



Marek MARCZEWSKI: *Leiturgia — Martyria —
Diakonia. Koinonia.*
Lublin 2021. 311 pp.

Following the Bible, all Christian denominations agree that the inner nature of the Church is expressed in a threefold task: proclaiming the word of God (*martyria*), administering the sacraments (*leiturgia*), and the service of charity (*diakonia*). All of these vital functions of the Church serve the ultimate goal of building community in Christ: *koinonia en Christo*. The book by the pastoralist and pastoral educator Marek Marczewski DSc, working as a professor at the Higher School of Social and Economics in Gdansk, is based on the ancient Christian notions. As the author emphasizes in the introduction, the book “aims to introduce theological and ascetic reflection on the implementation of attitudes that shape deacons in their threefold task (service) and help to implement them to the reality of home, the domestic Church, in the realization of the family as the *community-koinonia*” (p. 16). The book is dedicated to permanent deacons in Poland due to the fact that their number is constantly increasing in Polish dioceses; in addition, the author for many years of his professional life has been dealing with the issues of permanent diaconate in theology and the post-conciliar practice. Of course, the publication can also serve seminarians for whom diaconal ordinations are a transition stage to ordination to the presbyterate and all those who are involved in the salvific ministry of the Church (pastoral ministry). It can be said that the book deals with specific aspects of pastoral theology, especially the fundamental functions of the Church, thanks to which she comes to fruition.

The originality of the study in question lies in the fact that the author makes abundant use of the scholarly achievements of an outstanding

Polish pastoralist practicing theology in its ecclesiological aspect, Fr. Franciszek Blachnicki (1921—1987). A look at the life functions of the Church in the light of the theological and pastoral thought of the founder of the Light-Life Movement is worth popularizing primarily because his vision was ahead of his time. Thus, the depth and farsightedness of Blachnicki's theological thinking and the author's reference to contemporary documents of the Church and selected theologians make the look at the basic functions of the Church not only fresh but inspiring for further reflection, both in theory and pastoral practice. This applies especially to the realization of the Church in the family and the role that a deacon can play in it, which is analyzed in the context of the author's academic interests.

In the introduction to the first chapter, "Leiturgia", the author emphasizes that one of the last documents of the Holy See, *The Directory on the Service and Life of Permanent Deacons* published by the Congregation for the Clergy, pays special attention to the implementation and spirituality of the liturgical service. In view of the above, the book deals with the following topics: liturgy as an expression of God's rational service (cf. Romans 12: 1—2), education to the liturgy, the priestly community of the Church actualized by the sacraments and virtues, and the domestic Church as a community in dialogue with God. Especially the last point of this chapter in light of The Letter to the Philippians and the First and the Second Letter to Timothy shows the role of the Church as family and the domestic Church in the context of the deacon's ministry. Chapter Two, "Martyria", deals with the following issues: faith in the context of the preaching of the word of God, the Christian formation of adults, evangelization that leads to *diakonia* the deacon as a servant of the Word and the domestic Church as a community of faithful and evangelizing. In this chapter, the Christian formation of adults is first and foremost distinguished as a specific catechumenate that should have specific stages: preparation and education to living the word of God, to the life of prayer, and to the sacramental life. The formation must be associated with the word *metanoia*; it must prepare adults for the attitude of testimony and *diakonia* for the sake of specific community. An essential role in this formation initiated by evangelization is played by the discovery of the value of a small group, as the Church is a sacrament of community or a community of a sacrament. The third chapter, "Diakonia", deals with the following: *diakonia* as the source and inspiration of the basic functions of the Church, the sources of *diakonia*, the Christ-Deacon in the mystery of the Passover (here two texts by Bishop Zbigniew Kiernikowski are presented) and the domestic Church as a community at the service of man. The first point in which the author explains the meaning of the term *diakonia* is extremely important; it is this word that is essential for the entire

third chapter of the work. It is understood here as a feature and attitude of the entire Church, which should carry out her mission in imitation of her Lord, who came not to be served but to serve. In this light, the author explains the relationship between the deacon's office (diaconate), and *diakonia* and the specificity of the deacon's office: the deacon is the animator of the Church's *diakonia*, the deacon is the sacrament of Christ the Servant, and the deacon is an office that "secures" the Church's attitude of service. The second section of the chapter is worth emphasizing as well. It delves into the sources of *diakonia* following Paul VI and explains why the word itself, being the centre of the plan of salvation, is entirely explained by its negation: *Non serviam*. The problem of *koinonia* is taken up at the end of the book. The author presents here a synthetically original concept of the pastoral theology of Fr. Blachnicki. It is worth noting that the issues raised in particular chapters are inspired by a new division of pastoral theology suggested by Blachnicki. It is within the framework of such a division of the pastoral theology into general (pastoral ecclesiology) and specific that the creator of the ecclesiological deduction of the pastoral theology postulated that the specific pastoral theology should, within the life functions of the Church, deal with individual spheres or "areas" of its implementation, that is, within the area of the sign, in the life of the individual, and in the community. As has already been mentioned, the author, following Fr. Blachnicki's theological and pastoral achievements, enhances his thoughts by using contemporary documents of the Church, statements of popes, and the academic achievements of many theologians. In this context, it is to be regretted that the author did not include a bibliography in his book, as it would certainly show, *inter alia*, the richness of the Church's documents on the subject in question, and how prolific and versatile Fr. Blachnicki was in his theological and pastoral work. The reviewer wishes the author, while analyzing faith, hope, and charity, took into account such encyclicals as *Lumen fidei*, *Spe salvi*, *Deus Caritas est*, or *The Directory for Family Pastoral Care*, announced by the Polish Bishops' Conference in 2008. It is an important document because its main motive was difficulties encountered by the lay faithful in engaging in fulfilling liturgical functions. Also, it is of a concrete help for pastors and lay faithful and based on the ecclesiology of Vatican II; it had been devised for a better understanding of liturgical services and functions and more effective formation of people who fulfil them.

The issues addressed by the author, which are very deep and extremely important for realization of the salvific ministry of the Church, certainly require theological background. Therefore, it surely is a drawback that the author does not make an unprepared reader's life easier. The author of

the publication often uses long citations with no appropriate comments of explanations. The abundance of footnotes does not solve the problem either, as in the majority of cases they are based on literal quotes. Concise introductions to individual chapters would certainly contribute to a fairly comprehensive view of the issues raised, contrary to the otherwise important but too extensive texts that could be separate sections in the work. Moreover, it seems that the last part of the work on *koinonia* should be a separate chapter and not only given in lieu of conclusions, as focusing only on the synthetic presentation of Blachnicki's concept of pastoral ecclesiology and the *koinonia*-based pneumatological principle of the formal pastoral theology and pastoral ministry does not exhaust the extremely important issue of the realization of the Church in the community, which in fact was the motive behind the academic research of the "prophet of the Living Church": to deal with liturgy, fundamental catechetics, the theology of the life of the Church, and finally its implementation in the local community and in the Light-Life Movement. Summing up, it should be concluded that the reviewed book is certainly valuable from the substantive point of view, and also for Christians of various denominations. It offers the opportunity to learn about the life functions of the Church from a biblical diaconal perspective that is close to all churches and Christian communities.

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