# ROCZNIKI TEOLOGICZNE Tom LXIII, zeszyt 5 — 2016

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18290/rt.2016.63.5-6

### DAMIAN ZIARKOWSKI

# SUFFERING AS AN INVOCATION OF MERCY

A b s t r a c t. The presentation is based largely on the teaching and testimony of Pope John Paul II. Particular emphasis was placed on the statement of Pope-Pole that there is no such misery and sin God could not raise up a man from. The message of the reflection seems concrete, positive and valid in the context of the Year of Mercy lived for in Church. It is in harmony with the service of human greater openness to the grace of God's Mercy and entrusting all suffering to Him. The dynamics of the reasoning passes from the look "deeper" of the one who suffers, through his experience of the relationship with the Merciful, to the school of "greater humanity".

Key words: mercy; suffering; richer humanity; faith; meeting with the Merciful One.

Blessed Pope Paul VI considered the Gospel parable of the Good Samaritan<sup>1</sup> to be the spiritual paradigm<sup>2</sup> of the Second Vatican Council. The Church in its attitude towards the modern world, brought "messages of full

Ma Lic. Damian Ziarkowski—stuudent at the Institute of Pastoral Theology and Catechetics of John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin; address for correspondence—e-mail: jatojagtr@wp.pl

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "The old story of the Good Samaritan has been the model of the spirituality of the Council [...] a wave of affection and admiration flowed from the Council over the modern world of humanity"—Paul VI, last public session the Second Vatican Council 7 XII 1965, after: Pope Francis, the Bull announcing Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: *Misericordiae vultus*, 11.04.2015, no. 4, *L'Osservatore Romano* (ed. pol.), 36(2015):5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Paradigm – the term that describes accepted in a given field way of seeing reality– from Latin paradigma, greek para-deigma = standard, model, instructive pattern. In science sometimes the following term is used: the paradigm of declination, the paradigm of conjugation etc. Cf. Teresa PASZKOWSKA, "Communio jako paradygmat teologii duchowości" [Communio as a paradigm of spirituality], in Communio w chrześcijańskiej refleksji o Kościele [Communio in Christian reflection on the Church], ed. Andrzej Czaja, Marek Marczewski (Lublin: TN KUL, 2004), 463.

trust"<sup>3</sup> to replace the "depressing diagnoses encouraging medication; [and] ominous predictions."

Recognising numerous sufferings in the world, the Church met humanity in the attitude of empathy<sup>4</sup> (the capacity to place oneself in another's position) referring to the vision of mercy that takes responsibility for human lives. As pointed out by Pope Francis, mercy is a kind of "architrave which supports the life of the Church." In practice, this means undertaking again and again acts of charity towards the needy, concerning both the body and the soul.

The Church continues to confirm that Jesus Christ-true God who became true man remains the model of charity in relation to any man. He constituted the example that mercy in not merely the compassion but is an attitude of genuine commitment to the suffering person. As shown by Christ, it does not merely mean bringing relief, reducing the pain but it is personal accompaniment in need even in the most difficult moments. "No institution can replace human heart when one comes to struggle with the suffering. It is also not to be believed that the Gospel justifies passivity. On the contrary, suffering is the call for mercy and compassion."

The present reflection concerns the relationships between suffering (of various types) and mercy, especially in terms of mutual influence and mutual dependence.

### 1. SUFFERING THAT LEADS TO A DEEPER INSIGHT

"A man in his suffering remains an untouchable mystery." It seems to be ineffable, although the depth of human pain is concrete, real and wide-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> What is the attitude of empathy – see Teresa PASZKOWSKA, *Psychologia w kierownictwie duchowym* [Psychology in spiritual leadership] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2014), 122–125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The Bull announcing Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy: *Misericordiae vultus*, no. 4, The term architrave derives from ancient architecture, it is the main part of the entablature, supporting beams, placed directly on the columns.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Avery DULLES SJ, *The Splendor of Faith.Theological Vision of John Paul II*, trans. Aneta Nowak (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2003), 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> JOHN PAUL II, List apostolski o chrześcijańskim sensie ludzkiego cierpienia [Apostolic letter on the Christian meaning of human suffering]: *Salvifici doloris*, no. 4.

spread. Therefore, "in its 'objective reality' it demands reflection, recognition of the distinctive shape of the problem, posing radical questions and searching for answers." For the believer the Word of God is the key, especially the Incarnate Word – the person of Jesus Christ, His deeds, attitude and preaching. On the road of faith man can look with courage into the heart of his or her suffering and find there the meaning, elucidated by God.

St. John Paul II admitted "Many a time have I seen how the state becomes accepted not as 'fate' but as a true 'selection' and vocation: God's 'design' of human life, in which a man finds himself, identifies with it, finds inner peace, and even joy and happiness. Often have I been struck by the happiness and peace in talks with people deeply experienced in human terms. Handicapped in their human 'fate'. I found it as the tangible proof of Grace and presence of the Holy Spirit in the human heart."

The situation of suffering may be difficult for man, but God in such circumstances is able to do a lot for the sufferer, as well as introduce him into such dimensions of engagement he previously did not know. It is essential for man to allow God to intervene and guide him in this situation. It may relate to Christ's words uttered to tired and disheartened Peter by the lake of Gennesaret: "'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for the catch" (Lk 5:4). Peter's obedience led to an unprecedentedly good catch. When a person trusts the word of God and allows Him to lead him through critical moments, related to suffering, God is able to make the sufferer a "'tool'" and transform the life he has lived up to then.

Pope John Paul II confessed on the basis of His own experience: "There is no evil from which God could not make the greater good. There is no suffering from which He could not make the road leading to Him. Via voluntary passion and death on the cross the Son of God took upon himself all the evils of sin. The suffering of the crucified God is not merely some kind of suffering among others, a greater or lesser pain, but incomparable measure of suffering. In sacrificing himself for us all, Christ gave a new meaning to suffering, opening up a new dimensions, a new order: the order of love." <sup>10</sup>

Realising this and accepting in faith, the suffering person may find inner peace and the meaning of their own experiences, even if they appeared unex-

<sup>9</sup> Andre FROSSARD, "Be not afraid". In conversation with John Paul II (Kraków: Znak, 2005), 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Ibid., no. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Pamięć i tożsamość* [Memory and Identity] (Kraków: Znak, 2005), 171–172.

pectedly. The sufferer can find in Christ the path to perfect happiness. On the path, the pain can be accepted as a kind of "gift from God"—filled with deep, albeit mysterious, meaning—when man can organise his thoughts and desires as well as meet the demands of the new situation. This was John Paul II's attitude towards his own suffering, which showed the observers an indelible trace of God's presence in human pain.

Great misfortunes and sufferings related to them can overwhelm and depress the person affected as well as his or her relatives. In such circumstances it is good to remember that the last word always belongs to God (not to the circumstances themselves or human emotions). The Bible—as we observe—likes to use the word mercy to "describe God's conduct towards us."

Even in so helpless a situation as blindness from birth, Jesus—when asked who could be blamed for this state—taught that one should not deduce either the sin of the parents or the blind man himself, but notice that, paradoxically, this situation proves convenient "that the works of God might be displayed in him" (John 9:3). Besides, "Jesus carries the burden of searching for the aim of suffering from the question 'why?' to 'what for?'. Thereby He introduces his disciples into the deeper reflection on the meaning and purpose of suffering."

In the logic of the Gospel, illness and suffering can become the source of many graces for man. God can use suffering and various sorts of pain, to prove merciful and omnipotent in His love towards man. However, subjected to such a trial one can come out victoriously only when they entrust themselves to God and allow Him to work in their life. In these situations the loving voice of Christ resounds: "[...] your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering" (Mk 5:34).

"Suffering and the accompanying sorrow or isolation tend to focus attention on the deeper dimension of humanity. Sometimes astounding inner transformation takes place, bringing immense happiness to people who deeply suffer. This is one of the great paradoxes of suffering, difficult to comprehend for the patient as well as astonishing for the doctor. Pain and illness are not always closely connected with a sense of unhappiness; they can frequent-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> FRANCIS, Bull Misericordiae vultus, no. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Romuald JAWORSKI, Krzywda, wina, ekspiacja – trzy oblicza cierpienia [Hurt, guilt, expiation—three faces of suffering], in *Wobec cierpienia*, Konferencja Stowarzyszenia Psychologów Chrześcijańskich "Psychologia i psychoterapia wobec cierpienia", Konstancin 21-23 marca 2003 roku, ed. Romuald Jaworski, Agata Rusak, Witold Simon (Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2004), 51.

ly constitute the way to develop self-understanding, have creative and constructive benefits, especially for personal development, inner growth." One does not reach such a depth immediately, man subjected to the trial of suffering is, as it were, "polished" like a diamond which develops its sparkle. Such a process can be called maturing in suffering. It is frequently slow and prolonged but results in visible human transformation, further development in humanity as well as faith (assimilation to Christ), the sense of being "master of oneself." Having a safe relationship to the Lord who governs reality, the sufferer no longer experiences paralysing helplessness and fear. One becomes capable of showing love to others.

In this way, on the difficult path of suffering a man can find new opportunities to enrich humanity. "Suffering does not bear immediate and miraculous effects. It creates an opportunity. It creates an opportunity to reflect upon and take the trouble of learning. Still, man remains free to accept or reject the hand of God outstretched to him but hidden behind a difficult experience." 14

John Paul II in his personal notes immortalised the testimony of Bishop Lozinsky who, facing a serious illness, spoke to his friends: "do not pray for my recovery, pray so that I did not waste the grace of suffering." It is the testimony of properly and courageously accepted suffering by the Christian who possesses the ability to look into it "more deeply" in order to find its transcendental and spiritual dimension. It is insufficient to treat suffering casually, without a deeper reflection and spiritual move that opens to God.

### 2. MEETING BETWEEN THE SUFFERER AND THE MERCIFUL ONE

The suffering itself becomes very difficult for man, which generates the need to receive help from the one who would be able and would want to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Cit. after: http://drobata.blox.pl/2005/06/Chrzescijanski-sens-cierpienia.html. The author of the statement is Professor Zdzislaw Jan Ryn, the autor of the book: Cierpienie ma tysiąc twarzy. Jan Pawel II i chorzy [Suffering has a thousand faces. John Poul II and the sick] (1989); a psychiatrist at the Jagiellonian Uniwersity Medical College, mountaineer and diplomat [07.11.2015].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Jerzy Zieliński OCD, *In the school of suffering. Difficult paths to important discoveries* (Kraków: Wyd. Karmelitów Bosych, 2007), 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Karol WOJTYŁA/JOHN PAUL II, "I am very much in God's hands". *Personal notes* 1962–2003 (Kraków: Znak, 2014), 137.

satisfy his needs. The majority of the demands can be met – selflessly or through paid services – by people. The sufferer, however, carries in his heart also deeper needs requiring eternal, transcendent and metaphysical answers. One may try to satisfy these "higher" needs through people but to a greater extend they will be met by God.

Saint Paul the Apostle, when experiencing a suffering-like condition, difficult to accept and overcome, turned to God. In response, he heard from the Most High: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2Cor 12:9). These words constitute a valuable clue for those burdened by grief and a sense of helplessness. They indicate that in suffering one should turn to God to receive the power to overcome even the most severe difficulties. However, a meeting between the *sufferer* (man) and the *Merciful One* (God) must take place. Human faith and trust in God's mercy are the bridge of this meeting.

The worshipper, by giving a lead to the Holy Spirit, starts to comprehend the real meaning of consecration of the Son of God for human salvation. The Holy Spirit reveals to him mysteriously specific "pain, unimaginable and inexpressible [...] in «the depths of God», as if in the heart of inconceivable Trinity." It is the matter of the profound suffering of God related to the fact that many people do not believe in Him, choose sin, evil and Satan and find the Eternal Love valueless. When one compares personal pain (existential or particular) with these Divine feelings, they open themselves to the relationship that modifies their lives from this moment on, altering current priorities.

At this point it is worth paying attention to the issue—strongly related to the above—of human iniquity. In view of God, man always remains feeble and sinful, as evidenced by all the Saints of the Church. The state of "sinfulness," however, cannot justify doing evil. Man—created in the image and likeness of God—is called to holiness, hence sin is always connected with someone's suffering (of himself, other people, even God). The context of sin—frequently connected with the suffering of various kinds—constitutes the situation in which man should call upon the mercy of God. The sinner, despite the fear before Him who is holy, may rely on the words of St. Paul: "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Ro 5:20). They indicate

-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical letter on the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the world: *Dominum et Vivificantem*, no. 39.

that God's mercy is unlimited, and that sin is not the final word of assessment (judgement) of man.

Man is a social being, which is insistently manifested in suffering as a requirement of mutual openness: other people's' to him and his to the others. This opening allows the flow of mutual self-giving love: in gestures, words, favours. In these circumstances the truth continues to be confirmed, to which the Second Vatican Council pointed out that "a man «cannot find himself except through the sincere gift of self». These words [...] can be said to sum up the whole of Christian anthropology." <sup>17</sup>

The man, however, cannot find in himself the power to love in a spontaneous manner. A human being has to learn it from Him who (for him and from him) suffered so much yet still loves him. John Paul II emphasized in his encyclical on the Holy Spirit that "the greatest sin on man's part is matched, in the heart of the Redeemer, by the oblation of supreme love." By contemplating God's heart man enables his own heart to accept His love and be involved in it, thus to undertake mercy in an active way.

A man who starts to see God as always loving man, makes his own heart able to love and forms in it the willingness to be a selfless gift for others. "To love means to give and receive something which can be neither bought or sold, but only given freely and mutually." Merciful love is characterised by the fact that it is addressed towards a man who does not deserve it. In this sense it is "mercy" shown by the One who has magnanimity in his heart. It is crucial in this situation that the recipient of the gift was not humiliated by the attitude of the donor who could show off too much. Attitude which reveals "God rich in mercy" is characterised by the fact that the person "who is the object of mercy, does not feel humiliated but rather found again and 'restored to value'." <sup>20</sup>

It is not enough to do good to a needy person—by handing over a material or spiritual gift—it is crucial that this gift be bound with the proper intention and spiritual attitude towards the recipient. Suffering is called a secret (mystery) since it is not sufficient to perceive it as a universal phenomenon because such knowledge does not lead directly to the logic of (merciful) love but to (social) charity at most.

<sup>19</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Letter to families, no. 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ibid., no. 59. An inner quote comes from Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world: *Gaudium et spes*, no. 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ibid., no. 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical letter on God's Mercy: Dives in misericordia, no. 6.

In the encyclical Fides et ratio John Paul II stressed the necessity of transition from the phenomena as such to their foundation. "We face a great challenge at the end of this millennium to move from phenomenon to foundation, a step as necessary as it is urgent. We cannot stop short at experience alone; even if experience does reveal the human being's interiority and spirituality, speculative thinking must penetrate to the spiritual core and the ground from which it rises."21 It is not enough to have personal experience of suffering to have it correctly read and interpreted. One needs to relate the experience to an external criterion. "The word of God refers constantly to things that transcendent human experience and even human thought."22 A man needs help from the One who is the Lord of "all that is seen and unseen" (Creed). God's love towards man is stronger than any human wound (physical or mental) or sin. Referring to such an experience, a person feels new power that transcends earthly dimension.

"Love is the richest source of the meaning of suffering, which always remains a mystery [...] the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering"<sup>23</sup>—concludes John Paul II, touching the heart of the present reflection. The man who was led out (exodus) through Christ from the focus on pain and illness, begins to see things that are visible and invisible in a new manner. He perceives the whole reality in a more sensitive and deeper way, includes the elements overlooked by many, reasons using a different logic.

Man is capable of loving his own cross by linking it to the one of Christ (an instrument of salvation), he can find the deeper meaning in particular suffering that becomes a privileged space for becoming convergent to God. He can capture the call of God to make a special gift of himself while perceiving the suffering as "God's plea" he can either accept with love or reject. This requires from a sufferer a re-evaluation of his entire previous way of thinking.

Human pain constitutes an opportunity to be unified with Christ more profoundly and quickly, to enrich humanity and address the others in their needs. It happens to be a favourable opportunity to bear witness when it is "introduced into love" and it proves to be the source of grace for the sufferer

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> JOHN PAUL II. Encyclical *Fides et ratio* about the relationship between faith and reason, no. 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> JOHN PAUL II, List apostolski o chrześcijańskim sensie ludzkiego cierpienia [Apostolic letter on the Christian meaning of human suffering]: Salvifici doloris, no. 13.

and for others. The attitude of merciful love makes the man strong despite—or thanks to—his weakness, since he proliferates the good.

# 3. MERCY INSCRIBED IN A "RICHER HUMANITY"

"Suffering is a 'dis-form,' 'de-formation' of existence – hence it's a wrong, erroneous form; in other words, it is the symptom of bad or wrong existence, incorrect concept of being that crept in inside man. In a peculiar way it weakens the desire (will) of life and denies the possibility of life because of the state one experiences. Sometimes it even leads to the decision of taking one's own life when a man cannot cope with the tension inside." Suicidal decisions are most commonly taken by people suffering from mental disorders. These disorders constitute exceptionally difficult challenge for a patient, cause multidimensional suffering for himself/herself and their family.

Overwhelmed, man has two paths to choose from: to surrender to the pressure of pain (to collapse) or to attempt to meet the demands and live with this additional burden. If he selects the latter option, he undertakes the chance of deeper development—then he joins the school of "richer humanity."

It is virtually impossible to accept (tame) pain or suffering immediately. It is necessary to follow step by step the way marked by the Master—Jesus Christ—who as "true God and true man suffered. He understands suffering like none of us does." He is never merely compassionate and humane towards people, but always full of merciful love and ready to act. "To those who suffer, Jesus shows compassionate kindness, he sees every person that suffered from some kind of evil, he comforts in despondency and heals various diseases. In every man, even socially unacceptable, He recognises intact personal dignity (cf. Luke 13:16; 19:9; Jn 9:3). He always attempts to estab-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Zbigniew KIERNIKOWSKI, The role of suffering in the completion of human life. A look in the light of the Bible, in *In view of suffering*, The Conference of Christian Psychologists Association "Psychology and psychotherapy towards suffering", Konstancin 21-23 III 2003, ed. Romuald Jaworski, Agata Rusak, Witold Simon (Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2004), 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> JOHN PAUL II, Memory and Identity (Kraków: Znak, 2005), 11.

lish contact with these people, full of respect, inspiring confidence and hope. Such an attitude of Christ draws to Him people subjected to various life experiences. And He allows such people to be near Him and become the companions of His life and work. The Evangelist Matthew, a genuine witness to such situations, perceives it as the fulfilment of old prophecy «He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases» (Matt 8:17; cf. Is 53:4)."<sup>26</sup>

His instructions presented in the Gospel contain hints which are always relevant. Yet, everyone must make an effort to resolve their own problems with His help. It can be assumed that "each explanation on suffering given by Jesus became a sort of assignment for people. These are the grains that fell deeply on the ground of our hearts in order to take root and reveal something of divine mystery. They need time. Problems of mathematics or physics can be solved on a piece of paper. Problems posed by Jesus we must solve in our hearts since suffering is not an item lying nearby but an experience that makes each of us a house in which it will dwell." 27

In a personal experience of suffering, it is important to grow in faith as well as friendship with God while we reach further stages of suffering. This is a fundamental formative dimension in the "school of suffering," where one gradually needs to adjust "one's personal judgement and learn God's way of viewing people and events."<sup>28</sup>

Suffering forms a spiritual dimension of man, it brings out the virtue of patience or teaches the sufferer and those associated with him how to be gentle. "In the hands of Jesus suffering is the tool to temper human will in the good. The will is the power to command, it is a source of independence and gives the sense of power. It fulfils resolutions of the mind and put them into action. Just like mind, will carries the taint of imperfection. Instead of full control over one's desires and their fulfilment, a man becomes their slave in different ways and to various degrees. Instead of managing them, he turns out to be their servant. Gods providence cures this morbid state of human will through suffering. Using medical terminology, we can say that God works through suffering in a bidirectional way: He strengthens and ennobles human will."<sup>29</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Józef ZABIELSKI, Extraction of good. Theology of Christian charity (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2006), 34–35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> J. ZIELIŃSKI OCD, In the school of suffering, 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid., 22-23.

There is a profound truth hidden, as in any folk wisdom, in the well-known saying "suffering ennobles." Suffering can refine human conduct since "in the hands of Jesus, the suffering is used [...] as a tool of purification, helpful in forming one's heart. In the heart, there everything begins. All that a man does on the outside, what he looks at, listens to and talks about is expressed by his interior. Therefore, the biblical wise man wrote: 'As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart' (Proverbs 27:19). Each tough experience when lived with patience and good motivation, makes human heart stronger and richer internally in the eyes of God."<sup>30</sup>

A man who goes through "the school of suffering" gains an opportunity to learn an attitude of mercy, especially when he experiences the mercy of God and neighbour. One receives the stimulus to become the transmitter of "the spark" of mercy he has gained. He can pass it, building a civilisation of life and love thereby.

John Paul II, through his Apostolic letter motu proprio Dolentium hominum (1985), established Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, before which twenty years later (21 January 2005) he addressed the topic: "Sanctify the sickness time." He recommended that one should "promote ethical-religious formation of Christian health workers all over the world, taking into account various situations and specific problems [...] as well as protect fundamental values and rights related to dignity and ultimate destiny of every human being."31 "The sanctification of the time of disease"32 constitutes another task for people engaged in active being close to the sufferers. The idea is that illness and suffering should be used as a tool to build a civilisation of love that has both its internal and external dimension. Without doubt, "evangelisation, formation of consciences as well as the witness of charity [...] are valuable not only since they are comfort for sufferers but also they show societies ambitious aims of a civilisation of love,"33 which influences the future of the world. For this reason the Church devotes a lot of attention to it and presents many arguments to encourage people from different states of life to participate in its building.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *The sanctification of the time of disease*, 21.01.2005, Speech to the participants of the session of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, after: http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan\_pawel\_ii/przemowienia/sl\_zdrowia\_21012005.html. [07.11. 2015].

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

### CONCLUSION

Suffering and mercy are two different realities people are faced with. They are not mutually exclusive but share a common point of reference. In the center of each there is a man—the individual who suffers. This article brings out the truth about the relationship between human suffering and the experience (passive or active) of Mercy. It emphasizes the fact that suffering constitutes a *sui generis* cry for Mercy, addressed to God and people equally. Jesus Christ is the one who responds to it – He, the most perfect model of the Merciful, who unveils God's Mercy and teaches humans such an attitude. In order to understand one's own suffering more deeply, one needes to meet the Merciful God who will introduce a person to the school of "deeper humanity." The suffering, when well lived-through, can become a testimony of faith as well as it may contribute to the establishment of a civilisation of love.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

DULLES, Avery SJ. *Blask wiary. Wizja teologiczna Jana Pawła II*. Trans. Aneta Nowak. Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2003.

FRANCISZEK, Bulla ogłaszająca Nadzwyczajny Jubileusz Miłosierdzia: *Misericordiae vultus*, 11.04.2015. *L'Osservatore Romano* (ed. pol.), 36(2015), 5:4–15.

FROSSARD, Andre. "Nie lękajcie się". Rozmowy z Janem Pawłem II. Kraków: Znak, 2005.

http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan\_pawel\_ii/przemowienia/sl\_zdrowia\_21012005.html [07.11.2015].

http://drobata.blox.pl/2005/06/Chrzescijanski-sens-cierpienia.html [07.11. 2015].

JAN PAWEŁ II. Encyklika o Bożym Miłosierdziu: Dives in misericordia, 30.11.1980.

JAN PAWEŁ II. List apostolski o chrześcijańskim sensie ludzkiego cierpienia: Salvifici doloris, 11.02.1984.

JAN PAWEŁ II. Encyklika o Duchu Świętym w życiu Kościoła i świata: *Dominum et Vvivificantem*, 18.05.1986.

JAN PAWEŁ II. List do rodzin "Gratissimam sane", 2.02.1994.

JAN PAWEŁ II. Encyklika o relacjach między wiarą a rozumem: *Fides et ratio*, 14.09. 1998.

JAN PAWEŁ II. Przemówienie do uczestników sesji Papieskiej Rady ds. Duszpasterstwa Służby Zdrowia: *Uświęcać czas choroby*, 21.01.2005.

JAN PAWEŁ II. Pamięć i tożsamość. Kraków: Znak, 2005.

Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego. Rzym, 1992, Poznań: Pallottinum, 1994.

- KOWALSKA, Faustyna. Dzienniczek. Miłosierdzie Boże w duszy mojej. Warszawa: PROMIC, 2014.
- ORCHOWSKI, Józef. Święta siostra Faustyna i Boże Miłosierdzie. Kraków, 2015.
- PASZKOWSKA, Teresa. "Communio jako paradygmat teologii duchowości". In *Communio w chrześcijańskiej refleksji o Kościele*, 463–482. Ed. Andrzej Czaja, Marek Marczewski. Lublin: TN KUL, 2004.
- PASZKOWSKA, Teresa. *Psychologia w kierownictwie duchowym*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2014.
- RYN, Jan Zdzisław. Cierpienie ma tysiąc twarzy. Jan Paweł II i chorzy. Kraków: Znak, 1989.
- Wobec cierpienia. Ed. Romuald Jaworski, Agata Rusak, Witold Simon. Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2004.
- WOJTYŁA KAROL/JAN PAWEŁ II. "Jestem bardzo w rękach Bożych". Notatki osobiste 1962–2003. Kraków: Znak, 2014.
- ZABIELSKI, Józef. *Wydobywanie dobra. Teologia chrześcijańskiego miłosierdzia.* Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2006.
- ZIELIŃSKI, Jerzy OCD. W szkole cierpienia. Trudne drogi do ważnych odkryć. Kraków: Wyd. Karmelitów Bosych, 2007.

### CIERPIENIE JAKO PRZYZYWANIE MIŁOSIERDZIA

### Streszczenie

Opracowanie w znacznej mierze opiera się na nauczaniu i świadectwie św. Jana Pawła II. Szczególny akcent położono na stwierdzenie papieża-Polaka, że nie ma takiej nędzy i grzechu, z których Bóg nie mógłby człowieka podnieść. Przesłanie niniejszych refleksji wydaje się konkretne, pozytywne i aktualne w kontekście Roku Miłosierdzia przeżywanego w Kościele. Wpisuje się w służbę głębszego otwarcia człowieka na łaskę Bożego Miłosierdzia i powierzenia Mu swoich cierpień. Dynamika wywodu przechodzi od spojrzenia prowadzącego "głębiej" tego, kto cierpi, poprzez jego doświadczenie relacji z Miłosiernym, do szkoły "bogatszego człowieczeństwa".

**Słowa kluczowe:** miłosierdzie; cierpienie; bogatsze człowieczeństwo; wiara; spotkanie z Miłosiernym.