
MATERIAŁY

„Studia Pastoralne” 2020, nr 16, s. 270-279

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ABORTION AND EUTHANASIA AS ANTI-ECOLOGICAL “ASSAULTS” AGAINST MARRIAGE AND FAMILY²

The 20th century and the 21st century have been a time of an aggressive assault and, eventually, dismantling of the family, carried out by totalitarian systems. These anti-human ideologies, praising the collective, or serving a specific political or economic lobby, have been trying to subjugate the family. However, despite enormous moral losses, the family has not surrendered to destruction. The strength of the present-day family stems from the dramatic experiences it has weathered through. The dissolution of the family attempted by communism, national socialism and, currently, lay fundamentalism has not been successful (and let us hope that it will not be). The family can still defend itself and will always do so, thanks to which it enhances its vital spiritual strength, its charisma.

The phrase “anti-ecological assault on marriage and family” is not a poetic figure of speech or a cluster of random words. “Familiology” – the interdisciplinary examination of marriage and family – is closely linked to ecology. Environmental pollution, affecting water, soil and air, ultimately affects human beings. As a result of the destruction of nature, humans, the “crown of being”, are dethroned. They become just a part, a cog of the ecological system rather than its overlords.

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² Artykuł ukazał się drukiem w książce E. Sakowicza pt. *Dialogue and Identity an Other Studies*, Lublin 2020 za zgodą Redaktora Naczelnego „Studiów Pastoralnych”.

Abortion and euthanasia are the most brutal anti-ecological forms of attack on marriage and family, taking place in the name of the law and the purported achievements of civilisation. The assault on the beginning of human life, old age and dying, on illness and handicapped or disabled people is essentially a blatant act of violence against the laws of nature. It is the abandonment of care for human life from its conception to natural death; it means choosing an unjust death.

ABORTION

Every human life beginning from the moment of conception is a gift from God Himself. In Catholicism, the Almighty God (whom not only Christians but also Jews address as “Father”) is directly involved in the creation of every human being, without exception. Natural parents are appointed by God to take care of the life that He has created. Parents look after their unborn and then the born child on God’s behalf, so to speak. It is the most important ecological task entrusted to man.

“Since it must be treated from conception as a person, – as *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us – the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being.³

Ecology is manifested in the defence of human integrity, prenatal care, and treatment using acceptable means. The opposite attitude is the anti-ecological “assault” on a specific married couple and family, real people living in a particular environment.

The ecological care of the life of the unborn is also a call for the protection of women, for whom abortion is always a traumatic experience. As Marian Machinek writes in *Życie w dyspozycji człowieka. Wybrane problemy etyczne u początków ludzkiego życia* [*Life at Man’s Disposal. Certain ethical problems at the outset of human life*], “(...) a fragment of John Paul II’s Encyclical «*Evangelium vitae*» [no. 99 – ES] directed to women who had an abortion is an attempt to reach persons who are both perpetrators and victims of feticide. The Pope highlights problems that are often deliberately ignored by the public opinion. While heated debates take place concerning the possibility of carrying out a legal abortion and giving women access to the relevant counselling, the situation of women after an abortion is brushed aside. The post-abortion syndrome and other, both physical and mental complications are often blamed on “«Catholic propaganda» which allegedly harasses women and incites their feeling of guilt. Contrary to such views, the Holy Father [John Paul II – ES] can see the crux of the matter and shows true solutions to frequently very tragic and traumatic situations”.⁴ The post-abortion syndrome

³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nr 2274 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P7Z.HTM (7.06.2019).

⁴ M. Machinek, *Życie w dyspozycji człowieka. Wybrane problemy etyczne u początków ludzkiego życia*, Olsztyn 2004, p. 201-202.

is a traumatic consequence of violence against nature and, above all, against man. It is a response of a person who is subconsciously aware of the gravity of taking away the life of an unborn child.

As *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, “human life should be absolutely respected and protected from its conception. From the very first moment of its existence, a human being should enjoy the rights of a person, including the inviolable right of every innocent being to live.” The respect and protection of life is the first and most important task of ecology.

As Marek Czachorowski writes in the encyclopaedic entry on *abortion*, “eugenic considerations were consistent with Hitler’s Nazi ideology; in *Mein Kampf*, he did not conceal his plan to control «the right to procreation» that would prohibit those «burdened with genetic conditions» from reproducing; in accordance with the ideology of racial struggle, he intended to make this new rule to become the governing law of the entire world; already before [World War 2] he announced the creation of «a depopulation technique»; this idea was at the centre of Nazi plans, envisaging first the elimination of Aryans of poor health, then the disappearance of Jews and Roma, and reducing the numbers of Slavs” (...) “As part of the «negative demographic policy», Germans promoted (...) legal abortion in the conquered nations, particularly in Polish territories. On 19 October 1941, abortion on demand was introduced in occupied Poland. On 22 June 1942, Hitler presented abortion as the indispensable method of treating German population (...). In June 1943, an order was issued to the SS, SD and Policy, according to which, in the case of female workers from the East, pregnancy should be terminated upon request (...). One of the charges brought against Eichmann, who was accused of «a crime against the Jewish people», was that he «issued an order prohibiting Jewish women in Theresienstadt from giving birth and forcing them to terminate pregnancy».⁵

The Church continues to teach that abortion is a direct blow to the life of society, the life of a nation, and democracy. It is an act that intensifies hatred among people and leads to wars. It is an act of destroying nature, an assault on ecology.

According to *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* “formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life. «A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*,» «by the very commission of the offense», and subject to the conditions provided by Canon Law. The Church does not thereby intend to restrict the scope of mercy. Rather, she makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.⁶

⁵ M. Czachorowski, *Aborcja*, In: M.A. Krapiec et al. (Ed.), *Encyklopedia „Białych Płan”*, vol. 1, Radom 2000, p. 19-20.

⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nr 2272 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P7Z.HTM (7.06.2019).

The Church's teaching on the inalienable value of the life from conception is not a reflection of modern circumstances, but has been developing for centuries in the course of philosophical and theological studies.⁷ “The unequivocal condemnation of abortion, which John Paul II regards as a part of «a conspiracy against life», is not a new science as it is backed by the Church's uninterrupted teaching.”⁸ This “conspiracy against life” is an anti-ecological, brutal assault on marriage and family. According to *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law (...).”⁹

It should be assumed that somebody declaring themselves Catholic and associating themselves with the Catholic religious experience fully affirms the Magisterium of the Catholic Church concerning the ontological and anthropological status of the human foetus and its corpse as well as the Catholic funeral rituals, also with regard to human beings that died before birth. Thus, in their system of values and their religiousness, such an individual affirms the full dignity of a human being in the prenatal period and, consequently, regards a dead human foetus as a deceased person.

The cremation of the remains of aborted human beings, “flushing” them into the toilet or “disposing” of them in any other way is simply a brutal violation against the entire natural environment. It is an act of self-destruction.

EUTHANASIA

While abortion is a totalitarian attack on the beginning of human life, euthanasia is an assault on the natural death of a human being. Both acts of violence, constituting essentially an unlawful death sentence against the innocent, are ultimately directed against marriage and family – sacred institutions established by God, according to Catholicism. What is more, it is sacrilege that brings disgrace to the holy sacrament of marriage, a “visible sign of the invisible grace of God.” Euthanasia is a brutal, anti-ecological “assault” against marriage and family.

The so-called social considerations are the primary argument put forward by those who believe in the programme of euthanasia of unneeded, redundant and “burdensome” people. These considerations contradict nature but, according to

⁷ See M. Czachorowski, *Aborcja*, In: M.A. Krąpiec et al. (Ed.), *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, vol. 1, Lublin 2000, p. 22-26; M. Czachorowski, *Aborcja*, In: M. A. Krąpiec et al. (Ed.), *Encyklopedia „Białych Płam”*, vol. 1, Radom 2000, p. 14-32.

⁸ M. Machinek, *Życie w dyspozycji człowieka. Wybrane problemy etyczne u początków ludzkiego życia*, Olsztyn 2004, p. 201.

⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nr 2271 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P7Z.HTM (7.06.2019).

vigorous usurpers of God's powers related to human existence, they are supposed to justify the decisions of taking the life of old, terminally ill people, people who are a burden to their family and, above all, to the state. The life of people who have an inalienable right to a natural death is taken away for the alleged good of certain circles or groups of people "in their prime".

Similarly to abortion, euthanasia is a manifestation of the culture of death and destruction. The promoters of this kind of death are, ultimately, advocates of the death penalty that has been reputedly abolished by the legislation of the European Union. However, the proponents of unnatural death, which is actually similar to suicide, do not have any restraints. Trying to persuade the enthusiasts of euthanasia about the holiness of life and its natural course leading to a natural death, or reminding them about the primacy of respect for nature entrusted to man as the "crown of creation", will be of no avail.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church emphatically refers to euthanasia as an assault on human life: "Those whose lives are diminished or weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible,"¹⁰ "Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded"¹¹.

In the encyclical *Evangelium vitae* promulgated on 25 March 1995, John Paul II clearly states that "euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is a deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person. This doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written word of God, is transmitted by the Church's Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium."¹²

However, euthanasia violates the fundamental good represented by life. Therefore, it is an inherently evil act, as stressed by John Paul II in the encyclical *Veritatis splendor* from 1993. In the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis* from 1987, He wrote about euthanasia as a threat to peace. The war that is born in human consciences does not happen in a void; it unfolds in space and landscape, i.e. the environment in which human beings exist. If euthanasia is a threat to peace, it also violates ecology because there will not be peace in a world that is not at peace with

¹⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2276 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P7Z.HTM (7.06.2019).

¹¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2277 http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P7Z.HTM (7.06.2019).

¹² Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Evangelium vitae. To the Bishops Priests and Deacons Men and Women religious lay Faithful and all People of Good Will on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*, no. 65 http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html (7.06.2019)

nature which is a generous gift from God the Creator to all creatures, for every individual human being and all humanity.

* * *

Marriage and family today must fight to preserve their identity. Resisting all assaults and attacks, they will carry out their cultural mission, first internally, in the marriage and family circle, and then in the society, the nation. Family has always been a “communion of persons” and it wishes to remain so. It is in the family that the biggest and most valuable human effort is made: the effort of bringing up children in the environment of marital and family love. Only such a community can protect itself against the ominous, anti-ecological assault.

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Summary

Matrimony and family having a sacral status in every religion and being a sacrament in Christianity, are under attack from totalitarian systems which are both openly aggressive, driven by hatred. Nowadays the world is a witness to a fervent dispute concerning matrimony and family. These institutions acting as the guardians of the moral order and harmony experience numerous ‘attacks’. Their aim is desecration and the ultimate annihilation of the abovementioned institutions.

A particularly brutal attack – ‘blow’ aimed at the family is abortion and euthanasia. They are actions “sponsored” by worldwide corporations of hatred towards human beings. Although they are passed by parliaments as the greatest achievements of democracy, they are in fact its denial. They express violence towards nature, environment, God’s order inscribed into this world. In the light of these arguments they are theoretically and practically anti-ecological. Death of aborted human beings, as well as senile, mentally or terminally ill people submitted to euthanasia, is an expression of a totalitarian ideology which always despises one group and glorifies the other. It labels some people as subhumans and others as superhumans. Both these acts of violence, which are in fact an illegal death penalty imposed on the innocent, ultimately strike matrimony and family as institutions deemed as sanctified by the Catholic Church and ordained by God. The modern matrimony and family willing to ‘be themselves’ have to fight in order to keep their identity. It can be done by a decisive resistance towards any “strikes”. By these actions matrimony and family shall fulfil the culture-making mission first in the matrimonial and family circle, next in the society and finally in the nation. The family has always been “the communion of people” and wants to retain its status. It is within the family where the biggest and the most precious human effort is

taken – the task of raising children in the context of matrimonial and family love, the effort of maturing towards eternity and salvation. Only if the family and matrimony are strong in God, can they survive the sinister anti-ecological “strike” coming from the policy propagating abortion and euthanasia.

Słowa kluczowe: aborcja, eutanazja, małżeństwo, rodzina, ekologia.

Keywords: abortion, euthanasia, matrimony, family, ecology.

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¹³ Niniejsza bibliografia została zestawiona głównie w oparciu o zawartość katalogu Biblioteki Kongresu Stanów Zjednoczonych w Waszyngtonie. Pomocny tu okazał się katalog online: https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/search?searchArg=euthanasia+christianity&searchCode=GKEY%5E*&searchType=0&recCount=25&sk=en_US https://catalog.loc.gov/vwebv/search?searchArg=abortion+christianity&searchCode=GKEY%5E*&searchType=0&recCount=25&sk=en_US

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