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NEW APPROACHES TO ADULT CATECHESIS

INTRODUCTION

One of the major innovations in the field of parish catechesis is the concept of inter-generational catechesis and adult catechesis. Today, an adult believer can only survive if they personally know why they believe. While some Christians view the catechesis of children and sometimes also the young as almost the only possible form of catechesis, others discover with enthusiasm that catechesis concerns also the adults, although generally in practice we see that adult catechesis is still fairly marginal.

Jacques Piveteau claims that the Church of tomorrow will mirror today's Church of adult catechesis. The catechesis of adults has re-discovered the importance of catechuminate as a gradual maturation and deepening of faith. Fundamentally, adult catechesis is the basic form of catechesis, because it appeals to people who have experience and also the greatest responsibilities, and also the ability to live the Christian good news to its greatest potential.

Adult catechesis is permanent and does not end at the beginning of the middle age or late adulthood. In this regard, such catechesis covers a significantly longer time period than in the case of catechesis of children and the youth. The length of the period in which catechesis for the adults is performed may sometimes lead to a simplified view of the period of adulthood. A grown-up person is not the same in their twenties, fifties or eighties, what is necessary to be taken into account for adult catechesis. The purpose of our presentation is to cover the typical features of early, middle and late periods of adulthood – in terms of both psychological and spiritual development – and thus draw attention to some basic principles in the preparation and implementation of adult catechesis.

THE EARLY YEARS OF ADULTHOOD: THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

The beginning of the period of adulthood is set between the end of adolescence, which is between the ages of eighteen and nineteen, and the beginning of the following decade, that is towards the age of twenty-eight. A person in these ages feels responsible to take life in their own hands. „A young person should enter the period of adulthood with an established code of ethics enabling them to direct their own choices and behaviour and start taking responsibility for their own life”¹.

It is good for one’s own development to gradually start declining the financial and moral support of their own family in order to achieve their own physical independence and make a new step in the inner process of psychic and spiritual uniqueness².

The first period of adulthood is thus marked by a double challenge. A person in their own twenties thus has to deal with the vital question of personal vocation and the choice of a particular occupation. In the first part of the twenties a person „becomes aware of the new configuration of their own self-image”³, which is in interaction with the image of their own environment and other people. The period of asking questions accomplished by a quest for answers enables a person to specify the challenge which they will try to answer and to predict the path leading to it.

Work enables a person to consciously become part of a wider society. This requires a decision for a concrete occupation in accordance with one’s interest, skills and values. „Study or work, which a person starts, opens them for their own environment and relationships with other people and help them discover their own identity and place in the world”⁴. When a person accepts the decision about what they want to do in their own life, the process of clarification begins. A person needs to answer the question of what they want from life, which leads them to the search for harmony between their wishes on the vocational level (priest, religious, married, single) and their ambitions at the level of professional work. During these years, a person feels a strong need to perceive themselves competent for concrete choices and concrete realizations, which helps one to become self-critical and consciously enter into dialogue with the challenges of life⁵.

Together with the criticism in the early period of adulthood a person becomes also „more analytical, experienced, diligent in achieving the set objectives and persistent”⁶.

¹ J. Alain, *En manque de défis*, „Le magazine de la personne” 2 (2001), p. 8.

² C. Schuster and S. Ashburn, *The Process of Human Development – A Holistic Life-Span Approach*, Philadelphia 1992, p. 169.

³ L. Berk, *Development through the Life-Span*, Boston 2004, p. 84.

⁴ J. Gollnick, *Religion and Spirituality in the Life Cycle*, New York 2005, p. 120.

⁵ S. D. Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, San Francisco 2000, p. 6.

⁶ J. Gollnick, *Religion and Spirituality in the Life Cycle*, New York 2005, p. 121.

For the vast majority of young people a life decision gets its expression in relation to the person who they want to share life with. Some give priority to a specific mission which they completely dedicate themselves to; while others decide for a consecrated life, which is a decision for God and a person at the same time. Be it a decision for a specific person or a particular work, it is important that at the end of the adolescence a person is in accordance with their own personal values and tries to make sense of their own decisions. This helps a person „progressively develop the ability of openness to others and the availability regarding time”⁷ which they themselves decide who to devote to and to what extent.

When a twenty-year-old person carries out the changes in accordance with their own priorities, which they discovered to be important for them and is at the same time ready to acquire new knowledge, they mature internally in the process of differentiation of their own image in interaction with the image which they have about their own environment and other people. In fact, that signifies a „true transition from the youthful age/teenage life to adulthood, which may take about half of a decade”⁸.

In this life period a person feels „a strong need for approval from the people who are perceived as witnesses of interesting realizations from one’s own perspective. A person takes such people as inspiring role models who help them get to know more precisely their own life goal and the way of giving their own share to the community”⁹. Such a person is kind of a mentor, an important personality, a companion who has a strong influence on the self-reflection of a young person besides their own family members. Their job is to help a young person deepen their own personal reflection and discernment about the choices so that they would lead them to greater inner freedom. It is important that such a person is not only an advisor but also an assistant to a young person in the process of self-discovery, self-revelation and self-appreciation¹⁰.

„Towards the late twenties a person sees that their own success is appreciated in their own environment. In that period, a young person feels that success is not as important as it used to be and that success alone brings no deep satisfaction. That is the source of personal questions which trigger a decisive turning point, namely the process of interiorization”¹¹. That process is based on the reflection of one’s personal values on the basis of which a person re-considers their own inner

⁷ F. Kelcourse, *Human Development and Faith. Life-Cycle Stages of Body, Mind and Soul*, Missouri 2004, p. 238.

⁸ J. Guindon, J. Alain, *Prendre sa vie en main – L’enjeu de la vingtaine*, Montréal 1992, p. 31.

⁹ R. Lerner, *Concepts and Theories of Human Development*, Mahwah 2002, p. 247.

¹⁰ J. Monbourquette, *À chacun sa mission – Découvrir son projet de vie*, Ottawa 1999, p. 105–111.

¹¹ J. Guindon, *Donner un sens à son cycle de vie – L’enjeu de la quarantaine*, „Sans frontières” 1 (1996), p. 3.

attitudes and choices. That enables them to see more clearly their own priorities and also refusals followed by the concrete choices. While a twenty-year-old is focused on action very much, a thirty-year-old person is more concerned about the discovery of meaning of their own work and life and consequently prefers quality to quantity. The fruit of this process is inner harmony expressed in the way of living one's motherhood for women and fatherhood for men at the psychical, spiritual, and physical levels and learning flexibility in relationship with persons of the same and different sex.

According to Fowler, a person aged 18 and over is in transition between the synthetic-conventional and the individually-reflective belief a religious level. That transition proceeds from a religious idealism to realism, where the rational side of religion is given more expression. Although a young person still values other people, their views, expectations and advices, they simultaneously undergo a process of inner reference points. Their faith becomes personal. At this level they take a critical attitude towards the previous system of values and gradually establish a new identity expressed and actualized by the choice of personal membership in a certain (religious) group and by the formation of one's own life style¹².

Some contemporary writers, among them P. Feldmeier¹³, are convinced that many people of that age are involved in spirituality even more than they are encouraged by their own church community. It is important for them to be given room for creativeness and making suggestions. It is very valuable if they are accompanied by a person who accepts them, encourages them and helps them check their own religious vision. This also applies to young adult Christians who are „asleep and take no interest in anything. Spiritual leaders and communities should help them even more to face the questions such as What do you want in your life? What are your goals? What is worth living for? What is worth dying for? What do carry in your heart?“¹⁴.

The early age of adulthood is a crucial stage for setting the foundations of genuine spiritual life of an adult. Whitehead refers to this time *cairos*, the time of grace, because that period is vital for the personal identity formation, releasing of imagination and the uncovering of personal dreams¹⁵.

The twenties and thirties are transitional years from a great idealism to the realism of a complex reality. It is the time when an individual develops one's own „self“ and discovers the potentials and borders of one's own power. A young adult often feels insecure. Therefore, they feel a need to uncover and see themselves

¹² J. W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith – The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest of Meaning*, New York 1981, p. 179.

¹³ P. Feldmeier, *The Developing Christian*, New Jersey 2007, p. 137.

¹⁴ M. Warren, *Youth and the Future of the Church*, New York 1982, p. 122.

¹⁵ E. Whitehead and J. Whitehead, *Christians Life Patterns: The Psycho-logical Challenges and Religious Invitations of Adult Life*, New York 1979, p. 67.

in their own realizations. At the stage of „the recognition of the meaning of one’s own realizations for them, a person is able to gradually make sense of their own being as well”¹⁶.

The greater the wish to make progress in inner growth, the more internalized one’s own share and closer to the discovery of the inner source. When a person decides to give meaning to what they do, they feel that they are completely themselves. A person discovers that it is up to them to define their own goals more precisely depending on one’s own values, which lead one’s own efforts. This may mark the beginning of the internalization process of who they are. It is only from the inside that a person is competent to give meaning to one’s own realizations and row out into the deep water which has effects on every expression of one’s own personal identity¹⁷.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD OF ADULTHOOD: THE FORTIES AND FIFTIES

The transition to the middle period is often taken as one of „the most important events in the life cycle”¹⁸, which is quite reasonable in relation to the dynamics of the previous two decades. A person in their twenties is a researcher of oneself and the environment in which they live; thus, the emphasis is on action. However, if a person in their thirties does not enter the process of interiorization, they may experience the so-called „middle-age crisis” and desperately tries to find the solution outside themselves instead of inside, such as in the change of their partner in case of marriage, forgetting about the old friends and searching for new ones, holding on to reputation, giving too much importance to one’s position etc. This confusion created by sudden changes in body and personal disintegration finds its expression in self-affirmation. Sheehy compares the need for self-affirmation with the adolescent behaviour which searches for balance and tries to find the right direction. The changes of profession, a divorce, a nervous breakdown and psychosomatic disorders are all indicators of the middle-age crisis.

„On the threshold of mid-life, a person consciously, although veiled in secrecy, stares into the time still remaining in life”¹⁹. One’s look is directed towards the whole life cycle becoming increasingly aware that one half of life is already behind them and starting to question oneself how to lead the rest of it: Is that all what there is to life? What do I really want or need in life? Why do I work that much? Why do I strive so much and can find no more time for myself? Why, what for, whom for? In the middle ages, these questions undermine one’s life concept they

¹⁶ H. Bee, *Les âges de la vie – Psychologie du développement humain, Édition du Renouveau pédagogique*, Saint-Laurent 1997, p. 142.

¹⁷ M. Tostain, *Psychologie, morale et culture*, Grenoble 1999, p. 37.

¹⁸ J. Gollnick, *Religion and Spirituality in the Life Cycle*, New York 2005, p. 159.

¹⁹ M. Bornstein, M. Lamb, *Developmental Psychology*, Hillsdale 1999, p. 46.

have lived by then and relate with the question of meaning, which is a fundamental religious question.

From the religious point of view, the middle-age crisis brings a chance for spiritual growth and openness to God. While in crisis, one's suppressed bits and self-deceit come to surface as well as the wish for the source of life, healing and depth. Thus, the crisis is a critical turning point at which a person decides to remain close or to open oneself to God and his grace. A person is afraid to have a look at what is going on in themselves, to face the unrest in their own hearts. Instead, they project what is unsolved in them to the world outside, for example by trying to change first other people, surroundings and structures. Another less pleasant path is the path of self-revelation which makes a person free of masks, idols and self-complacency and leads them to the discovery of one's own truth. Especially in the moments of peace and silence, a forty-year old person may discover that they have only one life and that they are responsible for it. A person gradually gives up the expectations they have about other people such as parents, children, fellow workers, etc. and opens themselves unselfishly to the environment. The moments of solitude help a person start not only theoretically but also existentially „to accept the beginning of their own life, its passing, and its ending”²⁰. At work, they become less dependent on the affirmations from other people or expressions of gratitude. For such a person, life becomes a newly found gift, which they are personally grateful for and in which they learn to find meaning and inner joy.

In one's fifties, in the years of renewed vigour, the acquired ability of taking *now* relatively and the reflection of who they become in the years passed by help a person more consciously discover the fruits of their life experience, achievements and knowledge and is ready to share them with others. Other people are no longer perceived as competitors. „The process of interiorization of one's own identity brings a person to the point at which they want to make another turning point in their life when they enter the following decade. They want to act in favour of other people and their personal”²¹ growth both in the relationship with the family members and fellow-workers and the broader cultural, ecological, political and religious environment. Regardless of the kind of responsibility they hold, for a fifty-year-old person who has answered the challenges of their own life period a fellow person and their good become their own main priority. However, if a fifty-year-old has not re-entered the process of interiorization, that makes impossible for them to truly rediscover oneself as a person. Consequently, the perception of another person is distorted, as they are seen through the prism of events and roles which they have held and fails to see them first as a person.

On the religious level, Fowler notes that the unifying belief (Conjunctive Faith) usually does not occur before the middle period of adulthood. „A person has al-

²⁰ J. Guindon, *Donner un sens à son cycle de vie...*, p. 5.

²¹ Cf. *ivi*, p. 13.

ready experienced disappointment and failure as well as the reality of their own efforts and irrevocable decisions”²². God is no longer an external authority who controls people if and how they act according to the commandments; the ideal, people strive to, is gone, God has become internalized, experienced and a person may live from the experience of God’s presence. If the previous level of faith was a more rational one, a person at this stage rediscovers the message and meaning of symbols, pictures, images and rituals perceive them anew in interconnectedness and thus becomes part of them. Instead of arguing with other people in terms of view of the world, a person expresses openness to them, which surpasses strongly marked categories as formed at the previous level²³. That stage may be described as balanced or inclusive belief and also as the stage of interdependence at which a person is able to be independent from others without losing their own autonomy. Individualisation, a life-long process, reflected in relation to the self as well as to others, exceeds the tension between autonomy and belonging and matures in the realization that a person is most autonomous when they belong most or when they devote themselves to God and people.

Middle period ages require a person to pay attention to contradictory poles which they carry in themselves, to accept the shadow not lived out and face their own inner self. Confrontation with one’s opposites and shadows bring some people to the fear of opposites and consequently to the stagnation. Another possible reaction to the confrontation is the rejection of all values held dear by then in hope that everything suppressed would be able to live from then on. What happens may only be an exchange of the object of suppression, whereas one’s inner balance remains disturbed. The inclination to deny all former standpoints in favour of their opposites is as exaggerated as the previous practice, where a person due to the set ideals ignores subconscious longings and fantasies which would question these ideals. The second half of life is not about the change of the life direction but about the maintenance of the previous decisions together with the recognition of their opposites.

A mature middle-age person takes the challenge of confronting the real self and nurturing a desire for the „inner journey”²⁴ more seriously than a wish for self-promotion and productivity. The person is called not to put oneself into the centre any more as a psychological change occurs in this period by rule in comparison to the early periods of adulthood, characterized by great efforts to develop one’s own identity, create one’s own place, prove oneself and thus somehow turned inward. The middle-aged person starts preparing for the existence of the second half, in which they would finally leave one’s youth and illusions behind.

²² Ivi, p. 1.

²³ R. Osmer, *Faith Development*, in: *Encyclopedia of Religious Education*, New York 1990, p. 252.

²⁴ P. Feldmeier, *The Developing Christian*, New Jersey 2007, p. 191.

LATE PERIOD OF ADULthood: THE SIXTIES, SEVENTIES, EIGHTIES AND OVER

Is a sixty-year-old person an old one? Does it mean that a seventy-old one becomes an old person or even an elder one? The issue is a complex one²⁵. Therefore, the transition into the late period of adulthood will be taken the moment of retirement which for the majority of people means the beginning of the reorganization of work and life and thereby setting a new life structure. „A specific contribution of a sixty-year-old person is their focus on the essential and discovery of real needs of their human surroundings”²⁶. That is the way to become a person who is able to help without being burdened with the demand of immediateness and directness. A sixty-year-old places both their own life events and those common to the human kind in general in a new, more holistic context and has a more precise perception of their own surrounding and everything what may contribute to their own physical, psychical, moral and spiritual improvement”²⁷. The ability to „discover the inner meaning of events enables a person to recognize the factors which pave the way for the development of socially-culturally-religious environment and is at the same time aware of their borders”²⁸.

They are able to detect long-term consequences of the choices made by an individual or society and actively engage in the areas concerned with the quality of life and a better future for the next generations. It is interesting to observe that a sixty-year-old person usually finds it quite easy to express what they feel. However, if they do not develop an interest in innovations, they take a risk of boredom and difficult acceptance of their own borders when they reach retirement, which brings the cessation of a function.

„A seventy-year-old person sees all their life coming to the new perception of relations which make sense and encourage continuation”²⁹. Their discoveries contain a historical segment reflecting personal history. This differentiation brings them a better understanding of the ways trodden by other people as well. With the inner eye, that is with the contemplative gaze they read „the universal mean-

²⁵ One way to acknowledge the variability in individuals who are aged 65 and over is to segment older adulthood into categories based on chronological age: young-old (ages 65–74), old-old (ages 75–84), and oldest-old (ages 85 +). Compared with individuals in the old-old and oldest-old categories, those in the young-old category have greater physical vigour and are less likely to suffer from significant sensory or cognitive decline. In fact, many young-old adults experience more of what are considered to be age-related changes in sensory, perceptual, and cognitive functioning.

²⁶ G. Sheehy, *Franchir les obstacles de la vie*, Paris 1982, p. 236.

²⁷ S. Schieman, *Age, Education, and the Sense of Control – A Test of the Cumulative Advantage Hypothesis*, in: *Research on Aging*, New York 2001, p. 154.

²⁸ J. Guindon, *Phase de la soixantaine et réponse aux besoins de l'entourage*, „Sans frontières” 3 (1988), p. 10–27.

²⁹ Ivi, p. 15.

ing of their own personal history³⁰ and uncover the meaning of live memory for future generations. „The time stops in contemplation. A person concentrates in the privileged silence and gives oneself completely into the hands of God. With this acceptance, the process of internalization starts almost passively and very peacefully. It affects the roots of one's being and all has been expressed”. The way in which a seventy-year-old person who has retained psychological autonomy predicts problems shows that it covers the view of the whole person and includes sober assessment as well as the ability to generalize. It is important that they do not search for others to do the same as they or imitate them but want to discover their own path.

Erik Erikson aged 86 and Joan his wife aged 85 define this life period as „the final maturity which protects a person from despair which can be triggered by the constant physical disintegration³¹. The Eriksons confirm that the latest period of their lives means „the culmination of wisdom to the extent in which every previous period finds its evaluation³². A wise person has „admirable and moral behaviour, exceptional insight into life's problems, and the ability to consider multiple aspects of complex situations while maintaining some level of objectivity³³. Wisdom sees both the good and bad sides with the intelligence of reason and the intelligence of heart. Humankind needs it every time they look for an answer to any question or problem which is only possible if relying on the heritage of those who have lived a long life³⁴.

For an eighty-year-old person memories are quite important but not as much as in the previous decade; yet their role is different. A seventy-year-old person who is rereading their own life makes connections and sees their own life story in the inner unity. An eighty-year-old one keeps only the essential parts of the memories, which help him make sense of the late period of life cycle: „Towards the end of life a person can find no other delight such as the taste of the truth³⁵. For an eighty-year-old one the essence extracted on the basis of their own history is more important than the history itself. Their own memories serve them only as an illustration of the essence reflected upon. Their message to the world can be seen in „making sense of their whole life³⁶ – including the late period and time left and in the integrity of life experience. „An elderly person happy to have lived

³⁰ L. Leduc, *Personnalité et relations humaines internationales – La personne et sa croissance – Fondements anthropologiques et psychologiques de la formation PRH*, Montréal 1999, p. 151.

³¹ D. Coleman, *Growing into Wisdom*, „The Gazette Living” 6 (1988), p. 12.

³² Ivi.

³³ J. T. Erber, *Aging and Older Adulthood*, Malden 2010, p. 402.

³⁴ K. Koerbel, *Notre responsabilité les uns envers les autres – Pour un code universel des devoirs humains*, Québec 2000, p. 101, 102.

³⁵ J. Guitton, *Un siècle, une vie*, Paris 1988, p. 11.

³⁶ J. Guindon, J. Alain, *L'octogénaire et l'essentiel*, „Sans Frontières” 5 (1990), p. 31.

and without a wish to start living once again is a blessing for the family and all around them, for everyone in relationship with"³⁷.

„A person has pleasure to stay with oneself if they are aware of their own dignity"³⁸. „Their mission is to become what they are in love. Only those, who have seen their own life and accepted it as a gift, are not tired out at the end of their own cycle from all the attempts and efforts. On the contrary, they feel gifted and happy to be God's dear sons or daughters and are invited to move to eternity"³⁹. Légaut aged eighty talks about the experience of „taming” of death which only those who are spiritually and psychologically mature are able to do: „When the time comes a person does not see only their own destiny but also the necessity of death to give fertility to life by dying"⁴⁰. Only the person who takes death as a law of life and approaches it as their own goal is able to live, remain alive and mature. A person who is unable to take that step and behaves like an adolescent looks like a thirty-year-old man according to Jung. They turn back to their own childhood remaining infantile which Jung describes as psychologically sick, unnatural. The problem of our society lies in the fact that the young man described in the example is pitied, whereas the old man who tries to look like an adolescent is admired.

We all wonder what will happen to us after we die. When a beloved one dies, we long to see them again after our turn comes. Will we have a glorious reunion with those we love or is death the end of all consciousness? St. Paul expressed the characteristics of the three major stages of life psychologically and spiritually briefly and clearly in his letters: childhood, adulthood and afterlife: „When we were children, we thought and reasoned as children do. But when we grew up, we quit our childish ways. Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us” (1 Cor 13:11-12).

The last period in the Fowler scale of religious development which fundamentally requires to be united with God and live in God features an exceptionally rare form of religion into which one matures only in the late period of adulthood. It is described as the unselfish religion. „The sixth level opens itself to the way of being in religion which is primarily giving completely in and surpassing oneself"⁴¹. Fowler argues that such a person already reveals the fruits of „a strong kenosis or emptying of self"⁴². People at the level of the so-called universal religion live in

³⁷ J. Feillet and M. Légaut, *Patience et passion d'un croyant – Les interviews. Le Centurion*, Paris 1976, p. 152.

³⁸ J. Guitton, *Un siècle, une vie*, Paris 1988, p. 50.

³⁹ L. Leduc, *Personnalité et relations humaines internationales – La personne et sa croissance – Fondements anthropologiques et psychologiques de la formation PRH*, Montréal 1999, p. 160.

⁴⁰ M. Légaut, *Devenir soi et rechercher le sens de sa propre vie*, Paris 1980, p. 91.

⁴¹ J. Astley, *Faith Development – An Overview. Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*, Grand Rapids 1992, p. 22.

⁴² J.W. Fowler, *Faith and Structuring of Meaning*, Birmingham 1986, p. 31.

the world in the way of transformed presence and are like bowls which contain universality in them. Due to this quality they have value in themselves beyond what the society says about them or how it judges their usefulness. People at this stage love life – without being attached to it too much⁴³. „Despite numerous virtues, people of the sixth stage are imperfect – in the moral sense as well as in others. They have a typical new form of religion including the quality of freedom both in relationship to oneself and to other people”⁴⁴.

CONCLUSION

People may be similar, yet every person is unique and has a unique and unrepeatable life experience. The same person is also different in different life periods. They are affected by specific perception and sensation of things, which influence their thinking, decision-making, life and expression of the relationship with God, with others and with themselves. At the same time a person is called to respond to specific challenges of each period. In view of this, we have presented the gifts and the complexity of each period of adulthood by taking into account the religious and psychological maturation of an adult. We understand that no system can “grasp” a person’s uniqueness and their opening to A(a)nother. However, it may be helpful for a deeper and more complex understanding of our vocation, our gifts, crises and personal growth.

Maturing in faith means permanent and lifelong changes and transformations. These include experience, conceptions and relations which are linked to the faith in God. The key issues are personal freedom and decision making, by which we make relative two extremes: the conceptions that religious development is inbred and thus automated and that the levels of belief depend exclusively on the impact of the environment. Faith gives meaning to human life, but – because of the uniqueness of every human being – not in a straight line and not equally for all people, and is expressed with different intensity and in different ways.

In a classic adult catechesis five main elements are taken into consideration: the starting point is the experience of the individual, followed by personal reflection, prayer time and internalization. Next comes sharing with others, and finally a look at practical implementation and life in the future. Already the first-mentioned element in the adult catechesis shows the importance of personal life experience. A catechist in a group of adults who knows the characteristics of individual life stages in adulthood will recognize more easily during the time of sharing what is happening to a person and how to help them to be able to face life challenges and to seek internal balance in accordance with the life decision, values and priorities.

⁴³ Ivi, p. 76.

⁴⁴ Idem, *Moral Stages and the Development of Faith – Moral Development, Moral Education and Kohlberg*, Birmingham 1980, p. 149.

A modern adult feels great responsibility for the future. On the other hand, they have the experience how unpredictable it is despite increasing global interaction. Ethical issues are very topical, as well as the interest for the spiritual and transcendental. Noticeable in this situation is the primary human need for God and a relationship of trust and surrender. The catechesis of adults which allows for expressing and listening to God and a human being is an excellent way for a person to check and consolidate their life direction, to discover their vocation in each period of life and in the entire life cycle and over the years become an increasingly redeemed person.

NEW APPROACHES TO ADULT CATECHESIS

Summary

Maturing in faith means permanent and lifelong changes and transformations. Today, an adult believer can only survive if he/she personally discovers the reason of believe and the transformation of faith. The article covers typical features of early, middle and late periods of adulthood in terms of both psychological and spiritual development in individual decades. Adult catechesis gives room both to the proclamation of faith as well as to act in the faith what an adult lives, experiences, thinks and decides in different life stages – as a person who works on him/herselves, and as a Christian.

NOWE UJĘCIA KATECHEZY DOROSŁYCH

Streszczenie

Proces dojrzewania w wierze oznacza stałe zmiany i transformacje trwające przez całe życie. W dzisiejszym świecie dorosły wierzący może przetrwać w trudnościach tylko wtedy, gdy osobiście odkryje źródło swojej wiary i potrafi dostrzec jej przemiany. Niniejszy artykuł prezentuje typowe cechy wczesnej, średniej i późnej dorosłości zarówno w perspektywie psychologicznego, jak i duchowego rozwoju. Katecheza dorosłych pozwala na głoszenie wiary nie tylko słowem, ale działaniem we wszystkich aspektach tego, co dorosły człowiek przeżywa, czego doświadcza, o czym myśli i decyduje na różnych etapach swojego życia – jako osoba, która pracuje nad sobą, i jako chrześcijanin.

Keywords: catechesis, early/middle and late adulthood, life changes and transformations, maturing in faith, stages of faith

Słowa kluczowe: dojrzewanie w wierze, etapy wiary, katecheza, wczesna/średnia i późna dorosłość, życiowe zmiany i transformacje