

*Teologia fundamentalna w twórczości Josepha Ratzingera* [Fundamental Theology in Joseph Ratzinger's Works], Edited by Krzysztof Kaucha and Jacenty Mastej. Additional editor Piotr Królikowski, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2017, pp. 316. Reviewers: Rev. PhD hab. Andrzej Anderwald and Rev. PhD hab. Mirosław Kowalczyk.

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Almost at the same time two books dedicated to fundamental theology were released. The first one in Italian: *Dal chiodo alla chiave: la teologia fondamentale di Papa Francesco* (edited by Michelina Tenace, Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2017, pp. 160) by Department of Fundamental Theology at Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. The second one in Polish: *Teologia fundamentalna w twórczości Josepha Ratzingera* [Fundamental Theology in Joseph Ratzinger's Works] by Institute of Fundamental Theology at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. Fundamental theology has been present at this university since it was established in 1918 (for one hundred years) and it has turned to become Lublin School of Fundamental Theology few decades ago. A pioneer of this school was Rev. prof. Edward Kopeć (1918-99). His main co-workers were Cardinal prof. Stanisław Nagy (1921-2013) who was a member of International Theological Commission, and Rev. prof. Marian Rusecki (1942-2012) who was a member of Pontifical Theological Academy.

Krzysztof Kaucha and Jacenty Mastej as their disciples have recently completed a project which the main purpose was to discover in Joseph Ratzinger's works everything which contains fundamental theology topics and could support this discipline by offering new ideas and sensitivity. Both scholars were helped by many others invited to the project. They gathered together at a two-day conference at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin in December 2016. After that they started working on a book the content of which would be presented in this summary.

Krzysztof Kaucha in an introductory paper "A Swing Towards Ratzinger" has cleared the project background. He observed an increasing interest in Ratzinger among Catholic theologians in Poland including fundamental theologians although Ratzinger at the beginning of his academic career consciously left fundamental theology and turned to dogmatics. One of the well-known Polish fundamental theologians Rev. prof. Henryk Seweryniak named Ratzinger "the modern father of the Church." Kaucha very openly said that Lublin School of Fundamental Theology was probably the last place in Poland which joined others in searching an inspiration in Ratzinger. For the first time it happened in the year 2000 when Rev. Marian Rusecki initiated a university debate on the Declaration *Dominus Iesus*. After a long time of absence Ratzinger 'came back to Lublin' when Rev. Kaucha started to study Ratzinger's works with a group of doctoral students. Together they have found him as a marvelous systematic and fundamental theologian who had said a lot about justifying the credibility of Christianity which is the main purpose of fundamental theology. They would not be able to do so unless Rev. prof. Krzysztof Gózdź (a dogmatic theologian at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and a member of International Theological Commission) would not had started to translate Ratzinger's *Opera omnia* from German into Polish, with a great help of prof. Marzena Górecka from the same university.

Prof. Agnieszka Lekka-Kowalik was invited to the project as an expert in philosophy. In her article “An Alliance for Reason and Truth. Joseph Ratzinger’s Conception of Philosophy and Its Relations to Faith and Theology” she presented Ratzinger as the representative of classical philosophy which is helpful to the faith. Such philosophy helps theology in constructing the credible picture of God who is simultaneously the Person, Truth and Thought, the highest Being and its absolute Source, and the Person who by all her nature transcends the limits of death and any other limits typical of creation. God is the Person who constantly initiates the dialogue with human persons, the Person beyond which there are not (because it’s impossible) any other points of reference, The Person-Foundation (Fundamental). It’s worth reminding at this point that Ratzinger in his doctoral thesis recalled the Plato’s and Augustinian concept of God. According to it only God deserves to be called the Truth or even further: Over-Truth, because the truth belongs exclusively to the reality which is by its own nature unchangeable. Prof. Lekka-Kowalik reminded that Christianity since its beginning was able to convince philosophical reason by the fact of demitologization of ancient ‘gods’: mythical ‘gods’ and rulers who pretended to be ‘divine’.

Rev. prof. Krystian Kałuża in his article “Joseph Ratzinger’s Conception of Fundamental Theology. Attempt to Make a Reconstruction” presented the process of contemporary fundamental theology arising from traditional apologetics, Ratzinger’s scholar path, and also fundamental theology concepts or models present in Ratzinger’s works. Ratzinger himself named such two models; model one: fundamental theology as a discipline occupied with clearing basic principles of theology, and model two: fundamental theology as justifying faith and reason synthesis or, in other words, justifying universality of Christianity in front of contemporary reason and rationality. To all that Rev. Kałuża added model three: fundamental theology as the Christian *Credo* hermeneutics which expresses the identity and definite (or even absolute) character of Christianity among any other Religious and cultural propositions. Such a definite character of Christianity was already observed at its beginning, but through its history was being forgotten or shadowed many times. This observation by Rev. Kałuża is very much true and could be found in Ratzinger’s doctoral thesis which had appreciated St. Augustine for explaining to catechumens the identity and uniqueness of the Christian faith. Moreover, Rev. Kałuża suggested, by choosing his article motto taken from Ratzinger’s work, that according to the Cardinal explaining the definite character of Christianity (if only would be successful) is necessary not only for academic reasons (“further improving the system”), but is the call for the Church and theology in actual historical moment which turned to be “the hour of disbelieve.” “The reply of the faith” is necessary today. We need such fundament(al) theology which could be able to make the contemporary reason (which doubts almost everything) wake up, move, and act.

Rev. Rafał Pokrywiński PhD in his article “Concept of the Divine Revelation According to Joseph Ratzinger” presented an important Ratzinger’s contribution to clarify understanding of the Divine Revelation as the material object of fundamental theology. That contribution became a part of not only contemporary Catholic theology but also of the Second Vatican Council thought and teaching. Ratzinger took part in the Constitution *Dei Verbum*

preparations. He insisted on accentuating a dynamic dimension of the Divine Revelation and stopping the trend in Catholic theology which understood the Revelation in a very static way.

Rev. prof. Jerzy Szymik (the most outstanding expert in Poland on Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's works and the author of many times awarded book *Teologia benedicta*, vol. 1-3, Katowice, 2010-15) in his article "*It is Fire. Christianity as Religio Vera According to Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI*" followed the third model of fundamental theology found in Ratzinger and tried to name the core of a definite character of Christianity as its foundation and constantly active "fire." To do so Rev. Szymik reached for the basic terms connected to one another: *kenosis*, *communio*, the Church, and the Spirit. They express the credibility of Christians' experience meeting God who is Love. Such experience is obvious for them. They are aware that their experience is in the same time fully human and fully transcendent – it's impossible to reach it by any human efforts. It is always a gift from God which demands human openness and acceptance in freedom.

Rev. prof. Andrzej Michalik in his article "Credibility of Christianity According to Joseph Ratzinger" picked up from Ratzinger's work all his thoughts on the topic "credibility of Christianity," although Ratzinger uses very rarely such term. Rev. Michalik presented the personal answer given by Ratzinger to the question about credibility of Christianity and of the Church and also searched for such credibility in so called "basic structures of Christianity" and its identity which are very often present in Ratzinger writings. The article by Rev. Michalik proved that Ratzinger is a fundamental theologian and such is a way of his thinking. Difficult questions asked by him openly (for example: does the Christianity still have its original power? If it does, could it be convincing for a contemporary man? And if it does not, why is it so?) wake up fundamental theology, put in front of her new tasks, and inspire her to make a progress.

All the following articles were written by theologians representing Lublin theological school, mostly Lublin School of Fundamental Theology, or closely connected to it.

In 2009 Rev. prof. Jacenty Mastej released a book *Staurologiczno-rezurekcyjna wiarygodność chrześcijaństwa [Staurological-Resurrectional Credibility of Christianity]* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL) as his habilitation thesis focused on Jesus Christ's Paschal Mystery as the rock of Christianity's identity and credibility. In his paper "Paschal Credibility of Christianity and of the Church According to Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI" he continued promoting the term "paschal credibility" typical of Lublin School of Fundamental Theology. He has found such an idea present very often in Ratzinger's works. Although Ratzinger has not cleared his concept of credibility, his thought is constantly centered on Jesus Paschal Mystery which embraces the Last Supper, Jesus' death on the Cross, and His Resurrection. According to Ratzinger Jesus' Paschal Mystery (His Passover) has been a fulfillment of the Divine Revelation and the history of salvation. Through this mystery not only God has descended to the level of human beings (*kenosis*) but also the human nature has been elevated to meet God as He truly is. The Paschal Mystery has revealed who God is and opened a new dimension of reality: being with God. The Paschal Mystery is the original and true nature of Christianity and the Church. Rev. Mastej has explained that Ratzinger understood the whole

Jesus' life in the key of Passover including the Incarnation. Mastej also highlighted that the Paschal Mystery really 'works' in the Church. It finds its realization in the liturgy and Christian life, and makes the promise of eternal life credible. However, the Paschal Mystery is also a task for the Church: to believe it, keep it and follow it. Only doing so the Church will be on the path of credibility.

Ewa Schädler PhD earned a doctoral degree in fundamental theology in 2014. Her doctoral thesis (written in Polish) topic was Fundamental Christology in the Light of Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI's Works. In her article "Structural Elements of Fundamental Christology According to Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI" she presented the most important effects of her doctoral research: 1. Ratzinger's understanding of classical Christological terms (like: the Messiah's consciousness of Jesus from Nazareth, Jesus as Revealer and Executor of God's Kingdom, deeds of Jesus Christ, Paschal Event as the fulfillment of Revelation and Salvation), 2. biblical roots of Ratzinger's theology (Ratzinger always turns toward the biblical sources, especially from the New Testament; he carefully analyzes differences in them and on its base he formulates important conclusions for Christology and the faith), 2. actualization of Jesus Christ's message in a communicative language fitting the needs and culture-civilization circumstances of the modern world (for Benedict XVI the Master from Nazareth lived two thousand years ago, but his message comes true also "here and now." Ratzinger's Christological "turning back" to earthly Jesus means going to the fundamental past which destroys the limits of time and offers hope for eternal life to all people), 3. critical look at modern theology (Ratzinger with humility typical of him sees the weaknesses of different theological analysis and suggests searching again for the whole Christological truth).

Rev. Zbigniew Chromy PhD earned a doctoral degree in fundamental theology in 2010. His doctoral thesis (written in Polish) topic was On Soteriological Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ in the Teaching of *Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI*. In his article "Divine Consciousness of Jesus Christ According to Joseph Ratzinger" Rev. Chromy reminded that Cardinal Ratzinger has done a lot to defend the most important dogma of Christianity: the Chalcedonian Dogma. Ratzinger initiated the International Theological Commission document on Jesus' Divine Consciousness (in 1985) and the Declaration *Dominus Iesus* (in 2000). He himself has made a fundamental theological research on Jesus' consciousness and many different and always delicate ways He had revealed it (Christological titles: 'Son of Man', 'Son', and 'Son of God', the expression 'I am'). Because Jesus' consciousness and identity are expressed openly in Johannine Works, Ratzinger analyzed the problem of their credibility. In conclusion Rev. Chromy wrote: „Both fundamental Christology which embraces as her important topic self-consciousness of Jesus from Nazareth, and dogmatic Christology are not, like some say, a result of philosophical speculations, but a result of arduous reflection on the historical experience. The scandal which till today surrounds the Christian God comes from, among other reasons, philosophical presuppositions; they do not allow to accept God such as He revealed Himself. [...]. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI clearly and strongly maintains that Jesus has had a transcendent consciousness of being someone much greater than an usual man who was experiencing the closeness of God in a unique but

human way. His Divine consciousness is a foundation of all Christianity's claims [...]. It is not surprising that at the bottom of all naturalistic interpretations of Jesus Christ's Person there is a negation of His Divine consciousness, because accepting Jesus as God must lead to accepting the definite (absolute) character of Christianity as founded by Him."

The article by Rev. prof. Krzysztof Gózdź "The Essence of the Church According to Joseph Ratzinger" opens the Ecclesiological part of the book. The author puts forwards a hypothesis relating to the interpretation of the thought of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI concerning the essence of the Church as the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ built His Church in a visible form through His choice of the Twelve, who were called to build a special community with Him. By building the Church, the Apostles participated in Christ's earthly mission. The essence of the Church does not lie in the very fact of its apostolic foundation, but in the event of the Last Supper, that is of the Eucharist, which marks the actualization of the Church. The Eucharist concretizes the Body of Christ in its "physical" and its risen dimension (*Corpus Christi verum*) as well as its social form, where Jesus is the Head of the Body of all the baptised faithful (*Corpus Christi mysticum*), that is in the aspect of the integral Church. The Eucharist is a manifestation of both, the individual Body of Christ and the "social" Body of Christ's Church. Therefore, the essence of the Church is the community of Christ with the baptised faithful, whose sacramental participation actualizes the Body of Christ through the Eucharist. In other words, the essence of the Church lies in its being the Body of Christ in both of its aspects: individual and social, which are actualized through the Eucharist. Ratzinger himself also puts it in the following manner: "The Church is the People of God through the Body of Christ." In this sense, the Church is not only a sacramental sign (*signum*), but it is a matter of fact (*res*). This is how Ratzinger advocates the original Christian idea of a strong link between the Church and the Eucharist. By doing so, he opts for the full ontological, realist approach to theology, refuting the idealist stance. For Ratzinger, the Church is more than a sign. It constitutes the full reality of Christ as its Head in communion with the faithful as members of His Body.

Rev. Paweł Borto PhD in his article "Joseph Ratzinger's Understanding of the Church's Credibility" undertook one of key-questions for the fundamental theological reflection: how Ratzinger seized the problem of the credibility of the Church. Rev. Borto has reminded the Ratzinger's diagnosis presented in his article published in the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* (second edition) on forming the treatise on the Church in modern times. Ratzinger opposed making a gap in Ecclesiology between the reflection on inner reality of the Church (dogmatics) and on outside (institutional) side of the Church (fundamental theology). According to him such a gap misses a fundamental ground for Catholicism's unity of visible and nonvisible dimensions of the Church. Ratzinger suggested the necessity of finding a new shape of Ecclesiological treatise. Rev. Borto wrote that the topic "the Church's Credibility" did not find the general and systematic elaboration in Ratzinger's publications, and simultaneously the analysis of his thought indicates that behind the singular elaborations about the partial character hides the certain determined conception of the credibility of the Church. Rev. Borto showed this conception talking over following problems: conditions defining the

possibility of the reflection over the problem of the reliability of the Church, the close bond of the Church with the Person of Jesus Christ (from the origins of the Church till today), and features decisive about the reliability of the Church (oneness, universality, openness).

Rev. Roman Słupek earned his doctoral degree at Lublin School of Fundamental Theology. Recently he released two books in Polish: *Kto wierzy, nigdy nie jest sam. Wiara, Kościół i wierzący inaczej w myśli Benedykta XVI* [Who Believes Is Never Alone. Faith, the Church, and Those Who Believe Different Way in the Thought of Benedict XVI] (Kraków 2012); *Credo et credimus Ecclesiam. Eklezjalność wiary chrześcijańskiej w nauczaniu papieskim przelomu XX i XXI wieku (Jan Paweł II, Benedykt XVI, Franciszek)* [I Believe and We Believe the Church. Ecclesial Dimension of the Christian Faith in Papal Teaching at the Turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries (John Paul II, Benedict XVI, Francis)] (Kraków 2017). The second one is his habilitation thesis. In his article “Benedict XVI’s Apology for Ecclesial Dimension of the Christian Faith” Rev. Słupek says that one of the essential dimensions of Christian faith, which today faces a lot of obstacles and misunderstandings, even among Christians themselves, is its ecclesial character. Ratzinger/Benedict XVI is aware that the misconception of faith makes it impossible to experience and live it in the right way. Therefore, he undertakes the necessary apology for the proper understanding of the ecclesial character of the Christian faith. He points to the modern individualism as the root of questioning the ecclesial character of faith. To those who give in to the individualistic illusion of self-sufficiency in the faith, Pope Ratzinger shows the biblical heroes of faith, such as St Paul. They teach that faith is obtained in the Church and through the Church. Thanks to the real unity with the whole community of faith, the faith of a particular person has the power needed to counter the modern threats. Then the person can indeed experience the presence of the Risen Lord and reach the maturity of faith. For man truly grows in his/her value and develops, not in isolation, but when he/she establishes relationships with God and others.

Sebastian Kostecki – doctoral student at Lublin School of Fundamental Theology – in his article “Peter’s Primacy According to Joseph Ratzinger” presented how Cardinal Ratzinger justified Christ’s genesis of St Peter’s primacy in the Church as the element of her identity. According to Ratzinger St Peter’s primacy was necessary in Christianity’s origins because in the early Church that primacy played a leading role in protecting the authenticity of the Tradition. Bishop of Rome, thanks to the primacy, was the center of the unity. Whoever was in unity with the pope, was in the unity with the Church. Ratzinger talked about important historical circumstances which reshaped this crucial task of the pope in the Universal Church. Growing separation between the East and the West, and mixing up the mission rooted in the primacy with the tasks of the patriarch of the West lead to the present situation. Cardinal Ratzinger said that today Bishop of Rome has three functions: he is the bishop of the Diocese of Rome, the patriarch of the West, and the office of the rock. The third one is the most important because it guarantees the unity of the whole Church.

Ireneusz S. Ledwoń OFM in his article “Theological Evaluation of Non-Christian Religions According to Joseph Ratzinger” wrote that Ratzinger’s theology of Religions could

be seen as one of a few theories on the theological value of Non-Christian Religions and on their relations to Christianity. His proposition is based mostly on philosophy of Religions, phenomenology of Religions, and history of Religions. Such a perspective limits the possibilities of making theological conclusions.

Rev. Piotr Niewiadomski – doctoral student at Lublin School of Fundamental Theology – in his article “Joseph Ratzinger’s Theology of Music as the Source of Fundamental-theological Inspirations” wrote that Ratzinger’s theology of liturgy, embracing theology of music, and his fundamental theology are strictly connected. The common denominator lies in Christology. Ratzinger’s theology of music has many inspirations for fundamental theology. According to Ratzinger the liturgical music is an effect of the Church’s faith, an essential part of Christian cultural contribution, and an element of Christian anthropology which leads to reflections on the Divine image in a man and his/her renewal in Christ. Rev. Niewiadomski maintained that according to Ratzinger the Church’s music leads to contemplate the Holy Trinity. This music is itself *Imago Mundi*, *Imago Salutis*, and, in some sense, *Imago Dei*.

The last article “Inspirations in Joseph Ratzinger’s Works for Fundamental Theology” by Rev. Krzysztof Kaucha is a summary of Ratzinger’s presence in fundamental theology handbooks published in Germany, Italy, and Poland (Kaucha named it “the first quest”) and of all the project initiated by Rev. Mastej and Rev. Kaucha (“the second quest”). The article contains also the author’s own research which he named an attempt to do “the third quest.” It embraces 5 points.

In point “A” Kaucha listed historical facts and their effects for the faith mentioned by Ratzinger but usually missed in fundamental theology, at least in Lublin School of Fundamental Theology (for example: the group of three inside the Twelve; so called pairs of disciples; choosing a slave as the bishop of Rome in 217; choosing by the first disciples the term *Ekklesia* as the self-identity name; mixing up terms *corpus verum* and *corpus mysticum* which influenced Ecclesiology in a negative way; biblical ideas of Adam and the new Adam as so called species people, collective people, and “corporation individuals” which make the term original sin reasonable; Ratzinger’s way of resolving the theodicy problem; a biblical idea of a building foundation which already contains the whole building and determines it – *Christus Fundamentum et Caput*; in Ratzinger’s mind and language the Church’s credibility means first of all “responding to God’s will”, being simple, honest, faithful, and always truthful; Kaucha observes that Ratzinger tries to follow that idea: if historical truth allows defending the Church in her history, Ratzinger does it, but if it does not allow, Ratzinger honestly accepts that truth).

Point “B” is dedicated to Ratzinger’s meta-reflections on apologetics and fundamental theology. Ratzinger described the crucial difficulty of every apologetics when he wrote: „[...] till today there is a painful problem of every apologetics which always has a task almost impossible to do: to justify the faith to a man looking for such justification, but the justification is located finally inside him/her and in consequence a man becomes able to give such justification only if he had already given a positive answer of the faith – the faith

which should embrace the justification.” Ratzinger learned a lesson from St Augustine who discovered the pure and unquestionable credibility of the faith after he has converted and not earlier. Ratzinger concludes that Christians have only one way if they want to convince non-Christians: turn their attention to the signs of credibility (understood as being different from the logic of the world): dynamic growth of the Church in ancient times despite of persecution, a great number of nations belonging to the Church, universality, oneness, unity, martyrs, “little ones” meaning poor and marginalized (Ratzinger wrote that they always “represent the Lord himself despite of their moral quality”), and Christian brotherhood. Ratzinger reminded also the novelty of Christian idea of God which scandalized ancient philosophers. In the times of St Augustine simple people were much more wiser than philosophical schools’ masters.

In fundamental ecclesiological point “C” Kaucha underlined that Ratzinger differentiates the terms *sacramentum* (the whole soteriological God’s activity) and *sacramenta* (particular rites). In his eyes the Church is *sacramentum* and *signum sacrum*. Ratzinger loved reminding biblical and patristic analogy between human body and the Church: like empirical, visible human body (flesh) covers the inside human person, the visibility of the Church covers her inner, true reality.

In point “D” Kaucha tried to look at Ratzinger specifically from Lublin School of Fundamental Theology achievements which embrace new arguments for the credibility of Christianity. In Ratzinger’s works there are many original thoughts supporting such arguments, for example: veritative, agapetological, hope-giving and freedom-giving. Rev. Kaucha has even found a draft of freedom-giving argument in Ratzinger’s following words: “It is worth to indicate why the Christian faith might pretend to the function of making a man authentically free; it would be good to explain precisely how such a making a man free is possible through the sacramental entity of the Church. There is a need to analyze the sense of the authority and the Tradition in the Church and their relation to the Christian freedom.” Rev. Kaucha recalled Ratzinger’s words on the core of Christian freedom: “What matters most in the Church is the freedom in the deepest sense: the ability to participate in God’s being.”

In point “E” Rev. Kaucha wrote that Ratzinger is an example of being an outstanding theologian. He is the original thinker and familiar with many non-theological disciplines. At the beginning of his academic career he noticed the shortcomings in theology at that time and he responded to them by finding his own academic path: topics and method. He achieved levels of a university career in a very young age. Consciously he refused his disciples’ suggestion to create the academic school, because he wanted to leave them the freedom in research; by the way, his own works’ quality and quantity are more than enough for not only one academic school but several. Ratzinger’s scholar method is very reliable and clear: he chooses the topic and tries to express it in a form of few short questions (very often such questions open his articles), then he analyzes all sources and opinions on the matter, and finally he presents his own solution on the base of comprehensive justification given by him. He knows very well the history of theology and culture (mostly, if not only, European), he



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tries to understand the context of their past stages, different opinions and their evolution, but in the same time he finds the timeless content (*theologia perennis*). Ratzinger has been bravely taking issue with opinions he disagreed, but always with a full respect for people who expressed them.

All articles are followed by abbreviations and basic information on authors.

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