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**Evangelization as the promotion of the classical
understanding of the culture.
Outline of the problem**

**Ewangelizacja jako promocja klasycznego
rozumienia kultury. Zarys problematyki**

ABSTRACT

Observing contemporary events form Europe's social life, one should reach for the roots of the civilization. It seems crucial to understand one's own identity based upon European culture (*cutrura christiana*). This article is trying to answer the question: How can evangelization help to preserve the classical (Christian) understanding of culture? With a view to answering this question, the term culture will be analyzed; particular aspects of culture will be outlined, especially religion; there will be an attempt to analyze the relationship between culture, religion and evangelization. This analysis is intended to show the way to be pursued by contemporary man, who wants to live in harmony in human and God's world.

KEYWORDS:

culture, evangelization, religion,
human, civilization.

STRESZCZENIE

Obserwując współczesne wydarzenia z życia społecznego Europy warto po raz kolejny sięgnąć do korzeni cywilizacji. Wartością wydają się być rozumienie swoje własnej tożsamości osadzonej na kulturze europejskiej, czyli chrześcijańskiej. Artykuł to próba odpowiedzi na pytanie: Jak ewangelizacja może pomóc utrwać klasyczne (chrześcijańskie) rozumienie kultury? W celu zrealizowania postawionego zamierzenia analizie zostanie poddane rozumienie terminu kultura; zarysowane zostaną poszczególne obszary kultury, zwłaszcza religia; zostanie podjęta próba analizy relacji zachodzących pomiędzy kulturą, religią i ewangelizacją. Analiza ma na celu ukazanie drogi, którą powinien podążać współczesny człowiek, który chce osiągnąć radość w wymiarze nie tylko doczesnym, a przede wszystkim wiecznym.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:

kultura, ewangelizacja, religia,
człowiek, cywilizacja.

INTRODUCTION

Culture does not exist either in isolation from its creator – man, or beyond nature. A biblical command to subdue the earth (nature) is the execution of God's conception and at the same time it is a goal set to humankind. The path to God Creator is defined with the transformation and improvement of the World, and of mankind themselves both through intellectual effort and all manner of work. At some points the development of civilization, however, seems to separate the two realities: earth's and God's¹.

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council already in the 1960s noticed that "Today, the human race is involved in a new stage of history. Profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world. Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies of man, these changes recoil upon him, upon his decisions and desires, both individual and collective, and upon his manner of thinking and acting with respect to things and to people. Hence we can already speak of a true cultural and social transformation, one which has repercussions on man's religious life as well"². Those cultural transformations have also influenced human religious life.

Man is embedded in culture at all times. It stems from a principle that "nature and culture combine with each other very closely"³. Whereas God's grace assumes the existence of culture, and God's gift materializes the culture of those who accept it⁴. In that context, it is easy to understand the Church's care of man and their steady development in all aspects of life. Following John Paul II, it should be emphasized that the Church may not leave man alone⁵. Man, who subdues the earth, is subject to all relations and processes occurring in modern world. The community of the Church should therefore constantly take care of man so that they will not go off the way of salvation. The Church is needed to lean over modern culture, and cultural pluralism. All this is meant to contribute to a complete and sustainable human development. As the Second Vatican Council states: "A human being

¹ Cf. G. Barzaghi, *Metafisica della cultura cristiana*, Bologna 1996, p. 107–109.

² GS 4.

³ Cf. Tamże 53.

⁴ Cf. EG 115.

⁵ Cf. RH 14.

reaches true and complete humanity in no other way but through culture, and developing natural goods and values”⁶.

A human being, by their very nature, lives in a community. It is, however, more and more frequent that contemporary man fails to understand the surrounding world, culture and the right life path. Observing contemporary events from Europe’s social life, one should reach for the roots of the civilization. It seems crucial to understand one’s own identity based upon European=Christian culture (*cultura christiana*). When facing new challenges, it is essential to renew the awareness which will lead to a primary conversion, renewing the relationship with God and well-weighed decisions. The Church’s care expressed in the ministry of New Evangelization should come in hand⁷.

This deliberation referring to the relationship between evangelization and classical understanding of culture attempts to answer the question: How can evangelization help to preserve the classical (Christian) understanding of culture? With a view to answering this question, the term culture will be analyzed; particular aspects of culture will be outlined, especially religion; there will be an attempt to analyze the relationship between culture, religion and evangelization. This analysis is intended to show the way to be pursued by contemporary man, who wants to live in harmony in human and God’s world and wants to achieve not only earth’s happiness, but foremost eternal one.

This issue can be specified as very broad and complex. Thus, the text below is just a framework which, in the future, may be a starting point for further study and scientific research.

THE TERM “CULTURE”

At the outset, one needs to specify the term “culture”. It is not that easy. There are at least a few hundreds of scientific terms and definitions⁸. The word “culture”

⁶ GS 55.

⁷ Cf. J. Szewczyk, *Nowa Ewangelizacja a kultura w świetle myśli Benedykta XVI. Powiązania i perspektywy*, “Rocznik Teologii Duchowości” 60 (2013), p. 101–105.

⁸ Cf. W. Kawecki, *Co to jest kultura?*, in: R. Bartnicki, W. Kawecki (ed.), *Chrześcijaństwo a kultura*, Warszawa 2006, p. 50. R. Williams in his book “Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society” expressed an opinion that the word *culture* is one of the most polysemantic and complex expressions in English. Its meaning keeps changing, modifying and dispersing

originated from Latin and in the context of ancient Rome it first meant land cultivation (Latin *cultura* from *colore* – means to cultivate land, to tend, to improve). Observing the law of nature it was believed that only land-soil which is cultivated is able to beget good and healthy grain. Tending the soil involves human labour and does not exclude intellect⁹. Since Cicero's times, it has taken on a new meaning referring to the cultivation of human spirit. This term is used widely to signify everything that comes from man as a rational being.

The word "culture" quickly began to signify also the culture of spirit. This understanding was connected with shaping and ennobling human soul¹⁰.

The advent of Christianity affected significantly the previous understanding of culture. Religious faith as well as religious cult became the reference point for refining human spirit. In the middle ages the terms, such as: *cultura Christi* and *cultura christianae religionis*¹¹ were coined. While Renaissance, which appealed to the comeback to ancient legacy, identified culture with an intellectual and spiritual growth of man.

The term "culture" is frequently associated and interchangeably used with the word "civilization". Initially "civilization" was understood as human development according to Roman citizens' models – *civis romanus* – who enjoyed the right to have a complete personal growth with the aim of ennobling their conduct. Here both terms signify the whole of social relations and individual human life and are applied interchangeably. Whereas the act of accentuating their separate meaning and contrasting them (since I. Kant) shows that "culture" refers to internal life, while "civilization" relates to an external manifestation of actions. One can state that arts and science enrich man internally, while social institutions tend an external order¹².

Currently, it is difficult to point out a prevailing definition of culture which would embrace the whole of aspects. In order to grasp a wider meaning, one should refer to a few positions. *Encyklopedia Katolicka (Catholic Encyclopaedia)*

constantly. Cf. W. Daszkiewicz, *Podstawowe rozumienie kultury – ujęcie filozoficzne*, "Roczniki Kulturoznawcze" 1(2010), p. 43.

⁹ Cf. M. Krąpiec, *Kultura*, in: *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, t. 6, (ed.) A. Maryniarczyk, Lublin 2005, p.132.

¹⁰ Cf. M. Krąpiec, *U podstaw rozumienia kultury*, Lublin 1991, p. 7.

¹¹ Cf. Tamże, p. 8.

¹² Cf. M. Sieńkowski, *Cultura Christiana*, "Cultura Christiana" 1 (2012), p. 6–7.

says that culture is the whole of material and spiritual output of mankind, the outcome of human creativity and a set of norms, values and principles governing a given community¹³. While *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii* (*The Universal Encyclopedia of Philosophy*) says that culture is the activity and works of man as a personal being that is intellectual and free¹⁴. The documents of the II Vatican Council state that culture means everything whereby man develops and perfects his many bodily and spiritual qualities; he strives by his knowledge and his labor, to bring the world itself under his control¹⁵. According to J. Ratzinger, culture in the process of historical development has become the form of expression of cognition and values that shape the life of a given community¹⁶.

However, a German thinker of the 20th century E. Cassirer defines culture differently. He sees culture as human liberation from nature limitations through intellectual development thanks to science, art, language and religion¹⁷.

For the purpose of this essay, the definition of Father Krąpiec will be adopted. From his point of view, understanding the term culture is closely correlated with understanding man and their activities. He formulates the definition of culture saying that it is an activity and works of man as a personal being who is intellectual and free¹⁸.

This definition can be treated as a classical understanding of culture. The author points out that a European context, where this definition comes from, is based on a biblical and Jewish tradition as well as on that of ancient Greece and Rome. All those traditions have melted into Christian understanding of culture, leading to shaping the life and activity of man¹⁹. After carrying out further analysis of culture born in the Mediterranean basin, Krąpiec notices that it is the place where integral European culture takes root and grows. It comprises various issues of human activity. Basically it boils down to four substantial elements: science, art, morality, and religion. Although each of these elements seems to be

¹³ Cf. D. Capała, *Kultura*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 10, (ed.) A. Szostek, Lublin 2004, col. 188.

¹⁴ Cf. Krąpiec, *Kultura*, op. cit., p. 132.

¹⁵ Cf. GS 53.

¹⁶ Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Wiara. Prawda. Tolerancja*, Kielce 2005, p. 50.

¹⁷ Cf. P. Kowalczyk., *Kultura. Pojęcie*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, t. 10, (ed.) A. Szostek, Lublin 2004, col. 189.

¹⁸ Cf. M. Krąpiec, *Kultura*, in: *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, op. cit., p.132.

¹⁹ Cf. M. Krąpiec, *Człowiek w kulturze*, Warszawa 1996, p. 170.

autonomous and independent, none of them is isolated from others. On the contrary, they all intertwine and penetrate each other, thus creating a phenomenon of European culture²⁰.

The encounter of the Church faith with various cultures gave rise to a new reality. We are talking here about the so-called culture of the West, which has become the foundation of current global civilization²¹.

In this light, one must state that Europe, western civilization originated from a Christian religion and this religion is the most essential element of it. Such understanding of culture may be acknowledged as classic one²².

CULTURE AND RELIGION

Culture is an essential and universal attribute of human nature. Religion is related to it thanks to its range as well as the fact of being ingrained in human nature. Thus, one should ponder over their common relationships and consistency.

The focal point of the phenomenon of culture is religion²³. J. Ratzinger notes that religion is the “foundation of culture”²⁴. Krąpiec goes on to explain that: “the relation establishing religion is both the beginning and the synthesis of human acts (the cognition and craving for love, which turn into action)... This way, religion which subject is personal God, lifts human life to a personal level, not material one”²⁵.

At this point, let us take a look at the view represented by Z. Zdybicka which clarifies the relationship between culture and religion. She states that: religion is part of culture. At the same time it is something that goes beyond culture – if we understand it as an activity deriving from man. It goes beyond culture through incorporating supernatural, non-human elements which show the context of human life beyond nature and beyond human communities. Thus, religion may be defined as the field of cognition based on supernatural sources (faith) and human

²⁰ Cf. Tamże, p. 170–171.

²¹ Cf. FR 70; W. Kawecki, *Kościół i kultura w dialogu*, Kraków 2008, p. 19.

²² Cf. P. Bolberitz, *Europa a chrześcijaństwo*, “Communio” 4 (2005), p. 19–31.

²³ Cf. M. Krąpiec, *Człowiek i kultura*, Lublin 2008, p. 273.

²⁴ Cf. A. Supłat, *Pojęcie kultury chrześcijańskiej w ujęciu Josepha Ratzingera*, in: T. Sikorski, A. Dymer (ed.), *Kultura chrześcijańska w zjednoczonej Europie*, Szczecin 2007, p. 33.

²⁵ Cf. M. Krąpiec, *Człowiek i kultura*, op. cit., p. 23.

activity aimed at transcendent reality, so some kind of Absolute – in our culture it is personal God²⁶.

On that basis, one can state that religion penetrates and integrates all the areas of intellectual human activity. Yet, it must be stated that religion and culture may not be identified with nor replace each other. Their mutual relationship should be based upon completing, cooperating and penetrating each other. This is the only way how culture and religion are able to understand and express the truth of man in an earthly and transcendent dimension. Culture deprived of religion is incomplete²⁷.

It is difficult to find a culture which is deprived of religious elements. Civilization which is not engrained in God is not capable of addressing basic, existential dilemmas referring to morality, sense of existence or human death. Thanks to religion, a widely understood human creativity is given ultimate, deep meaning. Otherwise, it remains confined to history and temporality²⁸.

A lot of modern man does not want to admit to that. Often they are afraid of religion, a bright conception of the truth, decisive moral declarations. Apparently, they want to keep their neutrality. Yet, the symbiosis of culture and religion may lead to enriching life with supernatural virtues of faith, hope and love. Culture inspired by a Christian thought may result in person-oriented profile, thus accentuating the dignity of a human being as a supreme value of the tangible world²⁹.

The II Vatican Council notes and emphasizes that truth³⁰. It is underlined in their teachings that culture as an intellectual and free activity of man enjoys autonomy³¹. The autonomy of culture is limited, however, by moral norms that

²⁶ Cf. Z. Zdybicka, *Religia i religioznawstwo*, Lublin 1988, p. 143. Another notion on religion says that “Religion is a real, personal relationship of man and personal Absolute (God), who is acknowledged by man as the ultimate source of existence and the Highest Good which gives meaning to life”. Cf. Z. Zdybicka, *Człowiek i religia*, Lublin 2006, p. 299; P. Moskal, *Religia i prawda*, Lublin 2008, p. 37.

²⁷ Cf. P. Jaroszyński, *Filozoficzne koncepcje kultury*, in: *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, t. 6, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, Lublin 2005, p. 138; M. Rusecki, *Dziejowe znaczenie chrześcijaństwa*, Poznań 2011, p. 127.

²⁸ Cf. A. Liberski, *Religia i kultura – razem i przeciw sobie*, “Studia Koszalińsko-Kołoobrzeszkie” 16 (2011), p. 105–114.

²⁹ Cf. R. Boguszewski, *Religijność a zasady Moralne*. Komunikat z badań CBOS, Warszawa 2014; P. Kowalczyk, *Religia a kultura*, “Studia Płockie” 8 (1980), p. 263–277.

³⁰ Cf. GS 53–59.

³¹ Cf. Tamże 59.

guard the good and freedom of single man and society. Any form of culture which does not respect man's personality (dignity, conscience, self-confidence) constitutes an alienated form of culture. Man is the creator and the sense of culture. There should be a harmonious growth of all the values that are subject to man. It is only an integrated growth of culture that results in an integrated development of man³².

A NEW CONTEXT

Since the Age of the Enlightenment it has been observed that the term Culture has been constantly deprived of religious elements. This way there have been gradual attempts at cutting off and negating the civilization roots. It has led to a situation where Christians started to function in a completely new and unknown environment. Looking back on the first ages after Christ, we can notice that Greek and Roman culture, where Christianity was evolving, referred to transcendence. While the civilization based on some form of utilitarian and scientific rationalism led to a "coup" on the paradigms of culture. At the end of the 20th century one could observe a situation in which modern European culture excluded God from public awareness to an unprecedented extent³³.

The Church, which over the centuries had taken advantage of the legacy of various cultures and contributed to their development, could not stand still. It expressed a desire to keep a dialogue with the world so that a redemptive message could reach all nations. The II Vatican Council and all its teachings can be treated as the first impulse. Not only did this Council gather the representatives of Europe and old cultures but of the whole world. Therefore it featured the pluralism of mindset and culture. It was a clear picture of the Church's universality. The constitution *Gaudium et Spes* opens the Church to a dialogue with the world and promotes a Gospel attitude. The analysis of conciliar documents points out that the word "culture" appears 90 times therein, and the term "cultural" – more than 30 times. It only proves the topical nature of this problem³⁴.

³² Cf. W. Kawecki, *Co to jest kultura?*, op. cit., p. 50–55.

³³ Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Europa Benedykta w kryzysie kultur*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 47.

³⁴ Cf. R. Jaszczuk, *Ewangelizacja kultur i inkulturacja Ewangelii*, Warszawa 2012, p. 103.

In terms of terminology, there is a breakthrough in the II Vatican Council teachings. Before culture was referred to as “civilization” or “Christian civilization”. A conciliar document for the first time gives a positive and modern definition of culture. It has the following wording: “the word culture in its general sense indicates everything whereby man develops and perfects his many bodily and spiritual qualities; he strives by his knowledge and his labor, to bring the world itself under his control. He renders social life more human both in the family and the civic community, through improvement of customs and institutions. Throughout the course of time he expresses, communicates and conserves in his works, great spiritual experiences and desires, that they might be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family”³⁵.

A conciliar definition underlines a person-oriented dimension of culture, paying attention to its spiritual values and binding culture more with man as its creator and recipient³⁶.

The real breakthrough came yet when the direction of the ministry of the Church was outlined. The Council specified how in practice the relationship between culture and evangelical activity was going to look. The principle of the dialogue of cultures with the Gospel was defined as follows: “the Church, sent to all peoples of every time and place, is not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, any particular way of life or any customary way of life recent or ancient. Faithful to her own tradition and at the same time conscious of her universal mission, she can enter into communion with the various civilizations, to their enrichment and the enrichment of the Church herself”³⁷.

The Council and its teachings set a new direction for the Church ministry. Evangelization context appears on the horizon. This way the Church responds to the needs of man who is “the first and fundamental path of the Church”³⁸.

The Church through its educational ministry longs to meet man in all their wealth of existence: as personal, community and social being. All this effort is meant to set their eyes on the mystery of Christ. This new vision of culture and man should be construed in the context of evangelization. Just like Christ lived in a concrete culture of His times, the Church getting into contact with new

³⁵ GS 53.

³⁶ Cf. C. Bartnik, *Teologia kultury*, Lublin 1999, p. 16.

³⁷ GS 58.

³⁸ Cf. RH 14.

situations materializes the Gospel in different cultures, meanwhile respecting all that is good and noble³⁹.

Based on Christian anthropology and the principle of man's resemblance of God, the Church's teaching binds man to cooperate in culture development⁴⁰.

MAN'S PATH

A post-synodal document *Evangelii Nuntiandi* contains a key statement in terms of the relationship between culture and the Gospel. It reminds that "what matters is to evangelize man's culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots), in the wide and rich sense which these terms have in *Gaudium et spes*, always taking the person as one's starting-point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God"⁴¹. The document airs some concern that there is a dissonance between the Gospel and culture. It even calls it "a drama of our times"⁴². This post-synodal exhortation prompts also to put in every effort to evangelize human culture attentively. Living up to the classical understanding of this notion, there is a call to melt human culture with the Good News⁴³.

Pope John Paul II when teaching in Nowa Huta – Mogiła near Cracow in 1979 fulfilled these words in practice. There he used the term new evangelization for the first time. The context of time and space was crucial then. The pope's call for new evangelization was actually the call for restoring the proper culture of man. The pope called then: "Even though the times change, even though old Cracovian fields have been replaced with a huge combine, even though we are living in the era of rapid knowledge and technology development regarding the material world, this basic truth relating to human spirit, which is embodied by the holy cross, does not cease to exist, it does not become out-of-date, it does not become the thing of the past. The history of Nowa Huta is also written by the cross – first this old one from Mogiła, inherited from the past – and then a new one... which

³⁹ Cf. P. Olejnik, *Podstawowe wartości ludzkie jako normy kultury*, "Studia Theologica Var-saviensia" 10 (1972) 2, p. 239–259.

⁴⁰ Cf. GS 62.

⁴¹ EN 20.

⁴² Cf. Tamże.

⁴³ Cf. Tamże; L.J. Luzbetak, *Kościół a kultury. Nowe perspektywy w antropologii misyjnej*, Warszawa 1998, p. 130.

was erected not far away from here. Where one erects a cross, it gives a sign that the Good News has already reached there, the Good News of man's salvation through Love. Where the cross is erected, it is a sign that the evangelization begins. In the past our fathers used to erect crosses in all parts of Poland as a sign that the Gospel reached them and that the evangelization began – and that it keeps going. This intention was the beginning of the erection of the first cross in Mogiła near Nowa Huta. When a new, wooden cross was erected nearby the old one at the threshold of the millennium, it was a sign that the Gospel entered a new millennium. This second, new evangelization is the same as the first one. The cross lasts although the world keeps changing"⁴⁴.

When interpreting these words, one should note that John Paul II demanding the cross in Nowa Huta, does not demand solely a piece of wood, but he demands the proper understanding of this sign. In old days a cross was a clear sign – it meant that people belonged to God. These days man creating their life environment and culture not only does not understand the cross, but they also forget about God and His love. Therefore John Paul II who understood man and their culture in a spirit of classic philosophy and Gospel appealed for evangelization. Man, who lives these days, cannot focus entirely on manufacturing material goods or a rat race. Contemporary man needs the Good News and the experience of God's Love in order to develop fully⁴⁵.

It should be noted that a true theme of evangelization does not concern only different cultural and social situations in which man finds themselves. The first and foremost theme is the command of Jesus Christ resurrected which defines the reason for the Church's existence: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation!" (Mk 16,15)⁴⁶.

In the face of the threats that have appeared in the world, evangelization makes the Church's mission come true. A call for new evangelization was a sign of concern of the Holy Father about a current mission of the Church, including civilization and culture changes. John Paul II speaking about "new" evangelization

⁴⁴ Jan Paweł II, *Homilia wygłoszona podczas Mszy św. w ogrodzie klasztornym w Sanktuarium Krzyża Świętego w Krakowie-Mogile* (9 czerwca 1979 r.), in: Jan Paweł II, *Pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny. Przemówienia, homilie*, Kraków 2005, p. 187.

⁴⁵ Cf. RM 1–2; PDV 82; A. Sepioło, *Nowa ewangelizacja. Śladami Jana Pawła II*, Kraków 2001, p. 15; P. Colombo, *Ewangelizacja a promocja ludzka*, "Communio" 2, 6 (1982), p. 60–74.

⁴⁶ Cf. VS 106.

confirms that it is the same evangelization, only social and cultural situations are new for contemporary man. It can be observed that the values such as the faith, the truth, the good, freedom and love are disappearing in modern culture. Therefore it is vital that a real relationship with God (evangelization) should be restored so that man is able to find the proper social and cultural awareness⁴⁷.

The aim of evangelization – strictly speaking – is not culture as such, but it is always a concrete person⁴⁸. Therefore it can be stated that a path that leads to renewing culture and connecting it with evangelical values always runs through man. Only man who finds space in their lives for a true relationship with God is capable of expressing themselves through language, literature and religion⁴⁹. In her teachings the Church reminds that “the mission fulfilled today by the moral theologians is of primary significance not only for the life and mission of the Church, but also for society and human culture”⁵⁰.

One of the crucial notions in a contemporary conception of the Church’s ministry tradition – the Documents from Aparecida refer to the culture which is deprived of God as to “the path of death”⁵¹. As a consequence, the culture where the place of God and religion is taken over by material desires and pleasures turns against man. Hence there comes the call to be led to Christ. Only the evangelization which restores man’s relationship with God, may lead to “the fullness of life brought by Christ (...). Thanks to the life of God, human existence on a personal, family, social and cultural levels thrives fully”⁵². The document emphasizes that contemporary Christians should do their utmost to find a path that leads to Christ so that “the heart of culture of our times” will be nurtured with a unifying and truly meaningful human life. It is not either science, politics, economy or media that are able to do it. It is only evangelization that may lead contemporary man to God on the path of Love⁵³.

⁴⁷ Cf. VS 84–88.

⁴⁸ Cf. EN 20; J. Ratzinger, *Università e nuova evangelizzazione*, in: P. Poupard (ed.), *Università, cultura evangelizzazione*, Roma 1997, p. 30.

⁴⁹ Cf. W. Kawecki, *Teologiczna przestrzeń dialogu wiary i kultury*, in: R. Bartnicki, W. Kawecki (ed.), *Chrześcijaństwo a kultura*, Warszawa 2006, p. 199.

⁵⁰ VS 111.

⁵¹ Cf. Aparecida 13; 35.

⁵² Tamże 13.

⁵³ Cf. Tamże 40–41; Jan Paweł II, *Nowa ewangelizacja, postęp człowieka, kultura chrześcijańska. Przemówienie wygłoszone na otwarciu obrad IV Konferencji ogólnej Episkopatu*

The thing that lays the foundation for human culture – as Rocco Buttiglione noted – is always a natural desire to see God (*desiderium naturale videndi Deum*). Elimination of this desire is equivalent to a suicide of culture⁵⁴. Therefore, it is crucial to undertake the mission to restore the relationship between man and God. This way man will find the right sense of life and the way of expressing themselves through culture. The Church, in order to be able to take up this responsibility, should make allowances for the context of life of contemporary man. In order to preach the truth of the Gospel well and in its light give answers to man's questions, one should find a proper language, proper methods; in other words, it is vital to look for new ways of evangelization and aim at preaching the Gospel within a given culture in such a way that it will lead to a new synthesis with this culture⁵⁵.

CONCLUSION

Searching for the answer to the question: How can evangelization help to preserve the classical (Christian) understanding of culture? one should form a few statements:

One of the responsibilities of the contemporary Church, which wants to undertake her mission fruitfully, is to read the signs of times⁵⁶. It can be noted then that the Church is to recognize a social and cultural condition of the world. It should be done not for the sake of recognition itself, but for a better preaching of the Good News – evangelization. The mission to preach the Good News was passed over to the Church by Jesus Christ. Evangelization takes up and continues this mission. Its primary goal is to renew the Church, rebuild the whole previous order according to the Gospel principles, shape new man and a new society and to build the civilization of love based upon moral values. As a consequence, it should create the culture rooted in a Christian tradition.

The Council Fathers along with the popes of the last decades have set a new mission for the Church. The summary of those calls is embraced by the teachings

Ameryki Łacińskiej, "L'Osservatore Romano" (wydanie polskie) (1992) 12, p. 24–25.

⁵⁴ Cf. R. Buttiglione, *Zadania świeckich w ewangelizacji kultury*, "W drodze" (1989) 2, p. 44.

⁵⁵ Cf. EG 129.

⁵⁶ Cf. EG 101; DOK 31–32; J. Ferreira de Farias, *Nowa ewangelizacja a kultura*, in: L. Balter (ed.), *Nowa ewangelizacja*, Poznań 1993, p. 133–143.

of the pope Francis included in *Evangelii Gaudium*, where one can find a reminder that Christian communities have to be able to react responsibly and courageously to the need of rebirth raised by the transformation of cultural and social context⁵⁷.

Drawing conclusions from those deliberations, it can be stated that since the beginning God has been guiding man towards Him and filling them up with the grace which is the means to achieve a goal and its pledge⁵⁸. Man lost in the labyrinths of the civilization does not find the way to God.

Contemporary theological reflection proposes the path which does not despise the whole modern world, but seeks to find valuables. It is a peculiar symbiosis of the faith and culture. The faith which is born as a result of evangelization and the culture which expresses fully converted man⁵⁹.

This huge social importance of evangelization towards culture stems from the Church's pastoral service embedded in a concrete historical context. The Church's mission is to act for the good of man, who lives and acts in a concrete social and cultural situation⁶⁰.

Bringing it to an end, it can be stated that evangelization is closely correlated with the concern over man. It also aims to influence the transformation and shape the world based on the Gospel values. Therefore "a concern over a transcendent nature of man and a concern over fulfilling all their concrete needs"⁶¹ should be bound.

⁵⁷ Cf. EG 41; 61–67; A. Miśkowiec, *Znaczenie kultury w dziele ewangelizacji*, "Annales Missiologici Posnanienses" 19 (2014), p. 181–201.

⁵⁸ Cf. D. Oko, *Łaska i wolność. Łaska w Biblii, nauczaniu Kościoła i teologii współczesnej*, Kraków 1997, p. 198.

⁵⁹ Cf. K. Walkowiak, *Nowość w ewangelii darem Boga i wyzwaniem dla nowej ewangelizacji. Czyli: co chrześcijaństwo może zaproponować światu?*, "Warszawskie Studia Pastoralne" 16 (2012), p. 57–87.

⁶⁰ Cf. Aparacide 367; EG 242.

⁶¹ Cf. Aparacide 176; 390.

Man creates culture and is its recipient, since they live and act in it. Man has an impact on the surrounding world by taking personal decisions and making choices. However, it is impossible to fully understand man “analyzing only their economic activity or their class membership. It is much more exhausting to understand man in the context of culture, through a language, history, attitudes to fundamental existential facts, such as birth, love, labour, death. The axis of every culture is the attitude of man towards the biggest mystery: the mystery of God”⁶².

Thus, taking into consideration the fact that the phenomenon of culture includes the acceptance of God’s Revelation,⁶³ the Church should do her utmost to bring man to faith. One who experiences the relationship with God in a proper way is filled up with God’s love. As a result, this love determines man’s cognition, the way of thinking, communicating and acting on a material and spiritual level. In other words, evangelization which brings the dignity of a child of God back, will enable man to be the creator of culture in the full classical understanding of this term.

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⁶² CA 24; Cf. C. Parzyszek, Treść pojęcia “nowa ewangelizacja” według Jana Pawła II, “Kultura – Media – Teologia” 2(2) 2010, p. 135–151.

⁶³ Cf. FR 71; Jan Paweł II, *Wiara i kultura – dokumenty, przemówienia, homilie*, in: M. Radwan (ed.), Rzym–Lublin 1988, p. 55–56.

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