

ROCZNIKI TEOLOGICZNE
Volume LXV, issue 9 – 2018
English version

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18290/rt.2018.65.9-7en>

REV. MAREK ŻMUDZIŃSKI

THE THEOLOGY OF PRIMACY IN THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL AND ECUMENICAL THOUGHTS OF CARDINAL STANISŁAW NAGY

Abstract. The article presents the achievements of Cardinal Stanisław Nagy in the field of ecclesiology, including the ecumenical context. The main problem is the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as executing the supreme office in the Catholic Church. The article presents the apologetic argumentation concerning the Church's credibility, called *via primatus*. It describes the ministry of primacy as the function given to St. Peter the Apostle and his successors, conferred upon him by Jesus Christ, with the purpose of ensuring the unity and permanence of the Church. The article also addresses the problem of the ecumenical quest, where the pope is the most difficult obstacle in the process of unifying Christianity. The last part of the article presents the praxeological aspect of the ministry of primacy in John Paul II's pontificate.

Key words: Church; St. Peter; primacy; succession; Bishop of Rome; John Paul II; ecclesiology; ecumenism.

The second half of the twentieth century was a time of deep reform for the Church. Its paths were set by the Second Vatican Council, summarized by the *ad fontes* formula, a way of thinking that refers primarily to biblical and patristic sources. The general call for renewal was stated by Pope John XXIII, who in his inaugural address emphasized that the teaching of the Church concerning the whole person, with his earthly references and eternal destiny, should be given in

Rev. Dr. Hab. Marek Żmudziński, UWM, Professor and Dean of the Theology Department at Warmia-Mazuria University in Olsztyn; Chair of Dogmatic and Fundamental Theology; address for correspondence: ul. Kard. Hozjusza 15, 10-900 Olsztyn; e-mail: marek.zmudzinski@uwm.edu.pl

the light of revealed truth. It also takes into account the present temporal state, that is, the modern conditions and dimensions of life that provide new forms of Catholic apostolate (John XXIII 1962, 792).

Paul VI's program in the encyclical *Ecclesiam suam* continued his predecessor's motto described as *aggiornamento*, that is: adjusting things to the needs of the era, in order to constantly stimulate its eternally renewing zeal and to see the signs of the times thanks to its youthful zeal, to always and everywhere experience all things, and to keep whatever is noble (Paul VI 1964, 620). This had a fundamental impact on the achievements of the Council, which had an ecclesiastic and pastoral dimension, with a particular ecumenical feature.

It is important for this study, first of all, to note that the academic work by Cardinal Stanislaw Nagy falls during the time of the Council followed by several decades of implementing its reforms. Second, his area of interest oscillated around ecclesiological and ecumenical issues. His two main works, *Christ in the Church* and *The Church on the Paths of Unity*, are complementary concepts of these issues. The main problem of this study, the theology of papal primacy, will be presented in three parts: *via primatus*, primacy in ecumenical dialogue and the primacy practiced during John Paul II's pontificate. This will be presented in a context of reflecting on the complementary views of Cardinal S. Nagy, which can be described by the phrase: from apologetic to fundamental ecclesiology.

1. THE FIELD OF ECCLESIOLOGY

The field of theological research concerning the Church was distinguished as an independent discipline during the Reformation period. It was the Catholic response to the negation of the visible and institutional spheres of the Church articulated in Protestant theology. Extreme dualism between the Visible and Invisible Church, starting from the Council of Trent, thanks to Cardinal Hozjusz, Robert Belarmin and others, was eliminated due to emphasizing the unity of these two elements of the Church. The historical context, however, caused the necessity of emphasizing apologetic elements, which is why the visible, empirical, ethical and legal elements became more and more evident in opposition to Protestant views (Bartnik 1982, 384). The emerging ecclesiology, as an autonomous theological

discipline (the term was introduced by Angelus Silesius 1677), took on an apologetic character, emphasizing the divine genesis of the institutional Church.

A formula for this concept describing the Church was that it was an association of people gathered under the direction of righteous shepherds, and especially the only successor of Christ, meaning the Bishop of Rome on earth. Together, they profess the same Christian faith and accept the same sacramental economy (Rusecki 2009, 51–52). The description of institutional ecclesiology, presenting the Church only in legal and sociological terms, as a purely historical and eye-witness reality has been preserved. The Second Vatican Council followed this line of thinking, along with the dogma of the jurisdiction primacy of the Bishop of Rome and his infallibility.

The Church's reform indicated above was inspired by the achievements of Vatican II and directed apologetic ecclesiology into new areas of research. This resulted in fundamental ecclesiology developing a theological image of the Church as a revealed and saving reality. There is a human dimension with its history and heritage, and also the divine, supernatural and mysterious dimensions are presented in ecclesiological publications. The conciliar documents, especially the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, opened new possibilities for theologians, bringing this reality closer as a mystery of faith. The above historical perspective of the development of Catholic ecclesiology and its contemporary outlook has a peculiar analogy to the academic achievements of Cardinal Nagy, which mainly concerned the ecclesial reality. In M. Rusecki's opinion, his scholarly attitude presents the development of methodological and theological reflection on the gradual transition from apologetic to fundamental ecclesiology.

A clear exemplification of this process was the way of understanding the Church, from the initial stage which showed the visible dimension exposing the institutional and legal system, to the stage showing the mysterious character of the Church as a divine-human reality contained in God's plan of salvation (Rusecki 2009, 26–27). As H. Seweryniak indicated, under the influence of the Second Vatican Council, Professor Nagy lead the way in presenting the image of the Church as a communion and community and awakened this awareness among the faithful. This would later have a creative impact on perceiving our own origins, our relationship with Christ, and our identity and presence in the world (Seweryniak 2009, 42).

1.1. CHRIST IN THE CHURCH

The dual nature of the Cardinal's achievements is reflected in his main ecclesiological work. The phrase *Christ in the Church* is the title of this publication and at the same time a formula which should be understood as his scientific proposal or rather the methodological concept of the treatise on the Church within fundamental theology. It clearly expresses the contemporary tendency to integrate the Christological and ecclesiological theses in an integral way. This means going towards a methodologically mature treatment of the entire discipline, in which the mysterious, and thus historical and personalistic categories describing the Church as a Divine-human reality, replace the current style of a juridical and hierarchical structure. The title itself, therefore, nominally orients us towards fundamental theology, but the contents present in the structure and titles of particular parts are evidence of its strongly being rooted in apologetic methodology.

It should be remembered that the classic approach to apologetic ecclesiology, created in opposition to the Protestant concept, consisted in seeking answers to the question about Christ's idea of the Church, its implementation, and also indicating where it is presently visible. The entire problem was based on several theses: the establishment of the Church, its essential organizational elements, truth and ecclesial epistemology (Rusecki 1994, 222). The above outline corresponds to the structure of the mentioned publication, which contains six chapters: Part 1. The Establishment of the Church, Part 2. The Divine Origin of the Social and Religious Structure of the Church, Part 3. The Perseverance of the Church and its System, Part 4. The Issue of Belonging to the Church, Part 5. The Roman Catholic Church Is the True Church of Christ, and Part 6. The Teaching Office of the Church (Nagy 1982, 391–394). An important addition is the fact that Prof. Nagy in the methodological introduction uses apologetic and fundamental ecclesiology interchangeably, although he ultimately uses the rational method, elaborated by the arguments developed in counter-reformation polemics, namely *via primatus* and *via notarum*. On the other hand, however, he emphasizes the necessity of referring to theological data, without which concluding arguments would be impossible and the elements of revealed truth difficult to understand (Nagy 1982, 9–16).

There is no doubt that Vatican Council II had a fundamental influence on the professor's views and the documents that spoke directly about the Church as a mystery of faith (in the constitutions *Lumen gentium* and *Gudium et spes*). This is clearly shown in the study published in 2009 on the visible Church, where we can find the statement that it was the last council that created a balanced synthesis of the mysterious nature of the Church, constituting a close unity between two dimensions, the visible and invisible (Nagy 2009, 8). The Cardinal, in the words of Vatican II, emphasized the Trinitarian genesis, the communitarian character of the visible dimension and its spiritual ontological structure. He stated that in essence, the Church is a mystery that cannot be enclosed within the narrow limits of a verbalized formula, and can only be brought closer to its image by way of a meaningful, extensive description. The leading ideas should be, according to him, the images of God's household, the People of God, the Mystical Body and the Sacrament (Nagy 2009, 13–14).

The professor's ecclesiological thesis presented above should be treated as a methodological supposition presenting the main points of his achievements. They will be presented below in a few points: the genesis of the Church, its structure, nature and ways of argumentation, taking into account the characteristics of unity, holiness, universality and apostolicity.

1.2. THE GENESIS OF THE CHURCH

The basic thesis of traditional apologetic ecclesiology states that Jesus Christ founded the Church. More specifically, it points to the Savior's initiative, which was to establish the institutional structures of the apostolate and primacy as the ontological foundations of the whole Church. The Conciliar inspiration and contemporary teachings highlight the theological aspects of ecclesiology and emphasize all the initiatives and works of Jesus that were aimed at the founding of the Church, from the Incarnation through the Resurrection to the descent of the Holy Spirit. This is directly mentioned both in the special document of the Theological Commission and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 763–766).

Cardinal Nagy found himself in this conciliar climate, and so he consistently set the genesis of the Church in the whole of salvation economy. In the opinion of H. Seweryniak, he emphasized the affirmative attitude of Jesus towards the

social and religious idea of the Old Testament and its messianic awareness, shown in the quest to establish a new People of God (Seweryniak 2009, 42). It should be emphasized that in all relevant texts concerning the origins of the Church, words appear that show the value of the Old Testament events and their ecclesiological significance with the figure of Kahal Yahweh, the prototype of the New People of God. For the Professor, the entire history of the Chosen People had an ecclesiological meaning, beginning with the figure of Abraham, the captivity in Egypt, wandering to the Promised Land, through the era of judges and monarchs, to the Babylonian period of captivity, when messianic expectations were becoming clearer (Nagy 2009, 20–25).

The Old Testament events were, according to the Professor, the correct perspective for showing God's plan of salvation, the focal point of which is the life and mission of Christ the Messiah, and through it the call for the existence of a religious community, the new People of God. The origins of the Church are presented in the prism of the teachings of Vatican II, a radically new approach towards it. The establishment of the Church was not a matter of a single fact or event, but a long-lasting process, which Nagy called the "ecclesiological stages" in which all three divine Persons participated. The special role of Christ in his earthly mission consisted in establishing a new covenant and creating a new People of God (Nagy 2009, 34).

This theological reflection on the origins of the Church is inseparable from the issue of the Kingdom of God, which was also present in the Cardinal's thoughts. He exhibited Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God, because, he claimed, it was "an exceptional motif due to its frequent occurrence, and because of the role it possesses in the totality of his mission and the Gospel he proclaimed" (Nagy 1982, 31). According to H. Seweryniak, the relationship of the Church to the Kingdom of God is one of the most complex theological problems, which is solved by many extreme and mutually exclusive concepts, on the one hand equating these two realities, and on the other, radically opposing them (Seweryniak 2001, 405). Nagy proposed a moderate concept, claiming that there is a close relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God, a symbiosis. Recognizing the fundamental difference between them, without antagonism or any isolation, implies the deep coexistence and cooperation of individual elements (Nagy 1982, 44).

1.3. THE CHURCH'S STRUCTURE

Apologetic ecclesiology, the spirit in which Cardinal Nagy was educated, devoted a lot of time to the structures of the visible Church, the primacy and apostolate. Their essential function was to provide the Church with a lasting identity throughout history. Since primacy is inscribed into the office of the bishop of Rome, which will be presented in detail later, it is now possible to synthesize and discuss the views of Professor Nagy on the second factor of the ecclesial structure, namely the apostolate and the concept of collegiality closely related to it.

The starting point is the fact of attributed to Jesus the dignity of a teacher and the master, and as a consequence he had a group of listeners (Lk 8,4; Mk 3,9–13) and disciples (Lk 6,17; 10,1–9). The group of the Twelve was the most distinguished of these. For the professor, the evangelical theme of the twelve apostles was a key narrative in all the gospels. Their choice and special formation point to Jesus' intentional action: "Christ was determined to shape the group of people from the Apostles who, after His work of salvation, would take over His efforts, opening access to all mankind until the end of time" (Nagy 2009, 40). Their taking on this function was complemented by equipping them with exceptional privileges and prerogatives, identified with religious authority as an extension of Christ's messianic dignity (Nagy 1982, 108).

The institution of the apostolate had, according to Nagy, from the very beginning the traits of a collegial, team-based institution, united by: a) "being with Christ," meaning being his witnesses, b) a specific religious mission, and c) responsibility for the community of believers (Nagy 1982, 111). As M. Rusecki commented, the issue of collegiality in the work of our author had an important place and was pioneering academic research in Poland in the context of the achievements of the Second Vatican Council. One can see a significant change in his achievements: if at the beginning of his work he approached the problem of collegiality from the point of view of primacy, he later considered primacy in the context of the apostolate, claiming that the college of the Twelve, with Peter as its head, followed by the college of bishops with the Pope, constitute the proper structure of the Visible Church (Rusecki 2009, 30).

1.5. MARKS OF THE CHURCH

The phrase *notae Ecclesiae*, which originated in Christian antiquity, has multiple meanings: mark, sign, feature, indicator. The following marks are contained in the Nicene Creed, the profession of faith: one, holy, Catholic and apostolic, and were treated as essential features of the true Church. In contemporary literature, there is a metaphorical phrase containing the four notes of a musical symphony which, according to H. Seweryniak, is an expression of the changes that have appeared in ecclesiology. It is intended to express the transition from understanding them as the attribute of the true Church to being the sign of the authentic Church of Christ (Seweryniak 1996, 193).

The contemporary interpretation of the marks can be found in the literary output of S. Nagy, who proposed a re-evaluation of their understanding from being the static stigmata of the Church to a dynamic and semiotic understanding. The marks would therefore not be a visible criterion impressed once and for all on the nature of the Church, but would constitute an assignment that should be carried out permanently, not excluding the eschatological perspective (Rusecki 2009, 31). This new understanding resulted in the reconstruction of the *via notarum*, meaning the traditional way of justifying the Church's credibility. Nagy suggested withholding the apologetic element for later, meaning only supporting the Catholic Church's side, in favor of a new understanding of the Church's truth as an integrity that expresses its essential identity, not excluding a relationship of other Christian denominations with the Church of Christ. This method contains two basic elements: a) the truth about the essential relationship of the four marks with the structure of the Church established by Christ, and b) the fact of the actual presence of these marks in the Catholic Church. Such premises lead to the conclusion that the true Church of Jesus Christ is present in the Catholic Church, but does not exclude other people (Nagy 1982, 258–259).

In the assessment of this part of the Professor's achievements, it is necessary to emphasize his development of the views inspired by the achievements of the Second Vatican Council that emphasize historical and personalistic elements. We should not, however, ignore the fact that has been articulated above about a certain imbalance between the declarative sphere contained in the introduction to his main ecclesiological work and individual parts.

2. VIA PRIMATUS

The primacy of the Bishop of Rome in apologetic argumentation has always played a key role as the most important subject of the Church's monarchic and hierarchical organizational structure (Rusecki 2014, 18). The literature pointed out that St. Peter had a special role among the Twelve called by Jesus Christ, and they were the first college. This means that among the apostles, not everything was equal in all respects, but, as Cz. Bartnik stated, there was a hierarchy concerning the authority received from Jesus (Bartnik 1982, 125). Continuing this idea, it can be said that St. Peter, by the will of Christ, became the cornerstone of the apostolic college and the foundation of the whole Church, as well as the heir of the actual pastoral mission (Seweryniak 1996, 110).

The argument convincing us of the correctness of this thesis was the reference to the uninterrupted tradition and the three classic Petrocratic texts present in the Bible: the promise of primacy (Mt 16,17–19), the prayer of Christ for Peter (Luke 22:31–34) and granting him primacy (J 21,15–17). This was to testify to Christ's aspiration to create one supreme authority in the Church, which he clearly and directly gave to Peter. However, this authority, in accord with the will of Christ, was not only the personal privilege of this Apostle, but an essential organizational element of the Church continued in the office of primacy. An additional element of this argumentation was the claim that this mission has its continuation in the formula: Peter's successor in the primacy is his successor in the apostolate. The fact that the Apostle was present in Rome, his episcopal ministry and martyr's death were the basis for the historical arguments about the succession of primacy. This was strengthened by the fact that the first successors of Peter exercised the principle authority, and the whole Church always recognized the Bishop of Rome as the successor of the first Apostle and the head of the Church (Rusecki 2014, 18–19).

The above claims became the basis for *via primatus* arguments as a way of justifying the credibility of the Catholic Church, which arose from the awareness that among all other Christian Churches and communities, Catholics have kept the ministry of Peter the Apostle in the person of the Bishop of Rome. The fundamental element of this belief is the fact that this truth has the status of God's law, *iure Divino*, which means that it was God who established it

as “a lasting and visible source and foundation of unity” (Second Vatican Council, 1965, 23).

It should be emphasized that the ecclesiological output of Professor Nagy is a perfect reflection of this way of thinking about the Church. In a methodological introduction to his main work on the Church, he explicitly stated that he uses, above all, the synthetic-historical method, which is the above described *via primatus* (Nagy 1982, 15). However, it is worth adding along with M. Rusecki that the Cardinal initially advocated a juridical understanding of primacy, but ultimately he included it in theological categories as a ministry, deaconate, and also as a witness to love and truth (Rusecki 2009, 29). Without a doubt, the pontificate of John Paul II promoted perceiving this most important office in the Church in this way, which will be shown later in this publication.

The most important statements by Professor Nagy regarding pre-eminence include a certain narrative which shows Christ’s commitment and intention. This is first of all his foretelling the primacy during public activity, and next implementing this announcement, that is, granting primacy in the post-Paschal period. This narrative is based on the above-mentioned Gospel texts and on many others that present the Apostle of Bethsaida as the leading figure among the Twelve and in the early Church, as evidenced by the fact that his name is mentioned in the Gospels 114 times and in Acts 57 (Nagy 2009, 13). Such a narrative corresponds with the views of other theologians, such as J. Ratzinger, who stated that the characteristic feature of the most important New Testament texts is the fact that all of them note the topic of St. Peter, and he is given a universal meaning. This, as a consequence, makes it impossible to limit or reduce this issue to a specific local or personal tradition (Ratzinger 1991, 4).

The Cardinal began to present the description of the place and role of Peter with the fact of his vocation, which differs from the way of presenting the vocation of other apostles, for example, within a richer setting (Mt 4,18–20). It is also important to mention that Peter was the first on the list of the apostles (Mt 10,2–4; Mk 3,13–19; Lk 6,12–16). The change of his name and the way it sounds from *Kefas* to *Peter* to *Rock* (Mt 16: 16ff; Mk 3:16) and its interpretation are also exposed. In this context, Nagy emphasized the biblical meaning and sense of the name as a synonym of his personality and life role. He emphasized the fact that the name given to Simon by Jesus was not known in Israel at that time (Nagy 2009, 52).

For professor Nagy, the main biblical premise in the Catholic definition of the dogma of primacy was Peter's confession of faith, the messianic dignity of Jesus and the words of the Master of Nazareth. Jesus stated that Peter's confession was the fruit of the special grace of the Heavenly Father, and entailed the announcement of Peter's mission as the foundation of the Church built by Christ (Nagy 2009, 53). It is contained in three symbols: rocks, keys and the phrases to bind and to loosen. A fragment of the Gospel of St. Matthew, treated as the foretelling of primacy, was always shown in connection with a fragment of the Gospel of St. John (J 21,15–17), understood as the realization of or giving Peter primacy.

The image of St. Peter and his role in the early Church is the starting point for justifying this most important function in the Church. The office of primacy was not merely the personal privilege of the Apostle, but through Christ, he became a permanent structure of the Church that was to ensure the unity and permanence of the community of believers. The subject of this supreme authority is the successor of St. Peter in his apostolic mission. Peter's stay in Rome and his martyrdom became the basis for stating that his successors in the apostolate would be successors with primacy. Due to this, the individual bishops of Rome are the subject of this special mission. The essence of *via primatus* shows that the Catholic Church has continuously kept this function, which it treats as *iure divino* and sees it as an argument of its credibility. It should also be remembered that S. Nagy, in accord with the achievements of the Second Vatican Council, reflected on the primacy function in the context of the apostolate. He was doing pioneer research work in Poland, as M. Rusecki emphasizes, seeing the proper structure of the Visible Church in the Twelve as a college along with Peter as the head, a group who over time is present in the College of Bishops in union with the Pope as the head (Rusecki 2009, 30).

3. PRIMACY IN THE ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVE

Words that can be considered to be the ecumenical motto of Cardinal Nagy are to be found in the introduction to his main work dedicated to the unity of the Church. It is a statement that Christianity, indifferent to the matter of lost unity, is indifferent to the deep drama of division which destroys Christianity and

tragically limits its saving influence on the world. Following the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, he also makes a peculiar remark: “The Church would cease to be itself if it did not strive for holiness, because in its deepest being it is holy, it would not be itself if it did not strive for unity, because unity is also its essential mark as well as being apostolic and Catholic” (Nagy 1985, 11). In the statements of S. Nagy, one can find the strict theological meaning of ecumenical involvement, because, according to him, it is a matter between God and people, it currently exists and will be important in the future, has the dimension of mystery and elements of obvious visibility, is an inviolable attribute of the Church and at the same time a dynamic reality that strives towards its ultimate fulfillment (Nagy 2000, 95).

In the opinion of the commentators, the Professor knew the history of the unification movement perfectly well, and in this perspective, he outlined the principals of ecumenism which should be implemented in a spirit of brotherhood while respecting one’s partner in dialogue, but also done in truth to avoid the spirit of false irenism (Rusecki 2009, 32). Although following the thoughts of H. Seweryniak, one should remember that he remained a definite apologist of the Catholic vision of the Church and the ecumenical principles resulting from it. His views were in a sense confirmed by the Church’s contemporary thoughts contained in the declaration *Dominus Iesus* in 2000, which presents a similar vision of the unity of the Church. Its model and principle is the unity of God in the Holy Trinity, which can never be lost. Similarly, the Church is always united in Christ’s mystery of salvation. This mysterious unity is organically connected with visible unity, whose hierarchical communion is a component expressed in the principle of apostolic succession and communion with the Roman Pontiff (Seweryniak 2009, 45–46).

In the Cardinal’s ecumenical reflection, something essential for this article but controversial from the historical point of view is the issue of primacy, full of hope in the ecclesiological sense. According to Nagy, contemporary aspirations for Christian unification created a climate in the process of shaping a new image of the papacy, slowly emerging from the attitude of hostility or indifference. This was possible because at a certain stage of inter-religious dialogue, the problem of the office of the Bishop of Rome appeared in a substantive way. Optimism resulted from the fact that the kind of primacy in concrete modern life became the topic of conversation, not only in the Catholic Church, but also

other Christian denominations. This implied the need for a certain form of general Christian authority and an attempt to determine its essence and the way it functions (Nagy 2009, 136–137).

Three directions of research can be pointed out: changing the anti-Catholic views (Nagy 1979, 145–172), the fruits of theological dialogue with symbolic reconciliation and the new quality of papal ministry seen in John Paul II's pontificate. With regard to the first point, the Cardinal pointed to Orthodoxy's interest in this issue. Referring to such theologians as T. Ware, J. Meyendorf or N. Afanassiev, he recalled the fact that the Roman Catholic Church accepted its special authority from the beginning, without the element of jurisdiction and anchoring it in Peter's mission. The prevalence given to the Apostle would consist in service, his symbolizing unity, and in accepting his primacy out of love. With regard to Protestant theology, two important points can be found: justifying primacy and understanding it. What is important in this case are Fr. Cullmann's views, who in the text recognized the promise of primacy and the authenticity of the message to St. Peter, but as a personal privilege, without the possibility of continuation or succession. The Anglican community showed the most positive response, recognizing Peter and his successors as possessing some general unifying universal task for the Church, but without any jurisdictional dependence (Nagy 1982, 120–123).

The motivation for the dialogue carried out according to S. Nagy was symbolism creating a positive atmosphere. In particular, this concerned our relationship with the Orthodox Church, which was initiated by the meeting between Paul VI with Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople in the Holy Land in 1964. The continuation of the meetings resulted in a mutual pardoning of the excommunications of 1054, including strengthening dialogues, which also included theological talks at the International Mixed Commission.¹ The Cardinal paid attention to its interesting course of events, and even wrote that focusing on the issue of primacy was "sensational" (Nagy 2009, 137). However, it should be remembered that since 1988, when this issue appeared, the obstacles that emerged were not overcome and primacy is currently not an important topic of discussion (Bujak 2001, 22).

¹ Current achievements: *The Monachium Document* 1982, *The Baria Document* 1987, *The Valamo Document* 1988, *The Balamand Document* 1993³. They concern the mutual Declarations in 1976–1981.

Concerning the communities that grew out of the Reformation, the Professor pointed to the intense Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in the sixties at the level of the episcopate in America and throughout the world, which resulted in specific documents, in particular the Malta Document (1972). In his opinion, this was testimony to “a radical departure from the formerly remembered aggression towards Rome, even those by Luther himself” (Nagy 2009, 138). It also emphasized the good atmosphere during dialogues with the Anglican Church, including two declarations,² with deep openness to Peter’s primacy, but without specific references to the Catholic understanding of the problem (Nagy 2009, 138).

S. Nagy devoted most of his work to Catholics being open to the question of searching for a common formula on primacy. It centered on the encyclical by John Paul II dedicated to ecumenism (John Paul II, 1995), which should be seen as a complement to the Council’s *Decree on Ecumenism*. This document shows the office of the Bishop of Rome as somewhat *ad intra*, meaning that its subjective aspect is presented based on the person who exercises this office. Proof of this is the articulated awareness of his special responsibility, which consists in perceiving the ecumenical aspirations of the majority of Christian Communities and listening to requests for “such a form of primacy that would not dismiss the essential elements of this mission and be open to a new situation” (John Paul II 1995, 95). The Pope’s appeal was also emphasized, since he invited the superiors of communities and theologians to create a formula that would enable the ministry of love to be recognized by everyone. It was not, as the Cardinal emphasized, the modification of the Catholic doctrine of papal primacy, but its method and practical application in the specific life of individual Christian communities involved in the ecumenical movement (Nagy 2009, 140–141).

In the assessment of this part of the Professor’s achievements, we must emphasize his extraordinary passion in presenting individual elements of ecumenical dialogue, although it seems that his attitude was overly optimistic in the pursuit of unification and accepting papal primacy.

² They concern the mutual Declarations in 1976–1981.

4. PRIMACY IN JOHN PAUL II'S PONTIFICATE

The ministry of the Bishop of Rome is a thoroughly praxeological reality, because it is truth and at the same time includes the Church's ability to adapt to a certain time and place in its supernatural mission of evangelization. As a function in the Church and for the Church, it is always anchored in the person of the Bishop of Rome (Bartnik 1991, 81). Cardinal Nagy was an insightful observer and commentator of Pope John Paul II's pontificate. In M. Rusecki's opinion, he was one of the greatest experts on the pope's teachings (Rusecki 2009, 33). There is no doubt that the central topic of numerous statements, both strictly academic as well as popular, was Peter's ministry during our times. The Cardinal was not afraid to talk about a new way of accomplishing the mission of St. Peter's Successor, presenting the pope on three levels: the value of the principle of collegiality, papal pilgrimages and the serving nature of the ministry.

The idea of collegiality, according to the Professor, resulted from the pope's deep personality based on personalistic philosophy, his sensitivity to *communio* and dialogue. We can add that this resonated with the spirit and fruits of the Second Vatican Council. Therefore, it was no surprise that he made one of the unchanging elements of ecclesial life all forms of collegiality within the synod of bishops as its head (Nagy 1997, 166). This institution, established by Pope Paul VI in 1965, became, as Nagy writes, a powerful, resilient mechanism of his life and leadership in the Church. It was immersed in the Church's centuries-old traditions and institutions, such as the Roman Curia, local, metropolitan and plenary synods, including *ad limina* visits, and became effective help in governing the Church (Nagy 1993, 49).

It should be remembered that a synod lies in the Pope's field of advisory councils and is to be, in fact, a platform for a spiritual bond between the college of bishops, its head and their mutual cooperation. In this context, the professor stated that this is the way the papal office functions, and so there is no spirit of domination, with no attempts to be above others, and there is a brotherly willingness to support and cooperate with the entire Church. Also, this does not mean that the Bishop of Rome will resign from his particular role in the college of bishops and the universal Church (Nagy 1997, 166–167).

An equally characteristic feature of the pontificate of John Paul II, along with collegiality, are the pope's pilgrimages. They should be treated as a kind of

service and a response to the Council's ecclesiology. For Nagy, it was one of the most important determinants of the modern papacy (Nagy 1994, 231). It became a new law and a kind of charism of St. Peter's service on the world's roads, when as the head of the universal Church he became the main universal missionary present in the world (Nagy 1993, 159–160).

Searching for categories describing how John Paul II functioned in his everyday ministry as the successor of St. Peter, the Professor benefited from Pope Gregory the Great's beautiful self-determination, who spoke about himself as the *Servus servorum Dei*. John Paul II described himself using this title, indicating that he wanted to be a man and a bishop of unlimited service to the Church. Most eloquent are the words he spoken at the beginning of his pontificate: "O Christ, make me a servant of Your only power. Let me become a servant, the servant of your servants" (John Paul II 1987, 15). For Nagy, these words reached the rank of the symbol and irrevocable motto of his life and the authentic image of the Peter of our times (Nagy 1997, 165).

*

Theology of primacy is an issue that is one of the main themes of the academic achievements of Cardinal Stanisław Nagy. The Council's vision of ecclesiology and ecumenical dialogue influenced the views of the Professor, which initially accented the institutional and historical aspects of the most important offices in the Church, and over time placed them in the mysterious vision of the Church, highlighting its historical elements. John Paul II's pontificate undoubtedly influenced this vision of the primacy, showing the pastoral and serving nature of this ministry, which is open to contemporary challenges, including ecumenical dialogue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BARTNIK, Czesław Stanisław. *Kościół Jezusa Chrystusa* [The Church of Jesus Christ]. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej 1982.
- BARTNIK, Czesław Stanisław. “Prymat papieski w świetle eklezjologii prakseologicznej” [“Papal Primacy in the Light of Praxeological Ecclesiology”]. *Communio* 11, nr 6 (1991): 81–92.
- BUJAK, Janusz. “Prymat Biskupa Rzymu w świetle dokumentów dialogu katolicko-prawosławnego” [“The Primacy of the Bishop of Rome in the Light of the Documents on Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue”]. *SiDE* 2 (2001): 21–31.
- JOHN XXIII. “Przemówienie na otwarcie Soboru Watykańskiego II” [“Address at the Opening of the Second Vatican Council”]. *AAS* 54 (1962): 786–796.
- JOHN PAUL II. “Otwórzcie na oścież drzwi Chrystusowi. Na rozpoczęcie pontyfikatu” [“Open Wide the Door to Christ. The Pontifical Inauguration Speech”]. In *Nauczanie papieskie I* [Papal Teaching I], edited by Florian Kniotek, 13–17. Poznań–Warszawa: Pallottinum, 1987.
- JOHN PAUL II. The Encyclical *Ut unum sint*. Vatican, 1995.
- NAGY, Stanisław. “Prymat we współczesnym dialogu ekumenicznym” [“Primacy in Modern Ecumenical Dialogue”]. In *Chrześcijanin w Kościele* [A Christian in the Church], edited by Józef Majka, 145–172. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej, 1971.
- NAGY, Stanisław. *Chrystus w Kościele. Zarys eklezjologii fundamentalnej* [Christ in the Church. Outline of Fundamental Ecclesiology]. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej, 1985.
- NAGY, Stanisław. *Kościół na drogach jedności* [The Church on the Paths of Unity]. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej, 1985.
- NAGY, Stanisław. “Piotr naszych czasów. Piętnaście lat pontyfikatu Jana Pawła II” [“Peter in Our Times. Fifteen Years of the Pontificate of John Paul II”]. *Ethos* 6, nr 2/3 (1993): 47–52.
- NAGY, Stanisław. “Piętnaście lat Jana Pawła II. Próba syntezy” [“Fifteen Years of John Paul II. An Attempt to Synthesize”]. In *Symposium naukowe z okazji 15-lecia pontyfikatu Jana Pawła II* [Academic Symposium on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Pontificate of John Paul II]. Kraków, October 11–12, 1993, edited by Jan D. Szczurek, Roman Zawadzki, 225–245. Kraków: Znak, 1994.
- NAGY, Stanisław. *Papież z Krakowa. Szkice do pontyfikatu Jana Pawła II* [The Pope from Krakow. Sketches about the Pontificate of John Paul II]. Częstochowa: Niedziela, 1997.
- NAGY, Stanisław. “Modele jedności Kościoła” [“Models of Church Unity”]. *Symposium* 6, nr 4/1 (2000): 95–103.
- NAGY, Stanisław. *Ty jesteś Piotr, czyli Skala, i na tej Skale zbuduję Kościół mój. Studium o widzialnym Kościele* [You are Peter, the Rock, and on this Rock I will Build my Church. Studies on the Visible Church]. Częstochowa: Niedziela, 2009.
- PAUL VI. Encyklika *Ecclesiam suam* [Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*]. *AAS* 56 (1964): 609–659.
- RATZINGER, Joseph. “Prymat Piotra a jedność Kościoła” [“The Primacy of Peter and Church Unity”]. *Communio* 11, nr 6 (1991): 3–17.

- RUSECKI, Marian. *Wiarygodność chrześcijaństwa. Z teorii teologii fundamentalnej* [The Credibility of Christianity. From the Theory of Fundamental Theology]. Lublin: TN KUL, 1994.
- RUSECKI, Marian. "Recenzja dorobku naukowego i prakseologiczno-eklezjalnego Kardynała prof. dra hab. Stanisława Nagyego w sprawie nadania tytułu doktora honoris causa Papieskiego Wydziału Teologicznego we Wrocławiu" ["A Review of the Academic, Praxeological and Ecclesial Achievements of Cardinal Prof. Dr. Hab. Stanisław Nagy and Awarding him the Title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław"]. In *Kardynał Profesor Stanisław Nagy SCJ Doktor honoris causa Papieskiego Wydziału Teologicznego we Wrocławiu* [Cardinal Professor Stanisław Nagy SCJ, *Doctor Honoris Causa* from the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław], edited by Andrzej Nowicki, Grzegorz Sokołowski, 23–34. Wrocław: PAT, 2009.
- RUSECKI, Marian. *Traktat o Kościele* [Treatise on the Church]. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2014.
- SEWERYNIAK, Henryk. *Święty Kościół powszedni* [Holy Universal Church]. Kraków: Więź, 1996.
- SEWERYNIAK, Henryk. *Świadectwo i sens. Teologia fundamentalna* [Testimony and Meaning. Fundamental Theology]. Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2001.
- SEWERYNIAK, Henryk. "Recenzja dorobku naukowego Kardynała prof. dra hab. Stanisława Nagyego w sprawie nadania tytułu doktora honoris causa Papieskiego Wydziału Teologicznego we Wrocławiu" ["A Review of the Academic, Praxeological and Ecclesial Achievements of Cardinal Prof. Dr. Hab. Stanisław Nagy and Awarding him the Title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław"]. In *Kardynał Profesor Stanisław Nagy SCJ Doktor honoris causa Papieskiego Wydziału Teologicznego we Wrocławiu* [Cardinal Professor Stanisław Nagy SCJ, *Doctor Honoris Causa* from the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław], edited by Andrzej Nowicki, Grzegorz Sokołowski, 35–58. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo PAT, 2009.
- SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium*, 1965.

Translated by Jan Kobyłecki



The preparation of the English version of *Roczniki Teologiczne (Annals of Theology)* and its publication in electronic databases was financed under contract no. 836/P-DUN/2018 from the resources of the Minister of Science and Higher Education for the popularization of science.