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IDENTITY AND MISSION OF A CATHOLIC LAW SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

During a Lublin-hosted meeting on 21-23 June 2024, the deans of the law faculties of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin and the University of Notre Dame (USA), along with invited guests, inaugurated the international Consortium of Catholic Law Schools. The consortium is intended to serve as a modern platform for sharing, inspiration, and cooperation in the field of legal research, education and identity formation of law students, as well as the organization and social impact of Catholic law schools from around the world. Particular emphasis will be laid on cooperation, development, and expansion of influence of law departments of the Catholic universities of Central and Eastern European countries, including of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, the Péter Pázmány Catholic University (Budapest, Hungary), the Catholic Institute in Ljubljana (Slovenia), the Ukrainian Catholic University (Lviv, Ukraine), and the Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University (Tbilisi, Georgia). Notre Dame's proposal of the new platform of cooperation may become a creative stimulus for many research centres from our region to rediscover their own identity and engage in a thoughtful discussion on the contemporary ways of pursuing the mission of Catholic law schools. This article is an

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invitation to the staff of law schools and institutes operating at the Catholic universities to join a debate on the markers and implications of identity and on the constitutive elements of the mission of Catholic law schools, and, ultimately, on how this mission should be communicated and carried out in present-day particularly in Poland and Europe.

1. CATHOLIC IDENTITY

The Polish research literature rarely explores the question of identity of Catholic law schools, whether from the inside or outside perspective of the faculty. It happens that questions about what makes a Catholic law school different from secular law faculties are raised in private conversations. To design one and ideal model of a Catholic law school would be neither easy nor desirable. Catholic law schools are many and various and this diversity is natural and valuable. There is no doubt that each of them aspires to achieve the best possible results in research and teaching and wishes to do its best to prepare graduates to pursue successful legal careers. In the United States of America, which boasts a long and rich tradition of Catholic law schools, the subject of maintaining identity apparently comes to the fore. A law school or university faculty cannot simply be a high-ranking educational institution. More than that, it must be significantly different from other research and teaching centres, and its Catholic profile should not be reduced to mere symbolism or ornamentation [Nania and Dean 2019, 2].

In formal terms, the identity of a Catholic law school is governed by the regulations of state and ecclesiastical law. First of all, a Catholic law school or institute must be a school/faculty or institute within the meaning of state regulations. Second of all, it must be, in principle, an integral part of a Catholic college or university or other type of Catholic higher education establishment. The ecclesiastical legislator determines which higher education institution can be identified as and named “Catholic,” who can establish it, and what criteria it should meet. Can. 807 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law provides that the Church has the right to establish and direct Catholic universities, their goals being to contribute to a more profound human culture, the fuller development of the human person, and the fulfilment of the teaching function [Dębiński 2020, 115].

In the English-speaking domain, the Catholic identity is very often communicated by the name of the establishment, “Catholic law school.” Its closest Polish-language equivalents would be *katolicki wydział prawa* [Catholic law faculty] or *katolicki instytut prawa* [Catholic law institute]. However, none of these names have been accepted and widely used in Polish reality. Instead, we can come across “faculty of law of a Catholic university,” “faculty guided by Christian inspiration,” “faculty built on a Christian system of values.” In the USA, many law faculties or departments are called “Catholic law schools,” but rather based on their mission statement than owing to the official name. Some of such schools highlight in their mission statement that they are ordinary and one of many law institutes formally acknowledged by the American Bar Association, at the same time operating within a Catholic college or university and respecting Christian values.¹ In universities run by the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit or Ignatian tradition is emphasized [Cafardi 2001, 13]; sometimes such names as “Christian law school” or “faith-based law school” can also be seen [Miles 2017, 795].

It is worth noting that no education establishment may adopt the attribute of “Catholic” in its name without the consent of the competent Church authority [Sitarz 2018, 338]. This requirement of canonical acknowledgment by the Church authority shows that a specific college or university, along with its individual faculties or departments, participates in the teaching mission of the Church and, for that reason, it may call itself “Catholic.” If a Catholic university deviated from its identity, the same Church authority may decide to remove its “Catholic” attribute from the name [Domaszk 2015, 72-73]. It is worth knowing that within or alongside “Catholic” faculties or institutes of law there are “ecclesiastical” institutes or faculties of canon law. Higher education establishments, universities, faculties, and institutes that are “ecclesiastical” (sometimes called “pontifical” or “papal”) focus primarily on ecclesiastical sciences, including canon law. Their main goal is to prepare graduates for performing various Church services, and the awarded degrees (acknowledged by the authority of the Holy See) are primarily valid in the ecclesiastical domain, although they may also be recognized in state institutions [Dębiński 2020, 114-16].

¹ St. Thomas University. About College of Law, <https://www.stu.edu/law/about/> [accessed: 06.07.2023].

In substantive terms, as an integral part of a Catholic university, the Catholic faculty of Law, like other faculties, should: seek Christian inspiration in its work, and this inspiration should be the domain of not only individuals but of the entire university community; engage in scientific research in the light of the Catholic faith; and commit to the service of the people of God and of the human family.² Like any other Catholic institution, a Catholic law school must publicly identify itself as Catholic; must act like it is Catholic; and must maintain a formal and real connection with the hierarchical Church [Cafardi 2001, 13]. External Christian and Catholic signs and symbols are no less important, for example, the presence of the Cross in lecture rooms; highlighting the Catholic identity in advertising and marketing campaigns; the visible presence of the members of the clergy at the faculty; the staff actively involved in the Catholic mission of the faculty and following the Catholic system of values and intellectual tradition in research and teaching [Haney 2014, 4-11].

A Catholic faculty of law should therefore engage in legal research and offer legal education inspired by the faith, morality, intellectual tradition, and social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. Such schools and faculties should ensure that their staff and students be able to integrate faith and reason in learning, research, teaching, and curricula, as well as facilitating integral personal formation. The staff should seek to realize the values of truth, good, and beauty through scientific research that is marked by methodological reliability, originality, and social relevance. They should also look into (identify and develop) and share with students and the social actors the implications of the principles of Catholic social teaching in relation to various provinces of law and the practice of legal professions; they should engage in creative dialogue with and constructive criticism of other axiological concepts behind the existing legal order (religious and secular); they should also grab the opportunities and tackle challenges facing contemporary society and the Church from the perspective of legal sciences, the practice of legal professions, binding legislation and case law, as well as social and political concepts affecting public opinion.

Topics that are particularly relevant for the legal analysis and formation of Catholic law schools include: respect for human dignity, protec-

² Ioannes Paulus PP. II, *Constitutio apostolica de universitatibus catholicis Ex corde Ecclesiae* (15.08.1990), AAS 82 (1990), p. 1475-509 [hereinafter: "ECE"], no. 13.

tion of human life from conception to natural death, protection of marriage and family, protection of human rights, in particular the right to religious freedom, respect for individual freedom while highlighting duties towards other people and the common good, the principle of subsidiarity, social justice, dignity of work and protection of workers' rights, care for the poor, marginalized, excluded, and migrants, respect for pluralism and cultural diversity, protection of God's creation (the environment). What is more, the Christian system of values should not only be respected in scientific research, teaching, and impact on society, but also within the faculty administration and other areas of activity of the faculty community. Mutual relations based on respect and kindness significantly make the law school community part of the preaching mission of the Church.

An important element of manifesting the Catholic identity of law schools is the presence of the Cross or other Catholic signs or images in lecture rooms. Over the decades of a serious identity and self-identification crisis of Catholic colleges and universities [Ślipko 2000, 291], initiatives to remove crucifixes from classrooms were not uncommon. Such attempts were made in American Jesuit universities in the 1970s. The secularization of Catholic universities across the United States during this period was attributed to the post-WW2 baby boomers who were entering the college market in great numbers. Many of that youth admitted to Catholic schools were not attached to the Catholic or Christian ethos but were merely interested in finding somewhere to study. Back then, all universities, including Catholic law schools, were facing a very large number of candidates, and they took advantage of this with a view to significantly increasing their financial, personnel, and infrastructure resources, while often neglecting their Catholic identity. For example, crucifixes were removed from Gonzaga University's School of Law in 1974. This event was symptomatic of poignant changes across many Catholic law schools throughout the United States [Nelson 1981, 127]. Michael Scanlan, former president and outstanding reformer of today's Franciscan University of Steubenville (and a graduate of the prestigious Harvard Law School), reported that in the 1960s and 1970s almost all American Catholic universities were departing from their Christian roots or attempted to mask their Christian identity, striving to transform into institutions resembling secular schools. Many managers and lecturers were of the opinion that adopting a secular point

of view and removing religious standards from the university were a recipe for success [Scanlan and Manney 1993, 144].

It seems that a similar, although perhaps not so radical, approach was seen in Poland in the 1990s and in the 2000s. It was when many baby boomers born in the 1970s and 1980s were admitted to universities. Polish law faculties, either with a Catholic background or loosely associated with the Church, took advantage of the extraordinary interest in legal studies in Poland. They admitted hundreds of law students every consecutive year. They invested in infrastructure and hired more research and teaching staff, which was a challenge back then. But, above all, they stressed their capabilities to provide high-quality legal education, while paying less attention to Catholic identity and mission.

As a reminder, in communist Poland (the Polish People's Republic), much effort was invested in reducing the social life of the Church to the church building only; hence, for many decades of real socialism, the state authorities banned legal studies at Catholic universities, and even after the ban was lifted, due to ignorance and prejudices reinforced during the communist era, the idea of educating a professional lawyer at a Catholic school was barely acceptable. For many years, the quality of scholarly output and the level of law programmes were challenged just because the university was Catholic. Law students would often be confronted with malicious questions, such as whether they had to wear clerical collars (men) or habits (women) while on university premises, or whether they were taught anything else besides the Bible, ethics, and the social teaching of the Church. Even in democratic Poland, after 1989, university leavers were often refused employment just because they graduated from a Catholic school. It seems that in such a social ambience the students and staff of Catholic law faculties registered a need to prove – to themselves and others – their quality and professionalism, somehow ignoring or perhaps even disguising the Catholic identity of their Alma Mater. In the reality of the late 20th and early 21st century, that identity was considered more of a burden than a token of reliability and quality on the Polish labour market. Oddly enough, in such a traditionally Catholic country like Poland, it was more difficult for domestic law faculties to free themselves from prejudices and complexes, which was never the case in Western countries where Catholic education is often associated with above-average standards of instruction, even among non-believers.

Speaking of clerical collars and habits, they are less and less common not only in Polish streets but also in the lecture rooms and corridors of Catholic law schools. Certainly, the Catholic identity of a law school does not, and should not, be hinged upon the presence of clerics as students or staff only, although some opinions have been voiced in recent decades that the presence of lay people in the management bodies of Catholic law schools may be conducive to their loss of the Catholic identity [Cafardi 2001, 9]. In his teaching on Catholic universities, John Paul II said that through engaging in Catholic universities the laity may find a traditional way to play an important role in the Church. The pope also pointed out that in most Catholic universities the academic community was largely composed of laity who were assuming important functions and responsibilities for the direction of these institutions (ECE 25).

2. ESTABLISHMENT AND PRESENTATION OF MISSION STATEMENT

The vast majority of Catholic law schools and faculties in Western countries frame and publish their mission statements. In the United States, each law school is required to formulate a mission statement in order to seek accreditation from the American Bar Association [Scharf and Merton 2017, 289]. The schools most often publish their mission on their own websites or in special brochures with dean's message [Fitzgerald 2014, 302]. They emphasize that a clear definition and constant reference to the mission is necessary for law schools "to survive and thrive" [Scharf and Merton 2017, 292-93]. The formula of a mission statement should reflect the character and goals of the school, refer to tradition, inspire, and define aspirations for the future. It should determine how law is taught and how students are treated.³ The absence of a clearly defined mission means a lack of focus and scientific research and education becoming a collection of discrete activities without coherence [Scharf and Merton 2017, 292-93]. In US-based research, attempts are made to study the implementation of Catholic law school missions even through empirical re-

³ University of Dayton School of Law. Our Mission Statement, https://udayton.edu/law/about/mission_statement.php [accessed: 11.07.2023].

search to reveal the relationship of the mission and Catholic spirituality with students' performance and achievements [Redding 2010, 111-26]. When discussing the role of Catholic universities, John Paul II wrote that every such university was to make known its Catholic identity, either in a mission statement or in some other appropriate public document (ECE 2 § 3). A declaration of how the university is made as a whole is usually contained in its statutes.

An overview of the websites of selected law schools and literature on the subject shows what values are important for individual Catholic law education institutions and law faculties in general. The reviewed mission statements contain references to: academic excellence and the highest standards of research and education;⁴ humanistic, Jesuit, and Catholic traditions and values⁵ [Moore 2005, 464]; tradition of the Marianist law schools, i.e. top level education integrated with the formation of faith in the spirit of service, respect for family, justice, peace, common good, integrity of creation, education for adaptation and change⁶ [Grenardo 2022, 1-2]; to integrate questions of a moral and spiritual nature from academic discourse rather than exclude them [ibid., 36]; training ethical lawyers capable of defending human rights and the rights of the Church [ibid., 31]; promotion of the value of both faith and reason, which is embodied by the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, in harmony to seek the truth in any discipline and across disciplines with an emphasis on recognizing the dignity of every person and a commitment to justice and serving the common good [ibid., 55; Taylor 2008, 91; Boozang 2019, 8-9]; the values of human dignity, inviolability of human life, justice rooted in the common good, care for the impoverished, abandoned and defenceless, love of your neighbour, mercy and solidarity⁷ [Carmella 2019, 16]; an integral legacy of human knowledge and fidelity to the truth and Christian inspiration.⁸

⁴ Loyola Marymount University, <https://resources.lmu.edu/strategicplan2021-2026/strategicplan2012-2020/theplan/corevalues/> [accessed: 10.07.2023].

⁵ Gonzaga University School of Law, <https://www.gonzaga.edu/school-of-law/about/mission-vision> [accessed: 10.07.2023]; Loyola Marymount University.

⁶ St. Mary's University School of Law, <https://law.stmarytx.edu/academics/about/mission-vision/> [accessed: 10.07.2023].

⁷ Columbus School of Law. Mission Statement, <https://www.law.edu/about-us/mission/index.html> [accessed: 13.07.2023].

⁸ WPiA UKSW. O wydziale, <https://wpia.uksw.edu.pl/wydzial/o-wydziale/> [accessed: 19.07.2023].

It is emphasized that the Christian anthropology must play a central role at a Catholic law school [Breen and Strang 2020, 3-4], and the school as such is called to create, explore, and search for the truth and transform the world. It is emphasized that in our times, university, as well as schools and faculties, must have a global focus. They must reach across boundaries and borders and legal research and international collaboration are indispensable to unite citizens, leaders, scholars, and societies. A Catholic law school should be a better law school, should train conscientious and professional lawyers and leaders, precisely because it is Catholic [Garnet 2014].

3. SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

With regard to the scientific domain, one of the questions that calls for attention among the staff of Catholic law schools is the research methodology to be adopted for interpretation of law, analysis of norms, the means of reaching normative conclusions and proposals – one that would be consistent with the methods recognized in the legal scientific discipline and, at the same time, compatible with the mission objectives of a Catholic school/faculty and university. The operation of such establishments, as John Paul II put it, should be distinguished by a free search for the whole truth about nature, man and God, the real good of individuals and society, having regard to the moral, spiritual and religious dimension, and should also seek to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person (ECE 4, 7). The question of how to translate such goals into specific methods and procedures in legal research is particularly interesting and inspiring. These methods and procedures should fit within the scope of methods common to the legal scientific discipline, while enabling and leading to the implementation of John Paul II's inducement not to ignore a Christian inspiration; embark on a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith; maintain fidelity to the Christian message; search for the truth; encourage dialogue between faith and reason; integrate knowledge; be aware of the ethical dimension; and include a theological perspective (ECE 13-15).

Looking for answers, philosophical, legal, and interdisciplinary research should be a natural ally to formulate *de lege ferenda* proposals consistent with Christian anthropology and Catholic social teaching. Howev-

er, no less important is to ponder on how to pursue the mission of a Catholic law school in the area of scientific research across the distinct legal dogmas, i.e. the interpretations of applicable law along the line of fixed and universally recognized legal reasoning, strictly respecting the sources of law named in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland. To what extent can this be done, for example, by resting interpretations on the values expressed in the preamble to the constitution (truth, justice, goodness and beauty, culture rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation and universal human values), the constitutional principles of human dignity, common good, social justice, protection of marriage, family, motherhood, parenthood, health, labour, decentralization of public authority, respect for and protection of freedom, freedom of conscience and religion, national minorities, the natural environment, etc.? By resorting to the method of weighing, harmonization, and coordination of constitutional values and legal interests adopted in legal hermeneutics, the idea of dispersed constitutional control, or the derivational concept of legal interpretation, is it possible to make such an interpretation that, while compatible with the accepted methodology of legal sciences, lays axiological and normative stress where necessary, thus serving the Catholic mission of a law school? By emphasizing the classic anthropological concept and axiological preferences in legal reasoning, consistent with Christian values that were incorporated by the legislator into the Polish legal system, can we dispel doubts of those who opinion that, due to the diversity of sources of law, practicing legal science at a "Catholic law school" is an antinomy because it is either "Catholic" or "law"? It is necessary to define reliable methods that will enable the mission of a Catholic law school to be performed at the top level of legal argumentation, in a transparent manner, and by allaying suspicions of promoting a disguised, twisted, violent, fideistic or anti-intellectual attitude. Particularly interesting in this context seem the concepts of execution of the school's mission within individual subdisciplines of legal sciences, e.g. in the doctrine of penal law, where research can be guided towards the anthropological considerations of the legislator, the principles of criminal liability for an act, guilt, social justice, dignity of perpetrators and victims, protection of human life under penal law, etc.

Another important question relevant to research effort is the freedom of scientific research at a Catholic law school. How to reconcile the freedom of scientific research with the execution of the school's mission con-

cerning specific projects, especially grants, organization of conferences, publishing journals, publishing monograph works, and personnel policy? Whether and how to measure the achievements of staff and departments in relation to the mission objectives? Does this type of assessment ever take place? If so, who makes it and according to what criteria? Should additional points be awarded in the internal personnel appraisal procedure for special contribution to the mission? The issue of freedom at Catholic universities is very complex and overlaps with the broader problem of freedom of conscience based on person's dignity [Misztal 2002, 7].

In the area of teaching, an effective combination of specialized legal training and an interdisciplinary perspective, supported by philosophy and theology, which is intended to enable students to acquire an organic vision of reality (ECE 20), plays a pivotal role. At Catholic law schools around the world, missionary classes, such as the history of philosophy, ethics, logic, the Bible, and the social teaching of the Church, are a standard. The question, however, is whether such classes should not be designed for law students and cover law and legal professions instead of offering a standard programme applicable to all students of a Catholic university.

The training of future lawyers at a Catholic law schools should place special emphasis on the idea of "calling." Pope Francis emphasizes that the job of a lawyer is a vocation, mission, and service [Maron 2021, 136]. Some Catholic law schools, already at the stage of approaching candidates, communicate that law is more than just a job – it is a calling that allows the person to help others develop their own potential. The calling to be a lawyer involves devoting your life to serve others. Law school graduates should go out into the world as well-trained professionals but also filled with faith and eager to make their mark in the world.⁹ Law studies should help each student attain personal and professional satisfaction by developing the qualities of excellence, social responsibility, and ethical integrity. Students should be given the opportunity to acquire not only hard legal skills but also other habits necessary for professional growth. This can be achieved through individual reflection, personal dialogue with

⁹ AMSL Admissions Viewbook For Web, Ave Maria School of Law: Catholic, Conservative, Competitive, <https://www.avemarialaw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-AMSL-Admissions-Viewbook-For-Web-10-06-2022.pdf> [accessed: 05.07.2023], 2.

teachers and mentors, moral development, and vocational discernment.¹⁰ Pro bono projects for students, as well as meetings with lawyers who demonstrate loyalty to the Christian ethos in their legal practice, are particularly valuable in this process.

The execution of the mission of a Catholic law school must not be regarded as ideologization. Teaching law in harmony between reason and faith cannot be a gross indoctrination. Instead, it should be rested on respect for human freedom and rationality. It should contain an ethical and legal proposal rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition, perfectly designed methodology-wise, communicated boldly, openly, with truth and love. A university would also be considered ideologized if, instead of reliable reflection on complex legal and life affairs, it furnished only ready-made solutions. As Piotr Gutowski says, students receiving such education would be objectified. Ideologization does not encourage independent thinking and creativity. Quite the contrary, it kills autonomy, which is detrimental to students, society and the Church, the latter not needing passive followers but active and conscious people who will not only defend the principles of Christian doctrine translated into the rules of social life, but they will also co-create, modify, and confront them with various aspects of contemporary culture in a bold, wise, and creative manner [Gutowski 2005, 48-49].

Of key significance for the performance of the mission of Catholic law schools, while shielding against ideologization, is the development of a community based on personal relationships, which should be the case at every university. As John Paul II stressed, a Catholic university pursues its objectives through its formation of an authentic human community. This community, as the pope noted, is animated by a spirit of freedom and charity; it is characterized by mutual respect, sincere dialogue, and protection of the rights of individuals. It assists each of its members to achieve wholeness as human persons. Everyone in the community should help promote unity, and each one, according to his or her role and capacity, should contribute towards decisions which affect the community (ECE 21). Depriving a school or faculty of its community character runs a risk of transforming it into a corporation which will threaten its Catholic un-

¹⁰ University of St. Thomas. School of Law. Mission, Vision and Values, <https://law.stthomas.edu/about/get-to-know-us/mission-vision-values/index.html>[accessed: 06.07.2023].

derpinnings [Dębiński 2020, 121]. Hence, some Catholic law schools underline their willingness to create an environment of kindness and seek a balance between hard work, top performance, and joyful atmosphere. They strive to foster a positive dynamic among staff, faculty, and students;¹¹ some law schools foster a diverse environment in which each student feels supported in his or her unique journey from law student to lawyer and called to share his or her gifts to enrich the collective learning community.¹² Michael Scanlan from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, whose opinions were cited earlier, proposed that students join small integration and formation groups to receive support and create a sense of belonging, especially in the first year [Scanlan and Manney 1993, 158-69]. The openness and diversity of the school community is consistent with the Catholic doctrine (ECE 26-27, 45) [Sakowicz 2012, 320], and is often directly included in the mission statement¹³ [Collet 2019, 341].

A number of other questions can be posed, both general and theoretical, specific and practical, among them: What is the broad, yet specific, axiological framework of work at a Catholic law school? How to channel and harmonize the diversity of views and ideological and political activities of the staff and students within this framework? How does a Catholic law school enrich the Church and vice versa? How to deal with students or staff members who are active supporters of ideologies that are openly hostile to Christian anthropology and Catholic social teaching?

CONCLUSION

The meeting of representatives of Catholic law schools and faculties from various parts of the world, and primarily from Central and Eastern Europe, held at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin by such an outstanding academic player as the University of Notre Dame, became a somewhat unexpected and surprising, yet significant stimulus for its participants to revisit the issue of identity and mission of Catholic university units that research and teach legal sciences. This stimulus seems to arrive

¹¹ AMLS Admissions Viewbook For Web..., 3.

¹² University of St. Thomas. School of Law. Mission, Vision and Values.

¹³ AMLS Admissions Viewbook For Web..., 6; University of St. Thomas. School of Law. Mission, Vision and Values; Gonzaga University School of Law.

at a very opportune moment. The identity crisis at American Catholic law schools coincided with unprecedented demand for university studies driven by the post-WW2 baby boom generation. However, when the baby boomers in the USA graduated and some years later the number of candidates began to dwindle, Catholic law schools, which managed to weather the demographic crisis and after several decades proved to be capable of offering the top level of professionalism and quality, began to reconsider their roots and meaning, the Catholic identity and mission. Similarly, after the so-called “demographic tsunami” of the 2010s, Poland-based Catholic law faculties, which survived and have been able to compete with the best law faculties in Poland in terms of quality of research and teaching ever since, believe that this is a good moment for reflecting on the Catholic roots and meaning. They are inspired to rediscover their own identity and consider, formulate, and communicate their missions nested in the contemporary social setting and responding to new expectations, mindset, and related challenges.

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Identity and Mission of a Catholic Law School**Abstract**

The aim of the article is to propose to the staff of faculties and institutes of law, affiliated with Catholic universities in Poland, to start a debate on what is the determinant and implication of identity and what are the constitutive elements of the mission of Catholic law schools, as well as how to communicate and implement this mission in contemporary Polish and European social environment. The study includes references to canon law norms, but more importantly to Polish and American experiences in the provision of legal education at Catholic universities.

Keywords: Catholic law school; legal education; legal sciences; law faculty mission statement; Catholic university.

Tożsamość i misja katolickiego wydziału prawa**Abstrakt**

Celem artykułu jest zaproponowanie pracownikom związanym z wydziałami i instytutami prawa afiliowanymi do katolickich uczelni w Polsce podjęcia debaty na temat tego, co jest wyznacznikiem i implikacją tożsamości oraz jakie są konstytutywne elementy misji katolickich wydziałów prawa, a ponadto jak tę misję komunikować i realizować we współczesnych polskich i europejskich realiach społecznych. Opracowanie zawiera odniesienia do norm prawa kościelnego, ale przede wszystkim polskich i amerykańskich przedstawianych w piśmiennictwie doświadczeń prowadzenia studiów prawniczych w katolickich szkołach wyższych.

Słowa kluczowe: katolicki wydział prawa; studia prawnicze; nauki prawne; misja wydziału prawa; uniwersytet katolicki.

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