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BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR DIALOGUE
ABOUT THE MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY
IN TODAY'S WORLD

Abstract. In today's world there is a strong need for a dialogue about the marriage and the family. First and foremost young people, but also families, married couples including non-sacramental marriages are interested in this dialogue. The need for this dialogue can be observed within the Church. This has been demonstrated by the latest Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops as well as the Church's relations with the world, mainly represented by the mass-media. Therefore it is worth to recall, discover or rediscover this dialogue's basis.

Summarised by Rev. Jarosław Jęczeń

Key words: dialogue; marriage; family.

The 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in its proceedings focussed upon “The vocation and the mission of the family in the Church and in the contemporary world.” A strong need was demonstrated for dialogue about the marriage and family within the Church and with the world primarily represented by contemporary means of communication. First and foremost young people are interested in this dialogue. For a number of years the images of marriage and family relationships have been formed in the home church, i.e. the family at catechises classes. Then in the process of maturation and gaining self-reliance these images are confronted with the world. Family dreams encounter various difficulties: some rooted in the past (e.g. dysfunctional families) and some related to the future (emotional im-

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maturity, fear of taking on responsibility for the other person, fear of losing freedom). Daily-life experience brings about economic concerns, consumerism and relativism related mind-set. Many young people seek dialogue with their parents, peers, in parish communities, in the sacrament of marriage preparation, talking to priests or family-life counsellors. In the era of new communication technologies, the mass media have become a strong dialogue partner; both in the sense of traditional and the new media (the computer and Internet-enabled mobile phone). Dialogue, or in other words—interpersonal communication goes hand in hand with the communication which could be referred to as intrapersonal: young people seek internally answers to questions that arise in the context of the marriage and family. Therefore the question arises: what should the dialogue be like as regards the above-mentioned grounds. What is the basis for the inter- and intrapersonal communication? Answer to these questions will also engage the Church in dialogue; not only within the Church community, but also with the external world. Therefore there is the internal dialogue of the Church members—clergy and laity, as well as external dialogue with those who seek, doubt or deny the Church’s teaching on marriage and the family or go as far as to negate the very definition of marriage. That internal dialogue constitutes the Church’s, the marriage’s and the family’s identity. The external dialogue defines their mission. The dialogue, therefore determines the two pillars: identity and mission.¹ The marriage’s and family’s identity and mission call for references to the truth, to what was in the beginning. The dialogue about the marriage and the role of women and men requires a reference to what was in the beginning. The dialogue should serve the purpose of searching for truth. The truth, when revealed as *logos* creates *diálogos*. Therefore it leads to communication and communion.² The truth creates community. Love is even stronger community creator. The truth and love are inextricably united in the quest for the marriage’s and the family’s identity and mission in today’s world. There is therefore the «need bring love together with the truth, not only as it has been

¹ “The family finds in the plan of God the Creator and Redeemer not only its identity, what it is, but also its mission, what it can and should do. The role that God calls the family to perform in history derives from what the family is; its role represents the dynamic and existential development of what it is. Each family finds within itself a summons that cannot be ignored, and that specifies both its dignity and its responsibility: family, become what you are.” JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation on the role of The Christian Family in the modern world *Familiaris Consortio*, Rome, 22.11.1981, No. 17.

² BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter on integral human development in charity and truth *Caritas in Veritate*, Rome, 29.06.2009, No. 4.

indicated by St. Paul: *veritas in caritate* (Ep 4:15), but also in the opposite, complementary direction—*caritas in veritate*. The truth needs to be sought, found and expresses through the “economy” of love. Love, on the other hand, must be understood, authenticated and implemented in the context of truth.³ Love in truth and truth in love lead to love in the dialogue and the dialogue in love—the dialogue about the marriage and the family in today’s world.

CHRIST REFERS TO THE BEGINNING

The Church’s internal dialogue often encompasses the indissolubility of marriage. The dialogue includes ministers concerned about the statistics which indicate a rising divorce rate. It also involves spouses who have decided to separate and join civil unions as well as young people who find the word “indissolubility” incomprehensible and often associate it with an unbearable burden, a sacrament of marriage deterrent. Outside-the-Church environment, especially the media also discuss these matters. All questions about the indissolubility of marriage meaning can be compared to the Pharisees’ questions to Christ: “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” Christ’s answered, “Haven’t you read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female?” and then he said: “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall join to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, don’t let man tear apart.” And when his interlocutors asked him another question: “Why then did Moses command us to give her a bill of divorce, and divorce her?” Jesus replied: “Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been so. (Mt 19: 3–8). Christ refers to the beginnings. The dialogue is resolute, yet full of love; Christ refers to the truth (*logos*) from the very beginning. The *logos* constituted the communication and communion between man and God as well as between man and woman. This *logos* is to build today’s communion—the marriage and the family, in contrast to what today’s world brings. Christ does not accept the discussion in the standards enforce by His interlocutor. He refers to the beginnings. This is the indication for the today’s Church and for all those who want to enter the dialogue about the marriage and family: refer to the “beginning,” to what the Book of Genesis says: “God created man in his own image. In God’s image he created him; male and fe-

³ *Ibid.*, No. 2.

male he created them” (Gen 1:27) and: “Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his wife, and they will be one flesh” (Gen 2:24). Christ quotes these words and gives them a normative value. Even clearer when Christ not only appeals to the “beginning,” but also says: So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, don’t let man tear apart.” (Mt 19:6). These words of Christ are then decisive with regards to the marriage unity and indissolubility.⁴ Creator’s love to man is a gift that constitutes the unity and indissolubility of the covenant God made with man in the act of creation: a woman and a man. The very gift was to define the unity and indissolubility of bonds between a man and a woman and at the same time define the dialogue with God. All other gifts, such as “dominion over the earth,” “subdue the earth” lose their meaning when they become an autonomous objective of human life, if devoid of the dialogue of love with God perspective. The sin of disobedience made the secondary objectives compete and often marginalize the fundamental one. Today’s culture is the arena for this rivalry, therefore it is impossible not to refer to what was at the “beginning.” The Church’s dialogue with the external world, the Church internal dialogue and also the dialogue with young people in the family, marriage and family counselling centres cannot take place without man’s dialogue with God, without the “beginning.” This is the fundamental principle of dialogue with the today’s world about marriage, the family and about love. The dialogue (*logos*, the truth) about love refers to what it was at the “beginning.” Man, a woman and a man, through their life, love, marriage and family have to bear witness to what was at the “beginning.” Man, in their heart is found and fulfil the truth about their “beginning,” this man’s moral duty.⁵

⁴ JOHN PAUL II, *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Chrystus odwołuje się do ‘początku’*. *O Jana Pawła II teologii ciała* [Man and Woman He Created Them. Christ refers to the ‘beginnings.’ About John Paul II’s theology of the Body], ed. Tadeusz Styczeń (Lublin: RW KUL, 2001), 19–20.

⁵ Tadeusz STYCZEŃ, “‘Początek’ wyrazić ‘sercem’ [‘Beginning’ expressed with the ‘heart’],” in JOHN PAUL II, *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Chrystus odwołuje się do “serca”*. *O Jana Pawła II teologii ciała* [Man and Woman He Created Them. Christ refers to the “heart.” About John Paul II’s theology of the Body], ed. Tadeusz Styczeń (Lublin: RW KUL, 2001), 6.

UNITY OF LOVE

Dialogue with young people, dialogue of married couples who experience crisis or any other dialogue about love, the marriage, the family there are different interpretations of the word love. And this does not allude to the poetic “love has more than one name.” Indeed. It was disturbing in the past been and still is to understand love, show love’s components of different importance in order to eliminate some of the elements. Furthermore, human autonomy in their comprehension of love is promoted with contemporary consumerism, individualism and even more with relativism and man’s conviction that the only truth in life is the truth does not exist at all. Understanding of love has departed from what it was at the “beginning.” The Pope Benedict XVI engages in a dialogue with this kind of thinking in the *Deus Caritas Est* encyclical. On the one hand, the modern world tends to detach the physical love from spiritual love; thus tries to detach man’s love from the love’s roots it has in God. On the other hand, the Pope writes about love’s multiple dimensions, such as *eros*, *philia* and *agape*. Thus he leads his interlocutor towards the love understood as unity: “Amid this multiplicity of meanings, however, one in particular stands out: love between man and woman, where body and soul are inseparably joined and human beings glimpse an apparently irresistible promise of happiness. This would seem to be the very epitome of love; all other kinds of love immediately seem to fade in comparison” (no. 2). Love defined in this way, with the participation of the whole person, i.e. man’s body and soul, is a kind of intrapersonal, interpersonal and interactive communication act. The intrapersonal aspect involves self-awareness of what true love is. Interpersonal aspect implies awareness of the love realisation in people’s relations—equal subjects of action: “I-you.” And finally interactivity means feedback between “I” and “you” where “you” understands love the same way as “I” and this comprehension would lead to a community of persons: “we,” often referred to as *communio personarum*.⁶ Love is seen as a communication act between peo-

⁶ Through the community we understand what is in common. In “I”—“you” relation an authentic interpersonal community is created, if “I” and “you” last in mutual affirmation of transcendental personal value (which can be defined as dignity) and confirm it by their deeds. It seems that only this construction is typical for Karol Wojtyła’s personalism and deserves the name *communio personarum*. See Karol WOJTYŁA, *U podstaw odnowy. Studium o realizacji Vaticanum II* [The Roots of Renewal. Study of Vaticanum II Implementation] (Kraków: Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, 1972), 53–54; IDEM, *Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota* [Person: Subject

ple, the foundation of dialogue within the community, i.e. the married couple and the family. Love is also the basis for dialogue with the so-called external world. In dialogue with the world, presented mainly in the mass media, what determines the indissoluble unity of marriage cannot be escaped. The attitude of love—a self-less gift of oneself, responsibility, acting in truth is expected in all kinds of relationships: between spouses, parents and children, in Church community as well as in relations with those who degrade love of bodily pleasures (*eros*) or deny the definition of the marriage between a man and a woman. Indeed, *eros* can be a starting point for the dialogue in above mentioned relations. However, *eros* itself does not guarantee love in full, does not take into account the unity of the two people. *Eros* is not a interpersonal and interactive act which assumes a man's and a woman's spiritual-corporeal fulfilment. The dialogue must lead towards love comprehended as a unity. Love as ecstasy, however not in the sense of a moment of bliss (*eros*) but ecstasy understood as a way, a continuous abandonment of "I" towards the liberation of the "I" for the other person and thus towards the discovery of God (*agape*). These two types of love: *eros* and *agape*., earthly love and the love with a transcendental dimension (greater than myself, open towards another human being and towards God). They are indissolubly united and form the true nature of love. The *eros* and *agape* are rooted in man's nature. Man has been created to the image and likeness of God: *eros* directs man (Adam) to quest, to the marriage in which man gives themselves as a gift for another person (Eve). Thus *eros* is enriched, complemented so as it becomes *agape*. Such understanding of love leads to a community of persons—*communio personarum*—a reflection of *Unio Personarum* (the Holy Trinity) and their love to man. This truth was expressed by St. Augustine. Benedict XVI reminds it in his Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*: "If you see charity, you see the Trinity" (no. 19).

Different milieus' dialogue about the marriage and the family, including dialogue held in ubiquitous media in its traditional and modern forms often show *eros* and *agape* at a considerable distance, often they forget about one or the other dimension. This results is a caricature, a limited form of love. On the one hand this may have nothing in common with transcendent reality—i.e. with God and with what man quests—happiness, self-realization. On the other hand, it may have only the transcendental dimension as *agape*

and Community], in IDEM, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne* [*Man and Act, and other Anthropological Studies*] (Lublin: TN KUL, 1994), 402.

without human dimension, the dimension of quest named *eros*. All those engaged in dialogue about the marriage and the family are requested to show today's man, young people first and foremost a full picture of love or at least equal proportions of loves components.⁷

THROUGH THE EYES OF LOVE

In a dialogue it is very important to look at another man through the eyes of love, especially in conflict situations. And there are many situations like that—between parents and children, between young people who think about walking through life together and eventually between spouses who encounter various everyday problems. Looking through the eyes of love today is extremely important for Church community, when we think about our attitude towards non-sacramental marriages. This view through the eyes of love should build our relationships, our communication, our dialogue. The same view should apply to a dialogue when the dialogue parties significantly differ from each other as far as understanding of love in marriage is concerned. What is the meaning of this unique look at the other person through the eyes of love?

Let us refer to the “beginning” again. This “beginning” is the source of our knowledge, this “beginning” reveals the truth about who we are and where we are heading. In Genesis we read: “And God said: ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. God blessed them. God said to them ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. [. . .] And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. [. . .]’” (Gen 1:26–31).

God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. God saw! God looked at the man with admiration. It was a look of love because God made man out of love. God would not be Himself, would not be Love if He had not shared this love. God made man out of love. And vision accompanied this creation. Therefore it can be said that God created and co-created the world and man with divine eyes, with the eyes of love. Man experienced this God's

⁷ See Jarosław JEŃCZEŃ, “Mass media w służbie *caritas*. Refleksja na kanwie encykliki Benedykta XVI *Deus caritas est* [Mass Media serving the Charity. Reflection on the Encyclical Letter of Benedict XVI *Deus Caritas Est*],” *Roczniki Teologiczne* [Theological Annals], 54 (2007), 10: 192.

perspective, God's look. Furthermore, man became an heir to this look of love in a man—a woman relations as well as in relations man—the other man. That look so perfect enough (in the truth and love) that a man and a woman were both naked, yet they saw each other in truth without the feeling of shame.

The change comes along with disobedience, with what we call the original sin. St. Augustine, as John Paul II writes, “described the nature of the sin with a remarkable insight and expressed: *amor sui usque ad contemptum Dei*—‘Love to thyself so strong that God is denied’ (*De Civitate Dei*, XIV, 28). This *amor sui*—self-love—pushed our first parents to commit the original disobedience which gave rise sin presence throughout human history.”⁸ Self-love obscured man's love to other man. Henceforth the look through the eyes of love has been distorted, biased, incomplete. This means experience of other man. First, man experienced God's look full of love for man, then man experienced *amor sui* by man's own choice. The has result is a longing for this look, for God eyes full of love. This was demonstrated in the Old Testament, for instance in the Psalms: Lord look down. At this point God no longer looks through the eyes of love, but eyes of mercy. This God's look takes into account man's original sin. God looks at man through the eyes of mercy; not only does He look, he decides to “act.” St. Augustine says that the primary extent of sin could not find a commensurate compensation to *amor sui* in any other form but the opposition to *amor Dei usque contemptum sui*—“God's love as strong as to negate Himself.” The climax of God's mercy is found in Jesus Christ. In Jesus God gives utmost attention to every man, gives a helping hand to lift man up every time they fall, to constantly improve and support, to find strength to walk the new way.⁹

Jesus comes to once again look at man with love, this time to look at man with merciful love. He comes, so that man experience this love and bestows the same look upon others, looks at others through the eyes of mercy. Thus the *amor sui* self-love no longer obscures God and man.

The dialogue between Jesus and the rich young man is interesting. Jesus looked with love at the one who poses the question: “Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mk 10:17–22). The young man's question suggests that in life and in dialogue we ought to seek answers to the question “what it is good.” To task about good means that one turns to God—

⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Pamięć i tożsamość* [Memory and Identity] (Kraków: ZNAK, 2005), 15.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 16; JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter on the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World *Dominum et Vivificantem*, Rome, 18.05.1986, No. 38.

good in its full¹⁰. What is missing in man to man dialogues is this religious pursuit God. Not only should it emerge from religious premises, but also from the natural laws. This “is nothing other than the light of understanding infused in us by God, whereby we understand what must be done and what must be avoided. God gave this light and this law to man at creation.”¹¹

“Then Jesus looked at him and loved him, and said: ‘One thing is lacking in you: go, sell all you possess and give the proceeds to the poor, and you shall have riches in Heaven and come and be a follower of mine.’ And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions” (Mk 10:21). The young man experienced Jesus looking at him with the eyes of mercy. However, he did not take this experience as his own experience. This experience was foreign to him, because he owed great possessions. Or else, his possessions owed him. He was owed by what surrounded him. This was the obstacle that prevented him from accepting Jesus’ look through the eyes of mercy and then looking at other people the way Jesus did: through the eyes of mercy. Conclusions? The world owes us limits us in doing merciful acts, in looking at other people through the eyes of mercy.

Jesus is aware of human weakness, human perception which has been tainted with the original sin. Therefore the parable of the prodigal son. Jesus teaches what it means to look at man through the eyes of mercy. In this parable He reminds what was in the beginning. The father looks lovingly at his son, who wants his share in the property, then he looks with merciful love at the same son who, having fallen returns from exile. The father looks at the heart of his returning son. Not only does he look at his son, but also at his son’s heart; just like God does. And the son? The prodigal son, having discernment his situation wants to return to what it was in the beginning; when God looked at the man and saw that all He had made was very good. This is very important for all those who want to receive mercy: know your situation and arouse a longing for what was in the beginning; and in consequence experience what is referred to in Psalm 32: “Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that hope in his mercy” (Ps 32:18).

In the background there is the story of the other son who experiences the same, Father’s look of love, just like the first son. He has experienced, but has he internalised the experience enough to look with merciful love at others, including the other brother? We know he has not. This other son who has constantly been in Father’s house has experiencing His look through the

¹⁰ See JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, Rome, 6.08.1993, No. 9.

¹¹ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, No. 12.

eyes of love, but the son has not internalised the look so that he himself would look at others the same way. This includes his brother upon returning home. He just looked at his brother without looking at the brother's heart. Merciful love needs to look at man's heart, and not at man's appearance. And then he confines himself to saying: I feel sorry for this man; yet there are no deeds of mercy.

And thus we arrive at the conclusion: in the dialogue, look at others through the eyes of mercy. You need to experience God's look before. Not only do you have to experience, but also make this experience your own, a part of yourself, your heart, your intellect.

Karol Wojtyła anthropological philosophy assumes that there is an act in every man's experience ("man acts"), but also that "something happens" in man. Man acts—is looked at through the eyes of mercy and this look induces "something" happen in man. This is man's particular problem; problem discovering themselves, the whole immanent structure of acts that is responsible for man's freedom. The structure is called by Wojtyła self-determination. This structure is responsible for the man's realisation, for self-fulfilment in pursuit of the good man wants, has understood and accepted as their own. Man inside, in their conscience wants to be merciful; wants to look at others through the eyes of mercy. Why therefore does not man do this? The solution lies in learning the truth about the Father's look. Not only is this learning the truth; it needs to be accepted, make your own and act according to it, exceed yourself for it. Often, the world creates barriers; these push us from the truth we have learned. We often look at others through eyes of self-love and our own freedom. Often, this is lawlessness. Freedom must always face the previously learned and accepted truth. This ensures man's fulfilment, also in looking at others through the eyes of mercy. I will act—extend mercy and at the same time something will happen in me. I will have the sense of accomplishment as Christ's disciple, as a Christian. Wojtyła called this exceeding towards the truth the transcendence toward the truth. The transcendence itself Wojtyła calls the person's middle name.¹² Love in dialogue with

¹² "Without this transcendence- without going beyond and somehow growing above ourselves in the direction of the truth and towards the good we desire and choose in the face of the truth—a person, a personal subject, is somehow not himself," K. WOJTYŁA, *Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota*, 389–390. The moment of the dependence on the truth is fundamental for this transcendence of a person in his deeds. This finally shapes the person's independence. Transcendence is not only a self-dependence, dependence on one's own self. It is not realized by submitting the truth, but submitting to the truth. The dependence on the truth indicates the limits of human independence. Wojtyła stresses the fact that "a person has the right to freedom, but not as sheer independence,

the other man is, therefore a constant exceeding oneself towards the good one wants, the good that defines man's realization as a person and as a community (i.e. marriage, family, society).

CONFLICT IN LOVE

A conflict often occurs in dialogue; this conflict is often called communication noise. A conflict in love originates from cognition. Cognition collapsed at the beginnings of history as a result of man's disobedience to God. Therefore again we turn to what was in the "beginning." Since the beginning, human cognition has deteriorated and this happened in the face of the Creator. A woman and a man succumbed to the Satan's temptation, even though they had met God face to face, even though they were happy. In the beginning a man and a woman saw each other in truth; they were both naked, yet without feeling of shame. Creator saw everything that he had made was very good (Gen 1:31; 2:25) Man, a man and a woman participated in the perfect vision. This vision of the perfect covenant between God and man was lost due to a broken promise, the sin. "The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." (Gen 3:7). And thus a sense of shame between man and God and between man and another man appeared. Man's cognition deteriorated. This has continued until now, has been the source of all kinds of misunderstandings and conflicts in relationships of people who love each other. This, however does not necessarily mean hatred.

The first symptom of the conflict in dialogue is so called anger. Anger should not be perceived as negative. Anger is a kind of emotion (just like sadness and joy) which is a part of our nature, part of us. We may disagree with numerous issues, attitudes, other people's views, even if expressed by the loved ones, the ones we live in the community—the marriage and the family. However, if these emotions are a source of a conflict in dialogue with others, we may have a problem with expressing the emotions. We have a problem with being assertive. This problem also occurs in religious life evaluation. Many people in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation confess that they have sinned with anger in relation with children or a spouse.

but self dependence, which comprises the dependence on the truth [...] The dependence [...] on the truth constitutes a person in their transcendence: the transcendence of freedom becomes the transcendence of morality." K. WOJTYŁA, *Osoba i czyn*, 198–199.

And again it needs to be reminded that anger itself is not a sin. Sin is in the way anger is expressed, e.g. violence, abusive language, ambiguous body language, also wrongly understood humbleness, submission or escape from dialogue. In fact, the problem is rooted in assertiveness, more precisely—in lack of assertiveness in our daily life.

Lack of assertiveness problem is quite common. In the dialogue, even if one person musters assertiveness, there is no guarantee that a conflict may be avoided. The other dialogue party may not muster to express their emotions the same way. Therefore assertiveness is not only a skill that manifested in a direct expression of one's thoughts, feelings, needs, in care for one's rights without violating the rights of others. Assertiveness is the ability to assess the situation in order to find an optimal communication method. It should be noticed that assertiveness is not a personality trait; this means that anyone can develop assertiveness. Assertiveness is essential in love, when differences between spouses or family members emerge, in conflicts. Assertiveness allows to determine limits calmly and firmly, to express needs and expectations, to deny without a feeling of guilt, without undue reasoning or justification. Assertiveness gives the right to ignorance, to make mistakes.¹³ Assertiveness is ultimate freedom to be oneself; a reservation needs to be made—freedom is not always understood as freedom, it is often understood as lawlessness. Freedom in man is always confronted with the truth which has been previously learned and accepted through the act of free will. This includes the truth about the good. Only acting in accordance with the truth guarantees freedom, guarantees that man is fulfilled as a person. “The truth is in fact *lógos* which creates *diálogos* thus communication and communion. The truth allows people go beyond subjective opinions and feelings, allow to rise above cultural and historical conditions and meet at the common grounds of value and essence assessment.”¹⁴

The family is the cradle of cognition. The cognition process itself happens through intrapersonal, interpersonal communication and in today's media-communications ubiquity. Generally it happens in dialogue. If there is no dialogue, if dialogue is weakened with lack of assertiveness, the process of knowing oneself and the world becomes less predictable. Parents who do not talk to your children or are unable to talk to them, do not take part in the

¹³ Agnieszka WRÓBEL, *Asertywność na co dzień, czyli jak żyć w zgodzie ze sobą i innymi* [Assertiveness every day—how to live in harmony with oneself and others] (Warszawa: Edgard, 2011), 8.

¹⁴ BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, No. 4.

child's and the young man's cognitive process. Years after parents are surprised with their child's attitude. The child distances itself in their choices; these are then shaped by the unknown factors and authorities. Then it is even harder to establish dialogue love in the parent-child relationship. Lack of dialogue intensifies, conflicts weaken the bonds even further. The quality of interaction between parents and children is a matter of both sides children interact with parents as much as parents interact with children. The Commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother" is a two-way action. Children must respect their parents, parents should behave towards so that to their children's respect. Thus respect in dialogue will fuel respect, love will fuel love with this love a sense of security, approval, feeling of belonging to someone, recognition. These needs, when satisfied allow for assertiveness. Studies have shown that parents with low self-esteem (self-esteem affects assertiveness) have a tendency to send more signals that weaken self-esteem of their children. Children, in response are likely to behave the way parents self-esteem is even lower. This a self-reinforced feedback cycle is shaped which parents and children shape each other's feelings and behaviour. In such cases it is difficult to determine who is the sender and who is the recipient of the message. Therefore we speak about mutual influence upon one another.¹⁵ Communication, dialogue is not just one-sided transfer of information—this is the process of communication, transactional relationship, mutual commitment and responsibility for another person. In dialogue, in communication man realizes themselves as a person, becomes a person becomes "Someone," comes closer the Personal-Creator. At the same time, man is responsible for another man so that the other man would has the opportunity of the fiery, becoming. Communication is therefore a kind of gift from one person to another, the gift of oneself. It often comes at a cost, requires exceeding oneself toward the truth about the good one wants for themselves and for others; it is exceeding one's emotions, prejudices, etc.¹⁶ Only such a model deserves the name "personal communication." Otherwise, we speak about information communication, often one-way communication. This is particularly evident in parents and children relationship, when we experience the

¹⁵ Ronald ADLER, Lawrence ROSENFELD, Russell PROCTOR II, *Relacje interpersonalne. Proces porozumiewania się* [Interplay: The process of Interpersonal Communication], transl. Grażyna Skoczylas (Poznań: Rebis Publishing House, 2006), 15.

¹⁶ See Karol WOJTYŁA, "Person: Subject and Community," in IDEM, *Osoba i czyn*, 389–390; See Jarosław JĘCZEŃ, "Mass media darem osoby dla osoby [Mass Media—Gift from Person to Person]," *Biuletyn Edukacji Medialnej* [Media Education Newsletter], 1 (2007): 17–32.

so-called generations gap. This is also evident the spouses relationship when they have made the decision to divorce. Only personal-nature dialogue which includes respect for other man's dignity (assertive), with reference to the Personal God guaranteed a family conflict resolution (conflict between parents and children) as well as marriage conflict resolution. This will be a "conflict in love."

An example of the Gospel "conflict in love" is the scene when twelve-year-old Jesus is found in the Temple in Jerusalem by the parents. Concerned parents resent, asking Jesus: "Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I were anxiously looking for you?" (Lk 2:48). He explains that he wanted to be closer to His Father. This was not understood by Joseph and Mary, who treasured all these things in her heart. In this brief dialogue quoted in the Gospel of Luke there is Mary's assertive behaviour who speaks of her pain. There is assertive Jesus' behaviour. In this dialogue there is a reference to the Father. This brief exchange shows the hallmarks of personal communication, dialogue full of love, of mutual respect, a unique interaction, with a loving look towards the Father and towards their parents. The end of the story shows that the alleged generational gap was resolved in love. Both parties were engaged in the solution: Jesus "went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men" (Lk 2:51-52).

The other two elements of assertive conflict resolution in the love are the art of active listening and positive thinking. And although they do not belong dialogue's biblical and theological foundations, without these elements, the foundation of effective and proper communication, dialogue is in danger. To listen does not mean to hear. A listening process consists of sound waves reception into the ear, waves stimulate the eardrum and then cause vibrations transmitted to the brain. Active listening is when the brain processes electrochemical impulses into sound impression identical to the sounds sent and assigns meanings. Active listening, though in opposition to conversational skills, is instrumental to achieve communication success. As a rule, today's people do not want to listen, on the contrary—they keep looking for good listeners.¹⁷ In the conflict they only want to present their point of view without hearing the other party. This is a problem because an

¹⁷ Peter THOMSON, *Sposoby komunikacji interpersonalnej* [The Secrets of Communication], transl. Tatiana Geller (Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 1998), 19; See R.B. ADLER, L.B. ROSENFELD, R.F. PROCTOR II, *Interplay*, 181.

assertive argument does not make sense, if the other party does not listen. Conversely, there is no point in listening to the other person if we do not do listen really carefully. Spouses or parents with children either forget or do not know that active listening and the ability to ask questions is the easiest way to talk others into our point of view, affect their opinions and actions. Actively listening is pleasant to our interlocutor, we encourage others to speak on. Thus we gain incredible content and we resolve the conflict. Active listening involves the following elements: hearing, participation, understanding, remembering and responding. Types of active listener's reactions can be as follows: listening in silence, asking questions, paraphrasing, empathy, support, analysis, evaluation, counselling.¹⁸

Active listening builds positive relationships. This ability can be seen in Jesus' teaching, for example in the scene where Jesus meet the adulterous woman (Jn 8:1–11). Jesus listens, writes on the sand with a stick. It gives time to think and recall what was the beginning man and woman's vocation. Jesus presented the art of listening and gives a positive solution. More, in addition to listening Jesus gives positive messages for the woman.

Dialogues which bring together family members, but not only, you need to see such positive-thinking elements; self-esteem and self-confidence, positive self-image, positive language and positive affirmations, attempts to find concord.¹⁹

Conflicts resolution in love therefore requires communication competence; these are acquired throughout whole personal, marriage, family, social, professional, religious life. Competent communication is effective and correct, as it has been evidenced. What is needed is a balance of these two components. Efficiency without correctness may lead attaining a goal, but may cause discomfort at the other party. Conversely, correctness devoid of efficiency may satisfy the other participant of the relation, but the message sender is confused or frustrated.²⁰ Both efficiency and correctness cannot lose the personal nature of the dialogue described above. Only the personal dimension of communication provides the opportunity for dialogue in love and love in the dialogue.

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¹⁸ See R.B. ADLER, L.B. ROSENFELD, R.F. PROCTOR II, *Interplay*, 185–205.

¹⁹ See Sue BISHOP, *Asertywność* [Assertiveness], transl. Elżbieta Turlejska (Poznań: Zysk i S-ka, 2006), 20–33.

²⁰ See R.B. ADLER, L.B. ROSENFELD, R.F. PROCTOR II, *Interplay*, 26.

Talking about love (a dialogue on love), and acting in love (love in dialogue, love in action) have a common denominator. These are: unity love comprehension, looking at the man through the eyes of love, often through the eyes of merciful love, mutual respect and responsibility for another human being. The denominator can be presented in some other way; in comprehending love you have to go back to what it was in the “beginning,” to internal discovery or re-discover of the truth of man’s and woman’s vocation in the natural and revealed order.

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BIBLIJNO-TEOLOGICZNE PODSTAWY DIALOGU
NA TEMAT MAŁŻEŃSTWA I RODZINY W ŚWIECIE WSPÓŁCZESNYM

Streszczenie

We współczesnym świecie istnieje silna potrzeba dialogu na temat małżeństwa i rodziny. Tym dialogiem zainteresowani są w pierwszej kolejności ludzie młodzi, zaraz potem małżeństwa i rodziny, w tym małżeństwa niesakramentalne. Potrzebę takiego dialogu można dostrzec w łonie samego Kościoła, co pokazał ostatni Zwyczajny Synod Biskupów, jak i w relacjach Kościoła ze światem zewnętrznym, reprezentowanym nade wszystko przez mass media. Warto zatem przypomnieć, poznać bądź odkryć na nowo podstawy takiego dialogu.

Słowa kluczowe: dialog; małżeństwo; rodzina.