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THE IDENTITY OF LOCAL
AND PARTICULAR CATHOLIC CHURCHES.
METHODOLOGICAL OUTLINE

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A b s t r a c t. According to the Catholic faith the Church established by Jesus Christ *subsistit in* the Catholic Church as the Universal Church (*Ecclesia universalis, Catholica*).¹ This Church is also *communio Ecclesiarum* and *subsistit in* local and particular Churches, and in community among them. Joseph Ratzinger, following the teaching of the Catholic Church, reminds that a local Church (*Ecclesia localis*) means a patriarchy or a ‘specific community of traditions and rites’ and a particular Church (*Ecclesia particularis*) means a community of believers subjected to one bishop (a diocese).²

Post-conciliar Catholic ecclesiology has been mostly focused on the Universal Church. Such ‘universal’ ecclesiology earned mature methodologies.³ But meantime, the Universal Church has also been present in local and particular Churches which are making their own history and identity day by day. For example, in 2016 the Catholic Church in Poland celebrated 1050th Jubilee which itself offered an opportunity to describe its main dimensions and identity.⁴ So-

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¹ Vatican II, *Lumen gentium*, n. 8.

² Joseph RATZINGER, *Opera omnia*, vol. VIII/1, *Kościół – znak wśród narodów. Pisma eklezjologiczne i ekumeniczne* [Church – Sign among Nations. Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Writings], ed. Krzysztof Gózdź, Marzena Górecka, trans. by Wiesław Szymona (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2013), 499.

³ For example see Avery DULLES, *Models of the Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1987).

⁴ *Oblicza Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce. 1050. rocznica Chrztu* [Features of the Catholic Church in Poland. 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism], ed. Jacenty Mastej, Krzysztof Kaucha, Paweł Borto (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2016).

called young Churches are on their way to establish their identity. By no means, in our times and eyes the 'identity' becomes one of the key-words in theological reflection on the Church.⁵ The more secular the modern world and culture become, the more clearly one can see the difference between them and the Church.

This paper offers a methodological outline of the identity of local and particular Catholic Churches. Its purpose is to name and shortly describe main kinds of such identity (theological, historical, ethical-moral, cultural) and their components. But first, making some remarks as introduction is very much required.

Key words: local Church; particular Church; Catholic ecclesiology; identity of the Church; theological identity of the Church; historical identity of the Church; ethical-moral identity of the Church; cultural identity of the Church.

I. INTRODUCTION TO A NON-REDUCTIONIST UNDERSTANDING OF THE IDENTITY OF LOCAL AND PARTICULAR CATHOLIC CHURCHES

From methodological point of view it must be observed that there are some ways of reductionist understanding of the identity of the Catholic Church and its local and particular Churches. Such understanding could be called neutral. For example, the identity of the Catholic Church could be reduced to only historical, sociological and cultural perspectives without seeing religious and theological ones. Neutral looking at the Church could give only a description of it but not the insight to its identity.

The starting point for a non-reductionist understanding of the identity of local and particular Catholic Churches is the statement that the notion of identity relates to personal beings. In factual terms, it is only possible to speak of the identity of human persons and – in analogical way – of communities and societies. The understanding of the notion of a person and his/her place in the world can vary, which impacts on the understanding and definition of identity. These issues are directly addressed by a broad school of thought called personalism, yet they are resolved in diverse ways. However, this is not the focus of this article.

Psychology deals with the notions of personality and personal identity (referred to as psychological identity), with varying definitions and understanding of the terms. Generally speaking, it is emphasised that personal

⁵ Krzysztof KAUCHA, "Tożsamość Kościoła w Polsce" [Identity of Church in Poland], in *Oblicza Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce. 1050. rocznica Chrztu* [Features of the Catholic Church in Poland. 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism], 275-306.

identity is the image of a person perceived by him/herself and by others, encompassing his/her system of values, convictions, aims and also needs, motivations and emotions. The core of identity lies in the sense of the continuity of temporal existence (in various periods of time and development phases) and of existence in time and space (in relation to various elements of the outside world), which determine individuality and uniqueness. The said continuity is a basis for the formation of mental autonomy, which is a lifetime process. The significant aspects of the process are the previous development phases, social roles, the external world, and the relationship with its various elements and structures. Based on the way in which an individual approaches one's broadly defined environment, some psychologists identify four identity statuses: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium and achievement.⁶

From the point of view of personalism, which forms a deeper psychological perspective, personal identity is a derivative of being a person, which includes a number of harmonised components, i.e. subjectivity, awareness, self-awareness, freedom (self-governance, self-possession, being capable of deciding for oneself and making decisions about the outside world), responsibility, birth, and the inevitability of death, convictions (knowledge, intuitions), values, relationships (with others, with oneself, the world, God), functions (tasks), the dynamism of self-formation (in an upward or downward direction, self-possession in giving oneself to others, becoming more oneself, more free, responsible, pro-social, etc.), the internalisation of the external world with and in oneself, self-assurance (determining, establishing, self-determination), reflecting (thinking, evaluating, cognition, including self-cognition), the purpose and sense of living, meaning beyond oneself (vocation, mission), being aware of one's weaknesses (limitations, failures, harm done to oneself or others), being aware of one's achievements (successes, talents, charisms, one's impact on others) and actions.

Drawing characteristics of a corresponding structure of social or community identity is far more difficult, as one must take into consideration, in addition to the aforementioned aspects, a number of other issues, such as history, tradition and ways of passing it on, the culture and mechanisms of its creation and transmission, and finally, with regard to the identity of a local and particular Catholic Church, the understanding of religion, God, and

⁶ Władysław PRĘŻYNA, Marek GRYGIELSKI, "Tożsamość chrześcijańska" [Christian Identity], in *Leksykon Teologii Fundamentalnej* [Lexicon of Fundamental Theology], ed. Marian Rusecki, Krzysztof Kaucha, Ireneusz S. Ledwoń, Jacenty Mastej (Lublin-Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2002), 1254-1258.

the relationship between religion and culture, as well as the understanding of the Church herself. It is difficult to state exactly where (in whom) the subject of this type of identity can be found. The simplest solution seems to be the assumption that the identity of a local and particular Catholic Church is parallel to individual personal identity, with all its structural elements, and that it belongs to personal beings joined in a community referred to as the Church, and also that the members of the community constitute the subject of this type of identity, which is a more or less prominent component of their own personal identity.

Formulating the identity of a local and particular Catholic Church is only possible by synthesising its subjective and objective aspects (the subject and content of the identity in question), which cannot be clearly separated. An important element in this identity is memory and its content, and also the ways of valuing and communicating it. To recapitulate on the above considerations, and with reference to the main subject of this article, it must be stated that the main types of identity are individual and collective (social) identity and its (content-related) types: historical, cultural, religious (more generally – worldview), and ethical-moral identity. Identity is divided on the basis of the following aspects: the degree of subjectivity (clinging to oneself and one's identity, finding oneself, identifying with oneself), the level of precision of its determination (unspecified, intuitive, conscious, clear), the degree of reflecting on it (evaluating, adjusting), the degree of actuality (real, true, authentic, partial, projected, expected, desired), the approach to existing or suggested identities (diffusion, foreclosure, imposition, moratorium, criticism, achievement), the degree of being present in it and of the significance of axiology, especially the ethical and moral sphere, the degree of ideological commitment (the presence of ideals, models; the variants span from being devoid of ideals to utopianism), the degree of imperativeness (self-motivation and the obligation to promote it among others), the way of linking individual identity with social identity – and the other way round (contradiction, partial contradiction, harmony) – and the degree of the identity's compliance with actual choices and the actions confirming it.

The identity of a local and particular Catholic Church as a personal social (community) entity is a collective identity encompassing the aforementioned types, and, as previously mentioned, subject to multifaceted differentiation. The most crucial aspect in the discussed identity and its quality is the degree of identifying with the Church in general, being guided in life by the Church, or, in more general terms, Christianity and its founding figure, Jesus Christ.

The points made in this section form the basis for the subsequent parts of the article, which discuss the main types of the identity of local and particular Catholic Churches.

II. THEOLOGICAL IDENTITY

Because the Church is of religious nature, her identity is also religious. As underlined above, seeing the Church as only a part of neutral (without any religious connotations) history, society or culture, in practice means reductionism of the Church. Theology as an intellectual reflection on Christian faith is the most proper way to describe the core of the Church's identity. Remaining in the field of theology we may point out the following types of theological identity of local and particular Churches:

1. *The identity in God*

Because God is the fundamental source of everything which is truly religious, He is also the source of the Church including her identity. The Church fully belongs to Him, depends on Him and should serve Him. If the Church looks for her identity, she must turn to God as He is, to Him as speaking through His Revelation and to Jesus Christ as its fulfilment. God always carries the whole Church (the one Universal Church and all local and particular Churches) in His Heart. Only He knows the whole truth about the Church, her conditions, beauty and weaknesses. He is always involved in the renewal of His Church, because He wants to have her 'without spot or wrinkle' (see Ef 5:25-27). We are constantly reminded of this in the letters to particular Churches in *The Book of Revelation* (1-3). The identity of local and particular Churches in God is accessible to those who are close to His Heart and the Revelation, who listen to Him and follow His will. In biblical Israel, such individuals were prophets. In the Church, such individuals are saints, the blessed and mystics. Pastors in local and particular Churches have a permanent task to look for the Church's identity in God and to encourage believers to follow it.

2. *Ecclesiological identity*

Being a part of the Universal Church, local and particular Churches' identity is the same as the identity of the Universal Church. In practice, this identity is described in the Catholic Church Magisterium's teaching (*Vatica-*

num II's documents, post-conciliar Magisterium's teaching on the Church). It can be found easily in Catholic ecclesiology books.⁷

3. *Theological self-identity*

Theological self-identity could appear in the consciousness of the Churches which went through a long history. The Catholic Church in Poland, because of her particular history full of tragedies,⁸ is an example of the Church who produced a theological interpretation of herself, her self-identity. It used to be called the Polish theology of nation and is based on the biblical concept of the history of salvation, theology of nation, and the history of the Church in Poland.⁹

4. *Personalistic identity*

According to a personalistic model of the Church, being one of the leading models in contemporary Catholic ecclesiology, the Church should be understood as a personal being. The identity of local and particular Churches is like a personal being's identity. The Church is not 'something', she is somebody, a community of persons. The Church's identity creates the individuals' identity (as Catholics, as members of the Church) and also, in reverse, individuals' identity shapes the Church's reality, or identity. It refers especially to all saints, martyrs and blessed people. Their lives and memory kept in local and particular Churches are milestones of ecclesial identity. Personalistic identity is also shaped by ecclesial communities such as congregations, religious movements and Catholic societies active in local and particular Churches.

5. *Pastoral identity*

This dimension of theological identity of local and particular Churches denotes their own pastoral needs, activities, pastoral experiences, achievements, difficulties, and goals.

⁷ Joseph RATZINGER, *Opera omnia*, vol. VIII/1: *Kościół – znak wśród narodów. Pisma eklezjologiczne i ekumeniczne* [Church – Sign among Nations. Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Writings].

⁸ JAN PAWEŁ II, *Pamięć i tożsamość. Rozmowy na przełomie tysiącleci*, [Memory and Identity. Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2005).

⁹ Rafał POKRYWIŃSKI, "Z teologii narodu polskiego" [From theology of a Polish nation], in *Oblicza Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce. 1050. rocznica Chrztu* [Features of the Catholic Church in Poland. 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism], 255-273.

6. *Identity in the signs of credibility*

Contemporary fundamental ecclesiology is not unwilling to enlarge the number of the Church's credibility attributes (the four known traditionally as *notae Ecclesiae*: one, holy, universal, and apostolic) and to call them signs of the Church's credibility.¹⁰ Even more, these signs do not only serve to confirm the credibility of the Church or in testing the power of her credibility, but also to express her identity. The identity of the whole Church (Universal and local or particular Churches) is written down in her credibility and its criteria coming from the Divine Revelation. The call for every Church is simply to be credible which might be visible and recognizable. The most important signs of the Church's credibility are the following: the sign of Peter, sign of Apostolic Collegium and collegiality, sign of unity, sign of holiness, sign of universality, sign of apostolicity, sign of Christian love (agapetological), sign of praxis (praxeological), sign of Christian testimony (martyriological), sign of Christian culture (culture-creative), and sign of a mission (missiological).¹¹

7. *Identity in the context of present challenges*

The identity of the Church is not static but rather dynamic. It is shaped by actual challenges faced by the Church. It does not mean that challenges change the identity of the Church completely. It rather means that an important factor of the identity of the Church is her attitude (understanding, reaction) to those challenges. Some of them deserve attention and acceptance, others – clear criticism.

III. HISTORICAL IDENTITY

Historical identity denotes the identity written down in the history (and through the history) of a local or particular Church and is not tantamount to the Church's historiography. It consists of the following dimensions:

1. *Historical beginning*

Bearing in mind that from the theological perspective every local and particular Church's origins are the same as the origins of the Universal

¹⁰ Marian RUSECKI, Krzysztof KAUCHA, Andrzej PIETRZAK, "Znaki wiarygodności Kościoła" [Signs of the Church's Credibility], in *Leksykon Teologii Fundamentalnej* [Lexicon of Fundamental Theology], 1381-1393.

¹¹ Ibidem.

Church, every Church has her own historical beginning which throws light on understanding her identity. When, why and how did the Church start to exist? Who was at the beginning and what happened at that time? Usually, a historical beginning as an effect of receiving the Gospel with an open heart is in itself an identity-creative event in the memory of the Church. It has made her who she is. She can always, if necessary, turn back to the spirit of her beginning – first and eager love (Rev 2:1-7).

2. Main periods of history

A periodization of the history of a local and particular Church could make understanding her identity easier. It could present what stages (growth, difficulties, maybe persecutions, successes) she went through and how much she was tested (experienced, made stronger or weaker) by the passing of time.

3. Identity established in the past

It means particular events which established, or even created the identity of a local and particular Church for a long time. In practice, it indicates the most important historical events (for example papal visits, public promises to accept and keep the Catholic faith, synods, historical acts, decisions, etc.) and the most influential persons (martyrs, saints, blessed people, charismatic pastors, spiritual leaders). The identity of the Church today depends on her allegiance to her identity laid down in the past.

4. General historical identity

In the case of local and particular Churches, reflecting their whole past (from historical beginning till today) and summing it up could lead to define their general historical identity. For example, the Church in Poland has been given some names by historians trying to describe her identity, like *Polonia semper fidelis*, *antemurale christianitatis*, Country without stakes, John Paul II's motherland, Motherland of Solidarity.¹²

5. Actual historical identity

General historical identity aside, we can also speak of an actual historical identity. It is possible that for present generations in a local and particular Church her old history could seem to be a matter of the past. The world of

¹² Krzysztof KAUCHA, *Tożsamość Kościoła w Polsce* [Identity of Church in Poland], 278-284.

the past, whatever it was, is over. For people living today the world means the present, the past they lived (and keep in their memory), and the nearest future they will enter (and create) every day. An actual historical identity of the Church denotes the entity of the Church which is created and witnessed by people living today.

IV. ETHICAL-MORAL IDENTITY

By all means the Catholic Church distinguishes herself in ethical and moral spheres. An ethical-moral dimension is an essential part of Christianity and of the Church – of her identity. Being a Catholic means following the whole teaching of the Church: in doctrinal matters and ethical-moral ones. The Church is obliged to follow and teach what Jesus Christ taught in moral matters. The ethics covers norms and principles which are the base of human moral decisions and actions (morality). The Catholic Church ethical-moral identity embraces fundamental presuppositions, norms and principles, like every human being's dignity, the principle of loving God and neighbors, human rights, the inextricableness of marriage, the ban of abortion, euthanasia, and experiments on embryos, the primacy of common (society) goodness over individual benefits. The moral strength of a local and particular Catholic Church can be seen in the quality of her members' morality and her influence on the moral sphere in a society.

V. CULTURAL IDENTITY

A Polish fundamental theologian, Marian Rusecki, observed that the Church practically affects the culture and all its crucial components (education, literature, architecture, music, and arts). The best example is the European culture.¹³ Cardinal Avery Dulles tried to present the contribution of the

¹³ Marian RUSECKI, "Kulturotwórczy argument" [Culture-making Argument], in *Leksykon Teologii Fundamentalnej* [Lexicon of Fundamental Theology], 730-742; Marian RUSECKI, *Fenomen chrześcijaństwa. Wkład w kulturę* [Phenomenon of Christianity. Contribution to Culture] (Lublin: Wydawnictwo „Gaudium”, 2001); Marian RUSECKI, *Dziejowe znaczenie chrześcijaństwa* [Historical Impact of Christianity] (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2011).

Catholic Church in the US to the culture of the country.¹⁴ Recognizing their efforts, we can speak of a cultural identity of a local and particular Church which means: dynamic relationships between the Church and a local culture (inculturation: on one hand the Church appreciates what is good and acceptable in a local culture, and on the other hand the Church inserts ideas of Christian culture coming from the Divine Revelation) and a practical contribution of the Church to the culture. More specifically, such a contribution embraces a contribution to education, a contribution to resolving basic needs in a society (medical care, charity, social and political values), a contribution to language and literature development, a contribution to architecture (ecclesiastical architecture), a contribution to arts (ecclesiastical art), a contribution to music (ecclesiastical music), and a contribution to an everyday lifestyle (openness, hospitality, politeness, responsibility for others, etc.).

VI. OTHER IDENTITIES AND IMAGES

In the case of some local and particular Churches we could talk about supportive (additional) identities which express their important features.

1. *Religious identity*

Some Catholic Churches face a particular religious context which affects their identity. For example, it happens when the Church is a small minority in a non-Christian society dominated by other religious majorities or a secular (post-Christian, post-religious) society. Some Catholic Churches embrace almost all citizens of a region or a country. Others exist in half-Catholic half-Protestant (or half-Muslim, etc.) societies. Different religious contexts in many ways influence the Church's identity which could be defined by a prism of an interreligious dialogue, an ecumenical dialogue or a dialogue with a secularized culture. Any dialogue depends on both sides. Some Churches suffer a lack of constructive dialogue and an openness to it of the other

¹⁴ Avery DULLES, "The Contribution of Christianity to Culture: An American Perspective", in *Chrześcijaństwo jutra. Materiały II Międzynarodowego Kongresu Teologii Fundamentalnej (Lublin, 18-21 IX 2001)* [Christianity of Tomorrow. Materials of the Second International Congress of Fundamental Theology (Lublin, 18-21 of September 2001)], ed. Marian Rusecki, Krzysztof Kaucha, Zbigniew Krzyszowski, Ireneusz S. Ledwoń, Jacenty Mastej (Lublin: TN KUL, 2001), 150-177.

party. A social-religious structure of a society also affects the political and legal system in which the Church lives.

2. *Present self-identity*

Some Churches should be able or obliged to describe their present self-identity which means a picture of the Church in her own eyes and reflections, her self-awareness, and self-diagnosis which contains actual challenges, problems, achievements, main present and nearest future tasks, functions, and main pastoral goals. Some Churches, suffering from weaknesses or mistakes, need to formulate their self-identity in order to be able to go on, even to move on. Looking at the Church as a company is probably an exaggeration but the Church just like any company from time to time needs to stop and sum up what she has done (and what she has not done). She needs self-checking, a balance of herself, and self-reflection on her identity. It needs courage and truthfulness which always pays back in abundance.

3. *Comparative identity (identity 'from the outside')*

Another helpful way of describing the identity of a local and particular Church may be called comparative identity which simply means a picture of her in the eyes of other local and particular ('neighbour') Churches. It seems obvious that no one else knows us better than we ourselves. This is true but other people might inform us about something our eyes (and mind) do not see at all. We used to be 'stick' to ourselves so much that we are not able to list our most characteristic features. Anyone could be very much surprised if they ask a friend about their sincere opinion about us. What has been said above also refers to the Church. Quite recently when my academic colleagues and myself were working on a book dedicated to the features of the Catholic Church in Poland, we asked a few foreigners very much involved in Church life, who had lived in Poland for a long time, for their opinions about the ups and downs of 'our' Church¹⁵. What they said helped us a lot to see how other people perceive Polish Catholics. It is always enriching to take a look at ourselves through the eyes of others.

¹⁵ These persons were: Sister Nazarena Scopelliti SCSF (Italy), Viara Maldijeva (Bulgaria), Rev. Manfred Deselaers (Germany), Max Stebler (Switzerland). See: *Oblicza Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce. 1050. rocznica Chrztu*, [Features of the Catholic Church in Poland. 1050th Anniversary of the Baptism], 307-336.

4. *External image*

One cannot deny that in almost every society where Catholics live, non-Catholics (non-Christians and non-religious people) may have an image of the Catholic Church which might be called an external image of hers. Such images are very different. Many times they are based on stereotypes and ignorance. Any external images (opinions) of the Church cannot contain or express the identity of the Church, because the only way to get access to her identity is participation. However, external opinions could be very much helpful in realizing how we are seen by others. If such opinions sound sincere and reasonable (if they are not ideological, 'blind' or filled with hate), they could make a description of the identity of the Church more authentic and help local and particular Churches to work on creating a better identity.

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

For many recent decades Catholic academic ecclesiology has mostly focused on the Universal Church. It is time to 'discover', on the academic level, the presence of God in local and particular Churches as well: in their history, unique members (saints, martyrs, blessed people, heroic generations) and their contributions to the culture, society and morality. In other words, Catholic ecclesiology should open its eyes to see the peculiarity and identity of local and particular Churches. In a traditional ecclesiological language, the term 'identity' was reserved to the Universal Church and seen as her static nature and attributes. However the term 'identity' refers also to local and particular Catholic Churches. They must be always in unity with the one Universal Church of Christ from where, like water from the roots of the tree, their whole identity, of any kind (especially theological and ethical-moral), comes from. This paper presents a methodological outline aimed at discovering and understanding the identity of local and particular Catholic Churches. It starts with an introduction to the term 'the identity of the Church', followed by a description of the main kinds of the identity of local and particular Catholic Churches and their components: theological identity (identity in God, ecclesiological identity, theological self-identity, personalistic identity, pastoral identity, identity in the signs of credibility, identity in the context of present challenges), historical identity (historical beginning, main periods of history, identity established in the past, general historical identity, actual historical identity), ethical-moral identity, cultural identity and others (religious identity, present self-identity, comparative identity). A new methodolo-

gical perspective of this paper could enrich the traditional ecclesiology making her more realistic and alive, and it could also enrich the traditional ways of justifying the credibility of the Church.

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TOŻSAMOŚĆ KOŚCIOŁÓW LOKALNYCH I PARTYKULARNYCH.
ZARYS METODOLOGICZNY

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Przez wiele ostatnich dekad akademicka eklezjologia katolicka była skoncentrowana głównie na Kościele powszechnym. Nadszedł czas by „odkryła” obecność Boga także w Kościołach lokalnych i partykularnych, ich historii, wyjątkowych osobach (świętych, błogosławionych, męczennikach), wkładzie w kulturę, życie społeczne i moralne. Katolicka eklezjologia powinna otworzyć oczy na wyjątkowość i tożsamość lokalnych i partykularnych Kościołów. Dotychczas pojęcie „tożsamość” w języku eklezjologicznym było zarezerwowane do Kościoła powszechnego i rozumiane jako jego statyczna natura oraz przymioty. Niniejszy artykuł jest metodologicznym zarysem rozumienia tożsamości Kościołów lokalnych i partykularnych. Inicjuje go wprowadzenie do właściwego, nieredukcyjnego, rozumienia pojęcia „tożsamość Kościoła”, po czym omówione zostały główne tychże Kościołów rodzaje tożsamości wraz z ich komponentami: tożsamość teologiczna (tożsamość w Bogu, tożsamość eklezjologiczna, teologiczna auto-tożsamość, tożsamość personalistyczna, pastoralna, tożsamość w znakach wiarygodności, tożsamość w kontekście aktualnych wyzwań), tożsamość historyczna (geneza, główne okresy dziejów, tożsamość stanowiona, ogólna tożsamość historyczna, aktualna tożsamość historyczna), tożsamość etyczno-moralna, tożsamość kulturowa i inne (tożsamość religijna, aktualna auto-tożsamość, tożsamość komparatywna). Autor ma nadzieję, że nowa metodologiczna perspektywa, ukazana w artykule, może wzbogacić eklezjologię, uczynić ją bardziej realistyczną, „żywą” oraz otworzyć ją na nowe sposoby uzasadniania wiarygodności Kościoła.

Słowa kluczowe: Kościół lokalny; Kościół partykularny; eklezjologia katolicka; tożsamość Kościoła; teologiczna tożsamość Kościoła; historyczna tożsamość Kościoła; etyczno-moralna tożsamość Kościoła; kulturowa tożsamość Kościoła.