

Ireneusz MROCZKOWSKI. *Chrześcijańska tożsamość osoby. Zarys antropologii moralnoteologicznej*. Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy, 2016, pp. 145.

DOI: <http://dx.do.org/10.18290/rt.2017.64.3-10en>

Throughout the centuries of human civilization, reflection on human being has been a special mark of man's uniqueness in all creation. Only man is able to think about oneself and other people. Only man discerns anthropological truth about himself. However, already here lies a great variety, sometimes incapable of responsible debate.

The presented book is a proposition of anthropology outline. Its author is a professor of moral theology and head of the Department of Anthropology and Bioethics at the Faculty of Family Studies, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. He also works at the Higher Theological Seminary in Płock, teaching moral theology. Between 1999 and 2005 he was Rector of this Seminary. He is an author of many books, dissertations and studies, e.g. *Zło i grzech. Studium filozoficzno-teologiczne (Evil and sin. Philosophical and theological study*, Lublin 2000), *Osoba i cielesność. Moralne aspekty teologii ciała (Person and carnality. Moral aspects of body theology*, Warsaw 2008), *Rodzina, gender i nowy feminizm. Podstawy chrześcijańskiej obrony i promocji rodziny (Family, gender and new feminism. Basics of Christian defense and promotion of family*, Płock 2014).

The book reviewed here opens with a quite extensive introduction (pp. 5–16) and has been divided into four chapters, which in turn consist of three sections each. The first chapter of Ireneusz Mroczkowski's study is entitled "The nature of a human person as the foundation of Christian morality" (pp. 17–42). Personalistic approach to the subject of moral acting has been adopted here. The fundamental question, however, is the question of the nature of human person. In Christian morality, Christocentrism of Christian anthropology always comes first. This is a question of understanding the nature of human person from a unique perspective of Christian morality.

The issue of "Moral consequences for the dignity of man who was created in the image of God" has been raised in the second chapter (pp. 43–72). Here, two actions meet: the creative act of God and the efficient act of man (his agency). The greatest concern here is the bodily and spiritual identity of man. At the same time, there is also the communal aspect of care for human dignity.

The third chapter, in turn, is focused on the following issue: "Christian interpretation of the drama of human freedom" (pp. 73–98). Observation clearly indicates biological and psychological conditions of human freedom. Anthropological realism of life manifests the existential boundaries of man's causative will. The author also discusses the condition of human freedom after committing the original sin. The last

chapter of father Ireneusz Mroczkowski's reflection raises the subject of "Christian dynamisms of the moral courage of being" (pp. 99–124). It begins with remarks on the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. At the same time, the author emphasizes sacramental and ecclesiastic dimension of Christian morality. Faced with these phenomena, love ultimately becomes the source and the peak of morality. Therefore, theological virtues, sacraments and the great commandment constitute the dynamics of morality.

The book ends with conclusions (pp. 125–132), followed by bibliography (pp. 133–144) as well as a table of contents (p. 145).

*Chrześcijańska tożsamość osoby* is an interesting work which attempts to discuss moral and theological anthropology. Certainly, it is part of a specific trend in practicing moral theology. Knowing earlier publications of Father Mroczkowski, one can interpret and understand more easily the ideas and suggestions which have been presented very briefly in the discussed study. Without doubt, the work deserves further debate by moral theologians, anthropologists and ethicists.

The opinion expressed by the author already at the beginning of the book is important for understanding the message of the whole work: "The key to discovering biblical morality, the basis of the moral and theological anthropology, is not so much in the ranking of biblical categories (the idea of a covenant, conversion, and following Christ) as in Jesus Christ himself. A believer finds in Him both moral truth and a person leading to the fullness of life, including union with God" (p. 14). This reference to Jesus Christ gives a chance to responsibly look into the proposed material, especially while looking for the right anthropological solutions.

It seems that the presented study is yet another Polish attempt to implement the indications of the Second Vatican Council. It is good that those ideas are still alive and trigger further creative works. It must be said that in Polish environment these attempts have been scarce, at least in the form of open-access book publications. There have been numerous scripts, but they have never taken the form of coherent publications, which is a pity because they were interesting.

It seems that the study of Rev. prof. Ireneusz Mroczkowski is another important element in establishing a general handbook of moral theology which can only be created in cooperation with various academic environments. Of course, this does not exclude individual attempts.

Without diminishing the seriousness of the discussed book, one can assume that it is rather a kind of script and material for discussion. Certainly, it has already been largely verified during university lectures, seminars and numerous debates. It is an outline, as the author himself writes in the subtitle, and therefore it may raise various questions or doubts. At the same time, it also brings many positive remarks and hope.

Undoubtedly, reflection on person and their identity is particularly important in anthropology, and especially in its moral theology variant. Correctly recognized, this truth is an important foundation for further detailed propositions.

After reading the book, however, the question arises whether the vision is comprehensive and whether it shows Christian identity of a person in total expressiveness. It seems that this point is not obvious; moreover, these are too complicated issues,

which does not mean advocating for certain propositions and resulting consequences which the author states clearly.

It is good that the teachings of John Paul II are contained in the book, including his teachings as an archbishop of Cracow and a professor at the Catholic University of Lublin. Unfortunately, the presentation of his teachings is not too extensive. Why was the Pope's teaching marginalized to some extent by the statements of other theologians? Maybe because they are more suited to the assumed concept of the book.

The presented study raises questions in the editorial, formal or methodological and linguistic matters. Thus, among others, what do the terms "vicar of God" or "the courage of being" mean? Is freedom a drama, or maybe a gift? Is it not worth reformulating the problem, without diminishing its both dimensions? The expression "entangled in community of fate" (p. 129) is not a very successful one. It sounds quite fatalistically, at least in the cultural and social sense.

Certainly, alphabetical bibliography is eligible. It seems, however, that a study in moral theology, especially considering the subtitle provided here, should emphasise the teaching of the Church, including the Second Vatican Council, popes or Vatican dicasteries, not to mention patrology. In any case, various rank of these statements and sources is definitely resonant in the text and in the footnotes, in comparison to literature or studies.

It is a pity that the idea of "sons in the Son" was not emphasised enough and that it has not become another organizational element of the proposed content, along with the covenant, conversion and vocation (p. 128). Some excerpts from the text are literally repeated in the conclusion (pp. 42, 127–128).

There is a lack of consistency in including the names of translators of different works (pp. 135, 137, 138, 140, 141, 143). Not always were the pages of the texts in collections included (p. 137). John Paul II's message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences is contained on two pages; moreover, the title is different than provided by the author of the discussed book (pp. 13, 136). The places and dates of publication have not been included in the descriptions of the Second Vatican Council documents (p. 142). The author, however, seems to suggest that he uses the 2002 edition (pp. 7–8). Meanwhile, in other places he refers directly to the Polish edition from 1968 (pp. 70, 115). There is also a mistake in the reference to Conciliar documents (p. 115). The use of abbreviations in various places, e.g. "ks." ("rev.", pp. 18, 64, 112), "św." ("st.", p. 72) or "bp" ("bishop", p. 141) is a departure from the adopted rule.

The bibliography lacks numerous items referred to in the footnotes (pp. 92, 102, 111, 113, 122, 123). The footnotes introduce an unexplained abbreviation "S.Th." (p. 93), although it is obvious what it stands for. It is certainly an interesting procedure to highlight words, which allows the reader to concentrate on the essential content of the author's analysis. It seems that the highlighted content could become the basis for further development of the proposed moral and theological reflection in the subsequent editions.

As it is typical in this type of work, the selection of bibliography is a conventional matter for the author. It is a pity, however, that Polish studies were completely omitted, including, among others, W. Starnawski's *Być osobą. Podstawy moralności i wychowania* (*Being a person. Foundations of morality and education*, Warsaw

2011); R. Ingarden's *Książeczka o człowieku* (*A book about man*, Krakow 1975); A. Siemianowski's *Człowiek i prawda* (*Man and truth*, Poznan, 1986); or K. Wojtyła's *Elementarz etyczny* (*Ethics primer*, Wrocław 1982).

As indicated by the subtitle, the book provides an outline of moral theological anthropology. It contains a kind of systematisation of teaching on this matter, especially in the context of the broadly understood contemporary personalism. It indicates, among others, broad categories of understanding, freedom and ability to love, which should be inscribed in the actions of a personal subject.

The statement that opens the book is legitimate: "Although in the biblical descriptions of the creation of man there are anthropological elements, theological approach to man as a subject of moral action had to wait long for a personalistic interpretation" (p. 5). It seems that this waiting is still valid, and the book by Father Ireneusz Mroczkowski constitutes one of the proposals to respond to these expectations. The readers themselves will assess how successful, creative and innovative it is.

Father Ireneusz Mroczkowski proved once again to be a seeker for the sake of moral theology. The courage of the proposed study wins great respect for the author. It might be facilitated by a number of previous publications which have been well received and became inspiring formal and methodological tools.

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The preparation of the English version of *Roczniki Teologiczne* (Annals of Theology) no. 3 and its publication in electronic databases was financed under contract no. 753/P-DUN/2017 from the resources of the Minister of Science and Higher Education for the popularization of science.

Nigel BIGGAR. *In Defence of War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. XI +361.

DOI: <http://dx.do.org/10.18290/rt.2017.64.3-11en>

Contrary to the expectations of some, there was no "end of history" with the turn of the millennium. Quite the opposite, there are such areas of public life, also on a global scale, in which the dynamics of historical events gained the momentum and took unpredictable turn, sometimes with tragic effects. The world has become exceptionally restless, for many even more hostile than before. Pope Francis has repeated on several occasions that "there is already World War III," though "in pieces." As