive meditation)³⁷ and Kraków-Tyniec (training in Jesus Prayer)³⁸ — as well as the World Community for Christian Meditation, an ecumenical contemplative community.³⁹

Another area is the liturgical and devotional tradition. Many western Christians are affected by the Eastern liturgy and celebrations, with their liturgical sensitivity, presence, and theology of the icon, the school of writing icons and various forms of praying together, especially with the Akathist Hymn to the Birth-giver of God, which is gaining popularity in Catholic communities. At the same time, the Catholic Church spreads its way of thinking and practising theology and undertakes various pastoral work initiatives.

3. New ways to promote Christian unity

The opening of the Catholic Church to the ecumenical movement has given a new shape to the efforts to foster unity, co-existence and collaboration of Christian denominations. The words and gestures of John Paul II, including in particular Encyclical Letter *Ut unum sint*, and the care for ecumenism shown by Benedict XVI did a lot of good. However, it is Pope Francis' pontificate that is particularly marked with ecumenical efforts and service for the unity of Christians. The more than 50-years-

³⁶ See J.-Y. LELOUP: *Słowa z góry Athos. Duchowość mnichów z góry Athos*. Trans. W. SZŁĘZAK. Kraków 2012, pp. 51—59. For more information about Jesus Prayer, see MNICH KOŚCIOŁA WSCHODNIEGO: *Modlitwa Jezusowa. Jej początek, rozwój i praktyka w tradycji bizantyjsko-słowiańskiej*. Trans. S. HIŻYCKI. Kraków 2015, pp. 119—143.

³⁷ See <https://lubin-medytacje.pl/aktualnosci/> [access: 15.07.2021].

³⁸ See <http://domgosci.benedyktyni.com/oddychac-imieniem-modlitwa-jezusowa/> [access: 15.07.2021].

³⁹ See <https://wccm.org/> [access: 15.07.2021].

long history of the interconfessional dialogue with the participation of the Catholic Church is of course enormously important, but recent years have brought fresh air to the process. It will be no exaggeration to say that Christians are facing a new era of ecumenism. As important as the work done by theologians running the doctrinal dialogue was, the ecumenical rapprochement will now focus on spirituality, evangelization and responding to what the world needs, especially by truly clinging to Jesus Christ and building Christian life on the foundation of the Gospel. The experience gained in this respect by the Catholic charismatic renewal cannot go unnoticed.

3.1. Inspirations from spirituality

The broadly understood Evangelical spirituality offers new prospect for ecumenism. Various trends spread from one denomination to another, not disturbing their confessional identity. The trends include greater focus on Bible reading, teaching the Word of God, use of Christian music, interest in mysticism and use of spiritual gifts, and can be seen particularly clearly in the dialogue among Protestant communities as well as between Catholics and Protestants, mainly Evangelicals.

The first and foremost area is undoubtedly the need to be rooted in the Holy Scripture. The biblical revival in the Catholic Church opens Catholics up to Protestants, creating an atmosphere where they can truly meet. It also translates into what preaching methods are preferred. The reform of the Catholic liturgy following the Second Vatican Council placed greater value on the Word of God (more readings) in the celebration of the Eucharist and other church services, and shifted the emphasis away from a sermon understood as giving instructions to a homily understood as a deliberation about the Word read and the liturgy conducted. Moreover, the New Evangelization has brought a new form of teaching, which is more personal, with “we” and plural “you” replaced by “I” and singular “you”. It also stresses the fact that the Word of God acts here and now, so one may expect to see specific fruit of teaching. This model of proclamation brings the preachers of different denominations closer together, by letting them inspire one another and allowing for joint celebrations with guest preachers.

The second thing uniting Christians is the new Christian music. The songs are pan-denominational in nature, which creates rooms for spiritual meeting. It goes as far as to say that just like the 16th-century Reformation

was fuelled, among other things, by songs, today the Praise & Worship music, especially songs with one or more verses sung by the participants, conveys the message of and helps promote unity.⁴⁰ This can happen also because the songs are rooted in the Bible and express inner feelings rather than only describe a religious reality. The new music is more personal, helps identify with the lyrics and encourages contemplation. Additionally, there has been a clear shift in Christianity from traditional hymns to simpler songs and more instruments have been allowed, although the Catholic Church still has strict rules concerning that matter.⁴¹ All this is in line with the changing music culture in the society.

The third area of spirituality is mysticism, or actually mysticism in its new meaning. Father Jan Andrzej Kłoczowski, a Catholic philosopher, says that “a mystic interiorizes religion, putting emphasis on the internal and individual relation with God. The personal emphasis sometimes causes tensions between the mystic and his or her religious community. The conflict does not always mean that the mystic dissents from the tradition, but rather that he or she is concerned with ensuring that the doctrinal message retain its spiritual power.”⁴² It is not about some extraordinary experience, especially visions, but about a deep and unutterable sense of God’s presence and strengthening of the relation with God at a very personal level.⁴³ However, while Protestants will distance themselves from the classic Catholic mysticism, they may find its broader understanding more meaningful. This is particularly true for Pentecostal communities, which attach major importance to non-verbal and other than notional experience of God during prayer in tongues, silence after adoration or use of charismatic gifts. A meeting with Catholics from the charismatic renewal may help get to know each other better, share experiences and even work together. What matters are the results of the charismatic awakening — revival of faith, full spiritual life, love for the Bible and prayer, engagement in the Church’s mission. These things look similar in classic mysticism. In both cases, there occurs the “radical overwhelming” (manifesting itself

⁴⁰ See “Muzyka nowej ewangelizacji a doświadczenie duchowe. Kontekst, rzeczywistość, wyzwania.” *Studia Pastoralne* 12 (2016), pp. 88—109.

⁴¹ See *Instrukcja Konferencji Episkopatu Polski o muzyce kościelnej*, https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/kep/instrukcja_muzyka_14102017.html [access: 20.07.2021].

⁴² J.A. KŁOCZOWSKI: “Zwrot do mistyki?” In: *Duchowość chrześcijańska na progu trzeciego tysiąclecia*. Eds. J. MACHNIAK, J.W. GOGOLA. Kraków 1999, pp. 87—88.

⁴³ “When God visits the soul directly, the soul [...] receives spiritual favours from God. The reason for this is that His Majesty dwells substantially in that part of the soul [...]. Since the Lord grants these communications directly, they are wholly divine and sovereign. They are all substantial touches of divine union between God and the soul.” JAN OD KRZYŻA: “Noc ciemna.” In: IDEM: *Dzieła*. Trans. B. SMYRAK. Kraków 1998, II, 23, 11, p. 516.

in revision of life), “total transformation” (new style of life), “the idea of wholeness” (the feeling of fullness during prayer), and awareness of revelation.⁴⁴ Sometimes some physical symptoms appear, such as the feeling of joy or fall, as described by classic Christian mystics.

The fourth area is the practice of charismatic gifts for the purposes of evangelization and building the community of the faithful. “Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world.”⁴⁵ This brings charismatic Catholics and Protestants closer together. Although there are noticeable differences in how the two denominations understand the theology of charisms, for instance, glossolalia or resting in the Spirit, the sharing of experience and joint charismatic service are important to all Christianity, bringing Christians of different denominations closer together. Besides the practising of gifts, it is necessary to reflect on the ministries undertaken or ensure that the communities do not close themselves up to or focus too much on charismatic gifts.⁴⁶

3.2. Major impulses from Pope Francis’ pontificate

The pontificate of Pope Francis has had a profound impact on rapprochement of Christians. Francis’ numerous ecumenical meetings, gestures of respect, or reaching out — together with other church leaders — to help deal with the problems the world is struggling with, such as migrants or environmental pollution, are really meaningful and mind-opening. By way of example, we can mention here the visit Francis paid together with the ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew and the Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Ieronymos on the Greek island of Lesbos, which has been struggling with huge numbers of refugees, on 16 April 2016, but also the steps taken together with Bartholomew to care for the natural environment, and the joint efforts made

⁴⁴ A. MIGDA: *Mistycyzm pentekostalny w Polsce*. Kraków 2013, pp. 197—199.

⁴⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 799. See *Wprowadzenie do nauki o Biblii oraz doktryny i praktyki ruchu zielonoświątkowego*. Eds. E. BEDNARZ, R. TOMASZEWSKI. Warszawa 2010, pp. 259—264.

⁴⁶ See S. FALVO: *Przebudzenie charyzmatów*. Trans. T. STAŃCZYK. Łódź 1995; K.M. RANAGHAN: *W mocy Ducha Świętego*. Trans. T.M. MICEWICZ. Warsaw 1993; B. LOCUM: *Dar prorocтва*. Trans. A.W. MIZIOŁEK. Ząbki 2012; A.J. PALLA: *Poznaj swoją osobowość i dary duchowe*. Warszawa 2010.

with Archbishop John Welby, the most senior bishop in the Church of England, to help solve the problems of Africa (e.g. South Sudan). The Bishop of Rome's support for many of those in need and his famous call for help to the poor are clear manifestations of what he considers his duty.

However, Francis' ecumenical efforts cannot be reduced to social causes only. The inter-ecclesial relations are also vital. One of the key ecumenical events that Francis participated in was undoubtedly the beginning of the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Reformation. On 31 October and 1 November 2016 Francis went to Sweden and the visit encouraged Catholics and Protestants to take a different look at each other, helped to better understand papal service and gave a new impetus to joint projects, prayer meeting and retreats. At that event the Pope did not of course celebrate the 16th-century schism in the Church but took part in a meeting of brothers in faith who bore witness to Jesus Christ together. This was a meaningful sign of the search for unity and mutual respect among Christians. That event should inspire others to move away from confrontation but look for closeness and authentic brotherly love. The same idea is also expressed in *From Conflict to Communion*, a document prepared by Roman Catholic and Lutheran theologians and published in Geneva and Vatican on 17 June 2013.⁴⁷ However, human gestures and theological work are not enough. What is still needed is prayer. During a meeting with representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, Francis said: "Let us not forget to start from prayer, so that it is not human plans that indicate the way, but the Holy Spirit: He alone opens the way and enlightens the steps to be taken. The Spirit of love cannot but drive us on the paths of charity."⁴⁸

The words of apology uttered by the Pope to the members of the Waldensian Church for persecution by the Catholics were very moving.⁴⁹ Francis also asked Pentecostals to forgive the humiliation by Catholics — during a meeting with pastor Giovanni Traettino, the Pope said: "I ask your forgiveness for this! I ask your forgiveness for those Catholic brothers and sisters who understood and were tempted by the devil and did the same thing as Joseph's brothers. I ask the Lord to give us the grace to rec-

⁴⁷ See THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY: *From Conflict to Communion Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017*, <https://www.lutheranworld.org/sites/default/files/From%20Conflict%20to%20Communion%20EN.pdf> [access: 20.07.2021].

⁴⁸ FRANCIS: *Address to the Delegation of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church*, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/june/documents/papa-francesco_20180604_chiesa-luterana-tesca.html [access: 21.07.2021].

⁴⁹ See FRANCIS: *Address of the Holy Father*, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/june/documents/papa-francesco_20150622_torino-chiesa-valdese.html [access: 20.07.2021].

ognize and to forgive...”⁵⁰ Francis points to the value of forgiveness and a new look at Christians of other denominations. It is worth to remember that unity develops when one follows Jesus, which is something all the baptized are called to do, irrespective of what confession they belong to.⁵¹ Various words spoken spontaneously by Francis to the ecumenical partners express the same message. For example, in a video recorded for the Charismatic Evangelical Leadership Conference hosted by Kenneth Copeland in the United States, Pope spoke about the need to pray together and look for unity.⁵²

A special role in the work for unity of Christians is to be played by Catholic Pentecostal communities, which strongly rely on the experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is why one of the tasks of Catholic Charismatic Renewal Internationale Service *Charis*, which was established by Pope Francis and brings together all Catholic charismatic communities, is “to promote the ecumenical dimension of Catholic Charismatic Renewal and foster the commitment to serving the unity of all Christians,”⁵³ relying on an exchange of spiritual gifts, contacts, and various areas of joint work.

Pope Francis clearly shows that there is no turning back from ecumenism and that its special form is living, praying and working together. During a meeting held on 3 July 2017 to commemorate a jubilee of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Francis said: “Today Christian unity is more urgent than ever, Christians united by the power of the Holy Spirit, in prayer and in activity on behalf of the most vulnerable. To walk together, to work together, to love one another, and together to seek to explain our differences, to come to agreement, but as we keep walking! If we stop walking, we will never come to agreement. So it is, because the Spirit

⁵⁰ FRANCIS: *Address*. Private visit of the Holy Father to Caserta for a meeting with the evangelical pastor Giovanni Traettino, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140728_caserta-pastore-traettino.html [access: 20.07.2021].

⁵¹ “When one walks in the presence of God, he is granted this brotherhood. When, on the other hand, we stop, we watch each other too closely, we are given another path... bad, bad! The path of gossip...” FRANCIS: *Address*. Private visit of the Holy Father to Caserta for a meeting with the evangelical pastor Giovanni Traettino, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/july/documents/papa-francesco_20140728_caserta-pastore-traettino.html [access: 20.07.2021].

⁵² “Evangelical pastor, close friend to Pope, dies after motorcycle crash”, ROME Reports in English, 0:49—1:06, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHQDXkWBt_M [published: 21.07.2014].

⁵³ CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL INTERNATIONAL SERVICE (Charis): *Statutes*, II, Art. 3, f, <https://www.charis.international/wp-content/uploads/Statutes-CHARIS.pdf> [access: 25.01.2021].

wants us to keep walking.”⁵⁴ Ecumenism understood as serving others, walking together and accompanying others rather than as a developing a common doctrine is key. Such an approach makes it possible to look for unity, not only among leaders and theologians, but also among whole communities. A valuable example of how the Pope’s words can be put into practice would be prayer gatherings of all sorts, not only official but also spontaneous and local ones, with the people praising the Lord and sharing their personal experience of faith.⁵⁵

No discussion of the new impulses for ecumenism during Francis’ pontificate can omit *The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum*, published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The document says that truth, love and humbleness should govern relations between Christians and that the ecumenical dialogue requires patience and perseverance. Diocesan bishops have a special duty in the search for ways of unity and should be men of dialogue. The document strongly stresses the need to discover common ways with the dialogue of love, truth, and life.⁵⁶ A good advice is to establish ecumenical dialogue structures at the level of parishes. They are to help conduct intensive ecumenical activities at local communities, with the faithful participating in special celebrations of other Christian churches. It is also a good way to learn about various pastoral propositions of other Christian communities. All this clearly shows that, as specified in the applicable Catholic Church documents, ecumenism is not a marginal reality but an essence of the Church.

⁵⁴ FRANCIS: *Address*, Pentecost Vigil of Prayer. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/june/documents/papa-francesco_20170603_veglia-pentecoste.html [access: 20.07.2021].

⁵⁵ “In our relations, we will follow these basic principles: respect for confessional identities, ecclesiality (communion of each participant with his Church/Community), non-proselytism, and the search for unity as a gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mk 9,38-40, 1 Co 12,4-6). With an open heart, we want to cultivate our communion in the Holy Spirit with fraternal spaces of prayer, formation and worship of the God Trinity, in the light of the Word (cf. Mt 5,9-13; Jn 4,23).” The Third International Conference of Praise and Worship Somos Um (We Are One), <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/it/dialoghi/sezione-occidentale/pentecostali/autres-documents-et-evenements/en/en.html> [access: 10.08.2022].

⁵⁶ See PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN UNITY: *The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum*, <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/documenti/2020-l-eveque-et-l-unite-des-chretiens---vademecum-cumenique.html> [access: 20.07.2021].

3.3. Global Christian Forum and respective national forums

The need to build bridges between different denominations is felt by many environments, previously rather sceptical about ecumenism. Therefore, finding a new formula, where Christians could meet and cooperate, without questioning what has already been achieved, appeared necessary. The Global Christian Forum⁵⁷ and its local (national) counterparts seem to respond to that need. It was started in 1998 by Konrad Reiser, at that time General Secretary of the World Council of Churches. In 2002, *Guiding Purpose Statement* was signed, and the first international meeting was held in Kenya on 6—9 November 2007. The initiative was joined by many Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. Its formula offers an opportunity to meet for Catholics, and Eastern Christians, members of historical Churches originated in Reformation, and the so-called free Churches. The forum comprises joint prayers, exchange of thoughts and opinions, and other pastoral, scientific and formation projects. On the one hand, it provides opportunities to meet and get to know one another as well as to eliminate various prejudices. On the other, it is worthwhile to see how different denominations respond to the challenges of contemporary times. For example, the Polish Christian Forum has held major academic conferences which were an outcome of the prayers and meetings by representatives of Christian communities and which were a practical results of the dialogue and brotherhood efforts taken.⁵⁸

4. Conclusions

To conclude briefly the foregoing considerations:

- Care for Christian unity is an essence of Christianity. It is a response to the priestly prayer of Jesus, who called to the Father: “May they all be one” (J 17,21a). Thus, no one can marginalize ecumenism or feel exempt from the obligation to promote it.

⁵⁷ *Global Christian Forum*, <https://globalchristianforum.org/> [access: 25.05.2021].

⁵⁸ *Jeden Duch, różne dary, wspólne dobro*, <http://wst.kei.pl/wsts/event/11749/> [access: 25.05.2021]; *Na falach Ducha. Wyzwania pentekostalizacji*, <https://ekumenia.pl/aktualnosc/konferencja-o-pentekostalizacji/> [access: 25.05.2021]; *Godność osób oraz szacunek dla życia*, <https://pfch.wsts.edu.pl/> [access: 25.05.2021].

- Next to the doctrinal ecumenism, there is a need for development of the spiritual dimension. The search for unity is therefore possible thanks to the common prayer, support, sharing of daily activities, exchange of gifts and inspiring one another. Although it is difficult to achieve full unity, the cooperation and co-existence brings Christians closer together. An authentic focus on Jesus Christ, the only Saviour chosen by the faithful with an act of faith, is a crucial condition in this respect.
- The contemporary times see the emergence of new areas of ecumenism, namely biblical revival, new (spontaneous) forms of prayer, praise and worship music, new understanding of mysticism (related to the charisms from the Holy Spirit), and evangelization. The doctrinal dialogue should be continued by developing spiritual and pastoral ecumenical projects, so that the Christian message is conveyed more and more effectively.
- The dialogue between the Catholic Church and Evangelical communities, which are rather sceptical about ecumenism, remains a challenge. Cooperation is possible in giving testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, preaching the truth about the gift of salvation being offered for free, emphasizing that faith is chosen consciously and making use of spiritual gifts. What is particularly significant, communities may inspire one another in carrying out evangelization. It is no surprising then that Pope Francis points to fostering the unity of Christians as one of the key tasks of groups involved in the broadly understood charismatic renewal.
- Directions to be followed by the ecumenical movement now include: shifting from celebration to ordinary life and then to deeper celebration together, from prayer to collaboration and from too much care about one's denomination to openness assuming that one's identity is preserved. Then the ecumenical dialogue will be realistic and can be a part of the faithful's lives as it will open them up to the unpredictable actions of the Holy Spirit leading Christians to full unity in Jesus Christ.

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PRZEMYŚLAW SAWA

Ut unum sint:

Nouveaux domaines de l'œcuménisme spirituel et pastoral

Résumé

Le souci de l'unité des chrétiens fait partie de la nature de l'Église. Après de nombreuses années de mouvement œcuménique, une certaine déception est apparue. Les dialogues doctrinaux et les réunions officielles en cours sont toujours d'actualité, mais l'œcuménisme spirituel et pastoral est de plus en plus nécessaire. Il se manifeste non

seulement dans la prière commune, mais aussi dans un véritable échange de dons spirituels, d'inspirations pastorales et de coopération dans de nombreux domaines de la vie ecclésiale et sociale.

De nos jours, de nouveaux domaines d'un tel œcuménisme ont émergé. D'une part, ce renouvellement se manifeste dans diverses tendances spirituelles qui traversent les frontières des églises et des communautés (forme de prière, musique, pratique de dons spirituels); d'autre part, dans la recherche des sources et de lignes directrices pour la vie spirituelle dans différentes traditions. De manière particulière, la nouvelle version de l'œcuménisme inclut les communautés évangéliques et pentecôtistes. Par conséquent, le renouveau charismatique catholique au sens large occupe une place inaliénable dans l'œuvre de service pour l'unité des chrétiens. C'est pourquoi il est nécessaire de faire le chemin ensemble, de s'accompagner, d'être hospitalier, de travailler pour les gens. Ce n'est qu'alors que le Saint-Esprit conduira à l'unité des disciples de Christ.

Mots-clés: œcuménisme spirituel et pastoral, spiritualité évangélique, spiritualité pentecôtiste, renouveau charismatique.

PRZEMYSŁAW SAWA

Ut unum sint:

Nuovi spazi dell'ecumenismo spirituale e pastorale

Abstract

La preoccupazione per l'unità dei cristiani fa parte della natura della Chiesa. Dopo tanti anni di movimento ecumenico, si scorge una certa delusione. Anche se i dialoghi dottrinali e gli incontri ufficiali in corso rimangono attuali, l'ecumenismo spirituale e pastorale è sempre più necessario. Si manifesta non solo nella preghiera comune, ma anche in un genuino scambio di doni spirituali, di ispirazioni pastorali e di collaborazione in molti ambiti della vita ecclesiale e sociale.

Oggi sono emerse nuove aree di tale ecumenismo. Ciò si manifesta, da un lato, nelle diverse tendenze spirituali che attraversano i confini delle chiese e delle comunità (forma di preghiera, musica, pratica dei doni spirituali), dall'altro, nella ricerca di fonti e orientamenti per la vita spirituale in tradizioni diverse. In particolare, la nuova versione dell'ecumenismo include comunità evangeliche e pentecostali. Pertanto, il più ampio rinnovamento carismatico cattolico ha un posto inalienabile nell'opera di servizio per l'unità dei cristiani. Per questo è necessario fare insieme il cammino, accompagnarsi, essere ospitali, lavorare il bene altrui. Solo allora lo Spirito Santo condurrà all'unità dei seguaci di Cristo.

Parole chiave: ecumenismo spirituale e pastorale, spiritualità evangelica, spiritualità pentecostale, rinnovamento carismatico.