

## Introduction

The Department of the Cultural and Christian Foundations of Education in the Institute of Educational Sciences of the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow undertook a multi-stage research project in 2013 entitled “The educational influence of the Church in the context of socio-cultural changes”. The first stage of the research project’s goals was concerned with the educational milieu and the results of it were published in the scientific series “Cultura – Spiritualitas – Educatio.”<sup>1</sup> The present publication, devoted to the authority of the Church and her educational mission in the context of socio-cultural changes, is the effect of the second stage of the project.

The question of authority is the subject of numerous studies carried out mainly in the social sciences. In relation to education as a broadly understood concept, particular interest is raised in connection to the relationship between the parties of the educational process, the dynamics of this relationship in the maturation process of young people and the phenomenon of interactions related to the educator’s authority as defined by this relationship. The authority in the process of upbringing is a subject that has been undertaken for a long time but still needs to be updated and revised.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of the educators’ and teacher’s authority is the subject of separate studies and many considerations. The roles, functions

<sup>1</sup> See: *Ponowoczesne przestrzenie oddziaływań wychowawczo-formacyjnych Kościoła i “ziemie niczyje”* (Cultura – Spiritualitas – Educatio), ed. R. Jasnos, E. Miśkowiec, Kraków 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Cf.: *Autorytet w wychowaniu i edukacji*, ed. D. Łażewska, Józefów 2013; *Mit autorytetu – autorytet mitu*, ed. J. Sieradzan, Białystok 2009; *Autorytet. Czy potrzebny w procesie edukacji?*, ed. A. Olubiński, Toruń 2012; W. Banach, *Zagadnienie autorytetu. O. Józefa Marii Bocheńskiego analiza problemu*, “*Filosophija*” 2013, 2(21), pp. 151–157; B. Babik, *O potrzebie autorytetów wśród młodzieży*, “*Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze*” 2013, no. 2, pp. 32–37 and many other works.



and complexity of the teacher's tasks demand him to be well "equipped" with authority. Without it, he cannot support the student effectively in their development.

While the question of the authority of the Church is being discussed in the social sciences, the Church's social authority is also the subject of various analysis carried out within the area of sociological research on the Church. This publication, however, addresses the issue of the Church's authority in a specific context, namely in relation to her influence of an educative (forming) nature.<sup>3</sup>

The teaching and educational mission has always been one of the most important aspects of the Church's duties.<sup>4</sup> As Alina Rynio writes, "From the very beginning, the Church has been an educator in shaping the religious and moral attitude of man."<sup>5</sup> However, according to the conciliar decree *Gravissimum educationis*, her mission includes not only believers and matters of faith, but all people and the world in which they live. The Church is obliged "to promote for all peoples the complete perfection of the human person, the good of earthly society and the building of a world that is more human" (DWCH 3).<sup>6</sup> In the modern world, this mission is therefore of particular importance, and the manifestation of its implementation can be seen in various activities of the pastoral work of the Church.

The teaching and educational mission of the Church requires authority. The Church has the perfect example and inspiration in the person of Jesus Christ. As Piotr Mazur writes, the Christian tradition assumes that human authority has its fullness in the person of God

<sup>3</sup> See many studies by Janusz Mariański, Józef Baniak, Andrzej Potocki, and Irena Borowik.

<sup>4</sup> Cf.: S. Dziekoński, *Rozwój wychowawczej myśli Kościoła na przestrzeni ostatnich wieków*, Warszawa 2004, p. 7; J. Niewęglowski, *Kościół i wychowanie. Zarys problematyki*, "Seminare" 2005, 21, pp. 453–460; S. Dziekoński, *Wychowanie w nauczaniu Kościoła. Od początku wieku XIX do Soboru Watykańskiego II*, Warszawa 2000, p. 11; R. Buchta, S. Dziekoński (ed.), *Wychowanie w wierze w kontekście przemian współczesności*, Katowice 2011.

<sup>5</sup> A. Rynio, *Tradycyjne i współczesne środowiska wychowania chrześcijańskiego*, in: *Septuaginta pedagogiczno-katechetyczna. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Księdzu Profesorowi dr. hab. Zbigniewowi Markowi SJ w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, ed. A. Walulik, J. Mółka, Kraków 2017, p. 377.

<sup>6</sup> *Dekret o wychowaniu chrześcijańskim Gravissimum educationis*. Polish text in: *Sobór Watykański II. Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje*, Poznań 2002, pp. 314–324. Cf. ibidem, p. 377.

incarnate.<sup>7</sup> It is a special kind of authority which is difficult to compare with other authorities. In implementing the teaching and educational mission, however, the Church must rely on the inherited authority and the one which is being built by her at the present time. Based on an inherited tradition, she must constantly renew her authority in the face of the socio-cultural realities of the contemporary world in which her believers live today. This is due to the specific feature of the “two-subjectivity” of her authority. The Church’s authority must therefore combine tradition as the basis of authority with the requirements of modernity as a “place” of her interactions with the world. The ideals derived from the sources of Christianity are an inspiration for all those involved in the process of building a personal authority that influences contemporary reality.

Ongoing cultural changes do not facilitate the process of building the authority of the educator, which also applies to the Church. The increasing importance of freedom and independence of the person makes it difficult for the individual to accept the leadership and influence of the authorities. A contemporary believer wants to be rather a partner in the relations with the Church, and not a person who undertakes the effort of self-development. A high degree of competence is required from both people of the Church and others lay leaders. Those with authority do not have an easy task today, it is also not easy to be a person with authority due to the effortless access to almost all kinds of information and because of the better educated society we live in.

However, despite a critical attitude, believers are looking for witnesses and authorities in the Church. “They are fascinated by the testimonies of life and are looking for authorities,” emphasizes Wojciech Prus.<sup>8</sup> The high demands that believers place on them do not change the fact that the authorities are important to them. And it is these expectations of believers which have become the inspiration to take up the issue of the Church’s authority in the process of upbringing, which is the subject of this publication. If the believers themselves are

<sup>7</sup> Cf. P. Mazur, *Wychowanie w czasach kryzysu autorytetu*, “Zeszyty Społeczne KIK” 2011, p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> Opinion of Rev. Wojciech Prus OP, the director of publishing house and the monthly review “W drodze”. See: A. Petrowa-Wasilewicz, *Książka religijna – nowe trendy i perspektywy*, <<https://ekai.pl/ksiazka-religijna-nowe-trendy-i-perspektywy/>> [access: 15.09.2017].



looking for authority in the Church, and the authority is the key to educational actions, then it should be the subject of special attention, reflection and actions undertaken by the Church.

The issues and research undertaken in this monograph were aimed at answering the following questions: How do believers perceive the authority of the Church in Poland today, and how do believers assess the role of this authority in the educational influence of the Church?

This publication contains studies dedicated to the foundations of the Church's authority and its expression. Stanisław Gałkowski, in the article *Freedom of the individual towards the authority of the Church*, writes about the basic distinction between the epistemic and deontic authority of the Church<sup>9</sup>, which (in moral matters) cannot take place because of the personal freedom of the believer and the responsibility resulting from it which is based on the judgment of conscience.

Andrzej Mrozek has taken up the subject of *The prophetic authority of Pope Francis*, which is rooted in the prophetic mission of Christ, which (in accordance with the teaching of Second Vatican Council) can be seen as an answer to the problems of the relationship between the Church and the world. It can also be, as he writes, "a way of finding and restoring this key ecclesial aspect, that is, being a community in the way," because "the prophetic nature of Christianity lies at the very foundation of the community which the Church is."

Katarzyna Jarkiewicz, in the text *First after God: Popes in the iconographic transmission of the holy card*, has analysed the historical development of the way of presenting popes in religious pictures and its consequences for the perception of the authority of the head of the Church. In addition, the work contains research and studies on the authority of the Church, especially in Polish society seen through the prism of papacy.

Janusz Mariański, in his text *The social authority of the Catholic Church in Poland in the process of change* presents selected aspects of the social authority of the Catholic Church, pointing out the causes and perspectives of changes the Church is facing nowadays. According to the author, the main difficulty and the challenge the Catholic Church in Poland is faced with consists in "finding a right position and role in a pluralistic society."

<sup>9</sup> A distinction between the epistemic and deontic authority after Józef Bocheński.

Renata Jasnos, in her article *On the authority of the educating Church according to the opinions and expectations of students and younger employees of a Catholic university*, has examined the expectations of young believers in regard to the authority of the Church. In addition, in cooperation with Anna Seredyńska, she elaborates upon the issue of the nature of the educational activities of the Church and presents it in the text *Between coercive and emancipatory: Believers on the authority of the Church*.

Józef Majewski in the article *The Gospel on the Web: A word about the Catholic teaching authority in Wikipedia* has raised the issue of the teaching authority of the Church in respect to the Internet on the example of the ongoing edited and reedited entries in Wikipedia, the most widely read source of popular knowledge.

The last section contains texts related to the axiological structure of authority, with various aspects of the authority of the Church realized in the educational practices and with the influence of authority on the process of self-education. Andrzej Michał de Tchorzewski, in the article *Authority and its axiological structure*, presents the variability of the notions of authority, and has also proposed a theoretical model of authority.

Giuseppe Mari analyses the problem of the obedience of faith in the article *Catholic education, faith and authority* justifying that faith is obedience to the Truth and its authority, which are at the same time the basis of Catholic education.

Zbigniew Marek takes up the issue of authority as presented in Ignatian pedagogy. In the article *Authority in theory and practice of educational accompaniment* he sees this kind of pedagogical authority as a value aimed at the personal growth and development of the pupil.

Ewa Miśkowiec in the text *The influence of authority in the process of self-upbringing* analyses the problem of authority in the process of self-education which is beginning to play an important role in the period of adolescence and early youth.

*Renata Jasnos*