

REV. OLEG ZHARUK

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SAINTS AS A MODEL  
AND EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW  
ACCORDING TO POPE FRANCIS

**Abstract.** From the moment a person chooses certain religious principles and begins to shape their relationship with God, the development of a religious personality begins. In religious education, authorities and personal models are necessary, and they help a person better understand the need to live according to principles and values. Therefore, in order for a person to grow and mature in their religiosity, they need appropriate authorities and models.

Pope Francis in the Apostolic Exhortation entitled “*Gaudete et Exsultate*. On the call to holiness in the contemporary world” (April 9, 2018) draws special attention to holiness as a category that is not abstract, not impersonal, but true and real. Holiness is always connected with a person; it is a vocation to be an authority and a model that they become for other believers. Saints become true authorities for us and help in educating others. When writing the Exhortation, Pope Francis was aware of the importance of an example in the process of shaping the character of every person and their upbringing. The Holy Father closely links authority as a personal model with the vocation to holiness.

Francis understands authority in the catechetical sense. This model is understood as moral perfection, and it is adherence to Christ himself. Therefore, in addition to the persons of Jesus and Mary, there are other authorities and models in Catholic education. We make reference to such people who wanted to imitate Christ as perfectly as possible in their lives. These are the saints, the blessed, as well as people who, by the example of their lives, are worthy of imitation: parents who raise their children; working men and women; sick, elderly people; and consecrated persons. The transmission of appropriate and valuable authorities and models is necessary in the upbringing of not only children and youth, but also adults.

**Keywords:** authority, example, sanctity, canonization, Pope Francis

---

Rev. OLEG ZHARUK – rector and lecturer of the Institute of Theological Studies of the Immaculate Virgin Mary in Grodek and lecturer at the Higher Seminary of the Kamianets-Podilskiy diocese. He studies at the Catholic University of Lublin and has a bachelor’s degree in Church History at the Faculty of Theology; e-mail: [zharukoleg@gmail.com](mailto:zharukoleg@gmail.com); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6130-184X>.

Today we are living in a world experiencing a personality crisis. A person needs to appeal to a true authority in life, someone who, through their example, can show us how to be better and strive for perfection. Throughout history, there have always been people whom we have the right to define as authorities or role models. These are our heroes, people involved in culture or society, the people who we define as saints. Therefore, in a person's upbringing, it is important to appreciate the rank of authorities, ideals and personal models. Models are also needed because of the problem that appears in contemporary culture, the so-called *impersonal models*.

Commercialism often stands behind such models, meaning a consumer philosophy of life or even a nihilistic attitude. Therefore, it seems that the present times especially need moral authorities or personal models. We can refer to such people as saints who stand above time because the message of their lives is still pertinent. That is why the Catholic Church pays special attention in education to modeling after and imitating the saints.

On April 9, 2018, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Exhortation entitled "Gaudete et Exsultate. On the Call to Holiness in the Modern World." In this document, the Holy Father pays special attention to holiness. It is not an abstract, impersonal category, but true and real. Holiness is always connected with a person, their vocation to be an authority because they become a model for other believers. In this context, it seems worthwhile to rediscover saints as true authorities for us and for educating others.

#### THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

Modern educational sciences very rarely refer to the concept of educational authority. If authority is mentioned at all, it is rather in reference to a teacher's profession. In the Pedagogical Encyclopedia, the only entry related to authority is "teacher's authority."<sup>1</sup> We can also find the concept of "Pedagogical Authority," but this is also associated with a teacher.<sup>2</sup> The word "authority" comes from the Latin "auctoritas," meaning, among other things, moral

---

<sup>1</sup> Tadeusz Pilch, ed., *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna XXI wieku*, vol. I (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, 2003), 254-260.

<sup>2</sup> Czesław Kupisiewicz, Małgorzata Kupisiewicz, ed., *Słownik pedagogiczny* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009), 16.

authority, influence, example, model, credibility, command, advice, authorization, proxy, and full power.<sup>3</sup> Authority is always associated with a specific person, especially one who has power. Therefore, an authority is a person who, thanks to the features they possess, influences the attitudes, decisions, choices and judgments of other people; an authority is someone who is listened to by others, who can be relied on, and who is trusted and respected.<sup>4</sup>

K. Olbrycht writes that, for many educators, authority is a standard and model. An authority is first imitated, and as one grows up, it serves as an object of identification. An authority is considered the basis of the mechanism for learning behaviors, without which it is difficult to imagine pedagogical activities. Therefore, real educational authority is held by someone who really enjoys dignity and obedience in areas and matters that are related to personal development, and they work on this development. Such an authority figure should be a parent for their child, a teacher for a student, and an educator for a pupil. Potential educational authority is held by someone who is referred to in the course of education as a personal model due to their clear, credible efforts and the effects of working on their personal development.

The existence of an authority figure and the possibility of referring to their example is a chance for someone to wake up from life's numbness, encourage them to consciously build themselves, convince the discouraged, and provoke the rebellious to calmly reflect on their life. A *potential educational authority* is also a person referred to by educators as a model educator. Speaking about authority and its need – not only in the everyday life of children and young people, but also for adults – worth emphasizing are the pedagogical aspects that assign a fundamental role to the master–student relationship.

They can be encountered throughout the history of ideas about education in biographical literature that introduces significant personalities. In such a person, the student describes the life of his master, teacher, or professor, and sees in them an authority figure – as if “reflexively.” Students are demanding and still seek personal models. In religious biographical literature, such role models are the saints, the people who, on the one hand, are authorities for believers, and on the other, are specific personal models.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Alojzy Jougan, ed., *Słownik kościelny łacińsko-polski* (Sandomierz: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne i Drukarnia w Sandomierzu, 2013, fifth edition), 59.

<sup>4</sup> Feliks Grygliewicz, ed., *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. I (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1985), 1161-1167.

<sup>5</sup> Katarzyna Olbrycht, *Jan Paweł II i wychowanie, Osobowy wymiar kultury. Personalistyczna koncepcja szkoły w świetle nauczania Jana Pawła II. Materiały XIV Ogólnopolskiego Forum Szkół*

## DEFINING A ROLE MODEL

Every person in their life needs an authority figure or a role model to imitate. This is connected with man's search and longing for what is good. This good becomes a moral role model.<sup>6</sup> The concept of a role model is associated with an individual or a community of people who show us the right way to behave, leading us to a point of reference or signpost. This can help make one's life more meaningful and valuable.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of a role model in sociological, psychological, catechetical and pedagogical literature is defined differently. It is also worth noting that the concept of a role model is not only undertaken by pedagogy and psychology. Among the theological disciplines, this concept is studied in biblical theology, patrology, church history, fundamental theology, dogmatic theology, moral theology, theology of spirituality, homiletics, liturgics, catechetics, pastoral theology, and even canon law. For theology, the basic source for research concerning a role model is the Bible. In the Old and New Testaments, we find figures worthy of imitation, our role models. Yet, the main and most important authority and role model remains God, who reveals himself and his Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>

In pedagogy, the concept of a role model is related to such terms as "authority," "hero," "example," "model," "stereotype," and "personal ideal."<sup>9</sup> In pedagogical literature, a role model is a person who represents personality traits, norms of conduct and views that enjoy high social recognition. Such a person is worth imitating, because they are an authority figure.<sup>10</sup> In pedagogy, this concept is identified starting in early childhood. For a child, one's parents become their authority and role models, and through upbringing, they consolidate views and attitudes regarding desired behaviors.<sup>11</sup> The concept of a role model is often used interchangeably with such concepts as an "example,"

---

*Katolickich*" (Warszawa: Rada Szkół Katolickich, 2006), 57-60; Marek Tytko, "Relacja Mistrz-Uczeń w koncepcji Katarzyny Olbrycht," *Pedagogika Katolicka* 10 (1/2012): 43.

<sup>6</sup> Krystyna Chałas, ed., *Młodzież jakiej nie znacie – wzory osobowe godne naśladowania. Seria A* (Warszawa: Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, 2016), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Helena Słotwińska, *Wychowawcza wartość wzorów osobowych. Studium katechetyczno-liturgiczne* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2008), 460.

<sup>8</sup> Słotwińska, *Wychowawcza wartość wzorów osobowych*, 462.

<sup>9</sup> Wincenty Okoń, ed., *Słownik pedagogiczny* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, 1992), 73.

<sup>10</sup> Czesław Kupisiewicz, Małgorzata Kupisiewicz, ed., *Słownik pedagogiczny* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009), 197.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, 167.

“model” or “hero.” Sometimes the concepts of “authority,” “personal ideal” or “mature personality” are also used.

However, the concept of a role model also goes beyond these ideas. A role model, just like an authority, always exists in relation to someone. An authority figure is a person whose opinion and behavior are taken into account by others. However, the difference between a *role model* and an *authority figure* primarily concerns the dimension of *freedom*. Authority can be imposed on another person by force. On the other hand, a person who is a role model always accepts the free choice of another person. Therefore, a role model has a mature personality and draws others to follow them by her or his example.<sup>12</sup>

#### THE ROLE OF AUTHORITIES AND ROLE MODELS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A role model, just like an authority, is very valuable in a person’s upbringing. Role models play an important and irreplaceable role in shaping one’s personality at every stage of life. At the initial stage of a child’s development, namely infancy and then childhood, it is the parents who are the first educators and are to shape a child’s entire personality and instill authority as role models. The child sees behavioral patterns in the parents, which is why it wants to faithfully imitate them.<sup>13</sup>

In adolescence, one’s role model develops in the peer group. For a young person at a given stage of life, temporary authorities and role models become important, which are also important for one’s friends. However, parents and educators should pay attention to these authorities and role models, because they can pose a danger to young people in the form of social pathologies or subcultures. A person’s entry into a subcultural environment is often associated with a crisis of role models and authorities. The reason for such a situation lies in the family home, where there was a lack of love and true role models.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, in adolescence, the work of teachers and educators is important in raising true role models, but they too must become examples worthy of imitation. The role of teachers and educators in shaping young people is

---

<sup>12</sup> Słotwińska, *Wychowawcza wartość wzorów osobowych*, 460-461.

<sup>13</sup> Małgorzata Tomczyk, “Autorytet wzorów osobowych według Jana Pawła II,” *Pedagogika Katolicka* 5 (2/2009): 312.

<sup>14</sup> Stanisław Kulpaczyński, “Wartość wzorów osobowych w wychowaniu młodzieży,” *Pedagogika katolicka* 2 (2/2008): 74-75.

particularly important, one could even say that it is their mission and task.<sup>15</sup> Other sources from which children and young people can draw role models include: television, the press, literature, films, close people, and even their imaginations and fantasies.<sup>16</sup>

In the *Declaration on Christian Education*, we read:

... True education aims to shape the human person towards his or her ultimate goal, and at the same time towards the good of the community of which the person is a member and in whose duties, when he or she grows up, he or she will participate. Therefore, in accordance with the progress of psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences, it is necessary to help children and young people to harmoniously develop their innate physical, moral and intellectual qualities.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, the need for authorities and personal models arises not only in everyday life and behavior, but is also needed in the development of one's religious life. It refers to religious premises and is focused on Christian values. Religious education in the Christian form consists of the full development of the human person; deepening one's faith received in holy Baptism; and participation in the liturgy, which indicates how to lead a life as a new person and strive for holiness.<sup>18</sup>

The development of a religious personality begins from the moment a person chooses some religious principles and begins to shape their relationship with God. In religious education, authorities and personal models are absolutely necessary, which help us to better understand the need to live according to principles and values. In order for a person to grow and mature in their religiosity, they need appropriate authorities and models. Therefore, it is important that children and young people, as well as adults, get to know, observe, evaluate and imitate appropriate religious authorities and models.<sup>19</sup>

For many young people, Jesus becomes such an authority: "Christ also suffered for you and left you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21). Therefore, the proper task of Catholic education is to show who Jesus is, what his life and mission are, and to show that the Christian faith

---

<sup>15</sup> Tomczyk, "Autorytet wzorów osobowych według Jana Pawła II," 312.

<sup>16</sup> Kulpaczyński, "Wartość wzorów osobowych w wychowaniu młodzieży," 76.

<sup>17</sup> [Declaration on Christian Education] *Deklaracja o wychowaniu chrześcijańskim*, in: Vatican Council II, *Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje* (Poznań: Pallotinum, 2008, second edition), 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, 2.

<sup>19</sup> Kulpaczyński, "Wartość wzorów osobowych," 76.

means following Jesus, a living and true Person.<sup>20</sup> Following Jesus as the central person of the Christian faith is also connected with the person of his Mother Mary. Mary is presented as a woman who is a perfect model of virtues and a great authority. This is what the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium* says about this:

While the Church in the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary already attains the perfection by which she exists unstained and without blemish (cf. Eph 5:27), Christians still strive to grow in holiness by overcoming sin, and therefore they raise their eyes to Mary, who shines before the entire community of the elect as a model of virtues.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to the persons of Jesus and Mary, there are other authorities and models in Catholic education. We can refer to such people who wanted to imitate Christ as perfectly as possible in their lives. These are the saints, the blessed, and also people who, by their example of an exemplary life, are worthy of imitation.<sup>22</sup> Getting to know such people and their way of life is done by reading hagiographies or autobiographies and their writings personally written.<sup>23</sup> They are particularly necessary for religiosity to fulfill its important functions. One such function is to satisfy the need for security. Authorities and models are also needed to strengthen a person's identity and to satisfy their need for self-actualization.<sup>24</sup>

The Church, as a community of believers, sees the need for testimonies, authorities and personal models in education. In Catholic education, the influence of authorities and models is defined as presenting a specific ideal, which is to prepare the younger generations to strive after it and prepare them for their future life. A person who is being formed needs and seeks a specific example and model.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* (Poznań: Pallotinum, 2012), 520.

<sup>21</sup> [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church] *Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Kościele Lumen Gentium*, in: Vatican Council II, *Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje* (Poznań: Pallotinum, 2008, second edition), 65.

<sup>22</sup> Kulpaczyński, "Wartość wzorów osobowych," 72.

<sup>23</sup> Tomczyk, "Autorytet wzorów osobowych według Jana Pawła II," 313.

<sup>24</sup> Kulpaczyński, "Wartość wzorów osobowych," 78.

<sup>25</sup> Tomczyk, "Autorytet wzorów osobowych według Jana Pawła II," 314.

THE PRESENCE OF AUTHORITIES AND PERSONAL MODELS  
IN THE APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION „GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE”

While writing the Exhortation, Pope Francis was very aware of the importance of an example in the process of shaping every person's character and upbringing. The Holy Father closely links authority as a personal model with the vocation to holiness. That is why he strongly emphasizes the presence of models in upbringing, citing examples of numerous men and women from different nations, states, professions and ages.<sup>26</sup> Francis links authority as a personal model in the catechetical sense. This model is understood as striving for moral perfection and adherence to Christ himself. W. Walczak writes that a model is

a person or figure who, through their moral perfection, arouses a personal attraction in the person viewing them and who leads them in feeling spiritual kinship stemming from a pupil's spiritual and moral needs. Thus, a young person strives to experience higher values and wants to morally imitate and identify with this model.<sup>27</sup>

The Pope reminds us that the call to holiness is directed to us by God himself on the pages of the Old and New Testaments: “Be holy, for I am holy” (Lev 11:44; 1 Pt 1:16). A person called by God to holiness sees Him above all as a model to imitate on his life path. Therefore, the first model in a person's life is God himself, and from the moment of the Incarnation, this person is Jesus himself.<sup>28</sup> The Pope says that holiness consists in returning to the words of Jesus and accepting His way of communicating the truth. This is especially expressed in the beatitudes (cf. Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20-23) proclaimed on the Mountain. This means that a person who accepts Jesus as a model must do in his own way what Christ says, proclaim the beatitudes<sup>29</sup> and follow the path of sanctification.<sup>30</sup>

Pope Francis also lists other categories of holiness, where authorities can be seen as personal models. These are not only beatified or canonized people, but also the People of God: parents who raise their children; men and women;

---

<sup>26</sup> Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation “Gaudete et Exsultate”*. *On the Call to Holiness in Today's World* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2018), 10.

<sup>27</sup> Jan Walczak, “Wzórówkowe potrzeby psychiczne dorastającej młodzieży,” *Katecheta* 6 (1963): 253.

<sup>28</sup> Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation “Gaudete et Exsultate,”* 10.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, 63.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, 110.



those who work; sick people; and elderly nuns who simply smile.<sup>31</sup> According to Pope Francis, being a saint also means being an authority and a model for others, fulfilling one's vocation, duties and entrusted matters as best as possible. Therefore, a bishop, priest, nun, married man, employee, parents, grandfather or grandmother and a person in authority can be a saint and at the same time an authority. We can say that everyone has a vocation to holiness, and similarly, everyone, striving on this path, becomes a model for others.<sup>32</sup>

Another authority is a specific person who the Church has declared a saint. Who is a saint? The word "saint" in Latin sounds like "sanctus"; in Greek, it is "hagisos" and in Hebrew "kadosh." If we look back to Greco-Roman culture, this concept was used to describe things, but also people or gods. Over time, the concept of "holiness" was transferred from the physical sphere to the spiritual sphere. Therefore, this term began to describe a person who lived on a high moral level, without any suspicion and any accusations in one's private and public life. Such people were respected and enjoyed great authority among the people.<sup>33</sup> Christians adopted the concept of "holiness" not from the pagan world, but from the Bible. In the Old Testament, this word was used to describe not only God, but also creatures, things and people. In the New Testament, however, "holy" is used for the Spirit of God, Jesus Christ, as well as the angels, patriarchs, prophets, and people who participated in implementing God's plans for the Birth of Jesus and the People of God of the New Covenant.<sup>34</sup>

In the first centuries of Christianity, the concept of „holiness” was not used to describe individual holiness. This word was used to describe people who had passed into eternity, meaning the dead, and a little later also martyrs, the witnesses and heroes of the faith.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the saints become for us authorities and models for holiness, to encourage and motivate us. Copying their lives, the Pope warns, can distance us from the unique and specific path prepared by the Lord for us. Therefore, in imitating the saints, a person must discover their path and take from within the best that God has prepared for them. This means to try to read what God has planned for you.<sup>36</sup> Pope Francis also says that in the life of every saint, there can be mistakes and falls. Simi-

---

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, 6-7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, 14.

<sup>33</sup> Słotwińska, *Wychowawcza wartość wzorów osobowych*, 26–27.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem, 27-28.

<sup>36</sup> Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation „Gaudete et Exsultate,”* 11.

larly, in a saint's statements, not everything has to be fully faithful to the Gospel, and a saint's works may not always be authentic and perfect. Authority and being a role model are attributed to the saints when a saint's whole life, their path of sanctification, their person and entire life show and reflect the Person of Jesus Christ.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to saints, Pope Francis also mentions blessed people. The expression "blessed" in Latin sounds like "beatus" or "beatissimus." This concept was synonymous with "holiness" and often used before a saint's name. Later, the concept of "blessed" was combined with the concept of "martyr," a witness who gave his life for Christ. Pope Urban VIII (1568–1623–1644) introduced the concept of "blessed" to describe a person beatified by the Church. Therefore, the title "blessed" refers to a person whose religious cult is permitted in a specific country or province.<sup>38</sup>

Another authority and models that the Pope presents are martyrs. These are people who gave their lives by shedding their blood for Christ, becoming a model for them to follow.<sup>39</sup> Among the models of imitating Christ to the point of shedding blood, the Pope speaks not only of Catholics, but also of Orthodox Christians, Anglicans and Protestants. The presentation of role models in the Exhortation by the Pope emphasizes that they are becoming important and necessary not only for children and young people, but also for every person.<sup>40</sup>

In the discussed Exhortation, Pope Francis, one could say, lists a whole litany of the saints. Their lives are proof that they wanted to strive for holiness by looking at the ideal role model, Jesus Christ. However, here we should divide them into certain groups or categories:

1. *Biblical figures*: Abraham,<sup>41</sup> David,<sup>42</sup> the Samaritan,<sup>43</sup> St. Matthew,<sup>44</sup> St. Luke,<sup>45</sup> St. Paul, Mary,<sup>46</sup> Jesus, Mary and Joseph and Jesus with the disciples.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, 22.

<sup>38</sup> Słotwińska, *Wychowawcza wartość wzorów osobowych*, 28.

<sup>39</sup> Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation „Gaudete et Exsultate,”* 9.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, 165.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, 98.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, 80, 85 and 95.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, 81.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem, 124, 176.

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, 143.

2. *The Blessed*: Blessed Mary Gabriela Sagheddu who offered her life for the unity of Christians,<sup>48</sup> Blessed Paul VI,<sup>49</sup> Blessed Charles de Foucauld.<sup>50</sup>

3. *Holy women*. The Pope also speaks of the “feminine genius” that is manifested in the models of holy women. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit so that they would bring about new spiritual dynamics and reforms in the Church. Among them he includes St. Hildegard of Bingen, St. Bridget, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Avila,<sup>51</sup> St. Teresa of Lisieux,<sup>52</sup> St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross.<sup>53</sup>

4. *Church Fathers*: St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great.<sup>54</sup>

5. *Reformers*: St. John of the Cross,<sup>55</sup> St. Benedict,<sup>56</sup> St. Francis of Assisi,<sup>57</sup> St. Anthony of Padua,<sup>58</sup> St. Bonaventure,<sup>59</sup> St. Augustine,<sup>60</sup> St. Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>61</sup>

6. *Contemporary saints*. St. John Paul II as a promoter of bearing witness to Christ to the point of blood not only among Catholics, but also Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants,<sup>62</sup> St. Teresa of Calcutta,<sup>63</sup> St. Josephine Bakhita,<sup>64</sup> St. Faustina Kowalska,<sup>65</sup> St. José Gabriel del Rosario Brochero.<sup>66</sup>

7. *Sacrifice for others*. Showing wonderful spirituality and a life of prayer, love, reading the Gospel and dedication to others. The Pope includes St. Francis of Assisi, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Teresa of Calcutta and many others among them.<sup>67</sup>

8. *Saints as an example*: St. Francis de Sales as an example for cardinals.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Ibidem, 130.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, 155.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, 12, 149.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem, 12, 72.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem, 52. Church Fathers: St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great.

<sup>55</sup> Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation „Gaudete et Exsultate,”* 1, 117, 148.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, 100.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, 46, 127.

<sup>58</sup> Ibidem, 46.

<sup>59</sup> Ibidem, 46, 174.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, 49.

<sup>61</sup> Ibidem, 20, 69, 153.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, 9, 45, 91, 96.

<sup>63</sup> Ibidem, 107.

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, 32.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, 121.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem, 162.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, 100.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, 17.

9. *Saint writers*: St. Thomas Aquinas,<sup>69</sup> St. Bonaventure,<sup>70</sup> St. Theresa of the Child Jesus,<sup>71</sup> St. Bernard of Clairvaux,<sup>72</sup> Blessed Paul VI,<sup>73</sup> St. Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>74</sup>

10. *Saints of humor*: St. Thomas More, St. Vincent de Paul, and St. Philip Neri.<sup>75</sup>

11. *Communities of saints*. The Church has canonized entire groups of people who heroically lived the Gospel and those who offered their lives to God together as members of a group. Let us think, for example, of the seven holy founders of the Order of the Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the seven blessed nuns of the first monastery of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Madrid, of St. Paul Miki and his fellow martyrs in Japan, of St. Andrew Taegon and his fellow martyrs in Korea, of St. Roch Gonzalez and his brother martyrs in South America. Let us also remember the recent witness of the blessed Trappist monks of Tibhirine (Algeria), who together prepared themselves for martyrdom.<sup>76</sup>

12. *Saints from the same family*: St. Benedict and St. Scholastica,<sup>77</sup> St. Augustine and St. Monica<sup>78</sup>

Therefore, the pedagogy of holiness is not only pointing to an ideal, but also an encouragement to a personal faith encounter with those who the Church has called saints. Their advocacy is a valuable help for many Christians involved in personal development.

## CONCLUSION

Presenting appropriate and valuable authorities and role models is necessary in the education of not only children and young people, but also adults.

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, 106, 54, 59, 122.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, 39, 46.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, 54, 145.

<sup>72</sup> Ibidem, 151.

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem, 161.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem, 169.

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem, 126.

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, 141.

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, 142.

<sup>78</sup> Ibidem.

Who you follow shows who you become. That is why it seems that the authority of the saints becomes an encouragement for today's Christians: "The power of the witness of the saints consists in experiencing the blessings and rules by which we will be judged during the Last Judgement." These are short, simple words, but practical and important for everyone, because Christianity should above all else be lived. If it is also the subject of reflection, then it has value only if it helps us live the Gospel in our daily lives. I strongly encourage you to read the wonderful biblical texts anew often, to memorize them, to pray with them, and to try to put them into practice. They will be good for us and make us truly happy.<sup>79</sup>

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Chałas, Krystyna, ed. *Młdzież jakiej nie znacie – wzory osobowe godne naśladowania. Seria A.* Warsaw: Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji, 2016.
- Francis. *Adhortacja Apostolska „Gaudete et Exsultate.” O powołaniu do świętości w świecie współczesnym.* Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2018.
- Grygliewicz, Feliks, ed. *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, vol. I. Lublin: Towarzystwo KUL, 1985.
- Jougan, Alojzy, ed. *Słownik kościelny łacińsko-polski*, Sandomierz: Wydawnictwo Diecezjalne I Drukarnia w Sandomierzu, 2013, fifth edition.
- Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, second edition. Poznań: Pallotinum, 2012.
- Kulpaczyński, Stanisław. "Wartość wzorów osobowych w wychowaniu młodzieży". *Pedagogika katolicka* 2, no. 2 (2008): 71–86.
- Kupisiewicz, Czesław, and Małgorzata Kupisiewicz, ed. *Słownik pedagogiczny*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009.
- Okoń, Wincenty, ed. *Słownik pedagogiczny*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, 1992.
- Olbrycht, Katarzyna. *Jan Paweł II i wychowanie, Osobowy wymiar kultury. Personalistyczna koncepcja szkoły w świetle nauczania Jana Pawła II. Materiały XIV Ogólnopolskiego Forum Szkół Katolickich*. Warsaw: Rada Szkół Katolickich, 2006.
- Pilch, Tadeusz, ed. *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna XXI wieku*, vol. I. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, 2003.
- Słotwińska, Helena. *Wychowawcza wartość wzorów osobowych. Studium katechetyczno-liturgiczne*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2008.
- Deklaracja o wychowaniu chrześcijańskim*. In: Vatican Council II. *Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje*, 488–509. Poznań: Pallotinum, 2008, second edition.
- Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Kościele Lumen Gentium*. In: Vatican Council II. *Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje*, 144–263. Poznań: Pallotinum, 2008, second edition.

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibidem, 109.

- Tomczyk, Małgorzata. "Autorytet wzorów osobowych według Jana Pawła II". *Pedagogika Katolicka* 5, no. 2 (2009): 310–315.
- Tytko, Marek. "Relacja Mistrz-Uczeń w koncepcji Katarzyny Olbrycht." *Pedagogika Katolicka* 10, no. 1 (2012): 39–48.
- Walczak, Jan. "Wzór i potrzeby psychiczne dorastającej młodzieży." *Katecheta* 6 (1963): 253–258.

#### AUTORYTET OSÓB ŚWIĘTYCH JAKO WZÓR I PRZYKŁAD DO NAŚLADOWANIA WEDŁUG PAPIEŻA FRANCISZKA

##### Summary

Od momentu, kiedy człowiek wybiera pewne zasady religijne i rozpoczyna kształtować swoje relacje z Bogiem, rozpoczyna się rozwój osobowości religijnej. W wychowaniu religijnym konieczne potrzebne są autorytety i wzorce osobowe, które pomagają lepiej zrozumieć potrzebę życia według zasad i wartości. Dlatego, aby człowiek wzrastał i dojrzewał w swojej religijności, potrzebuje on odpowiednich autorytetów i wzorów. Papież Franciszek w adhortacji apostołskiej pod tytułem „Gaudete et Exsultate. O powołaniu do świętości w świecie współczesnym” (9 kwietnia 2018 roku) zwraca szczególną uwagę na świętość jako kategorię nie abstrakcyjną, nie bezosobową, ale prawdziwą i realną. Świętość jest zawsze związana z osobą, jest powołaniem do bycia autorytetem oraz wzorem, jakim ona staje się dla innych wierzących. Osoby święte stają się prawdziwymi autorytetami dla nas oraz pomagają w wychowaniu innych osób. Papież Franciszek, pisząc adhortację, zdawał sobie sprawę ze znaczenia przykładu w procesie kształtowania charakteru każdego człowieka oraz jego wychowania. Ojciec święty autorytet jako wzór osobowy ściśle wiąże z powołaniem do świętości.

Autorytet rozumie w sensie katechetycznym. Ten wzór jest rozumiany jako doskonałość pod względem moralnym, jest przyłgnięciem do samego Chrystusa. Dlatego, oprócz osoby Jezusa i Maryi, w wychowaniu katolickim występują inne autorytety i wzory. Do takich odnosimy osoby, które w swoim życiu chciały jak najdoskonalej naśladować Chrystusa. Są nimi święci, błogosławieni, a także osoby, które przykładem własnego życia są godne naśladowania: rodzice, którzy wychowują własne dzieci; pracujący mężczyźni i kobiety; osoby chore, starsze; konsekrowane. Przekaz odpowiednich i wartościowych autorytetów i wzorców jest konieczny w wychowaniu nie tylko dzieci i młodzieży, ale także człowieka dorosłego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** autorytet; przykład; świętość; kanonizacja; papież Franciszek