

ANNA ZELLMMA

## ACCOMPANYING THE CATECHISED IN THEIR HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

**A b s t r a c t.** The analyses presented in this paper focus on the accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development. Thus described, the educational activity of a catechist is consistent with the principle of faithfulness to God and to man. It always concerns a specific catechised person with specific developmental predispositions who lives in a specific community and is influenced by modern culture. By referring to the Catechetical directory and the literature on the subject, it was pointed out that the accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development is the fundamental pedagogic and catechetical category. Various aspects of accompaniment for the catechised in the contemporary world are presented. Vocation, passion as well as the testimony of life and faith were particularly emphasised. The importance of the encounter, presence, being near and being with the pupil, and dialogue were stressed. Active listening, trust, care, devotion, kindness, empathy, and credibility were also regarded as important. The described traits and predispositions of a catechist play an important role in establishing authentic relations with pupils. They are manifestations of the communicative and pedagogic competence of the catechist and his ability to accomplish his goals, as well as of his awareness of the vocation and the educational mission among the catechised.

**Keywords:** accompaniment; catechist; holistic development; pupil; education; pedagogy; catechetics; religion teaching; catechesis.

The issue of accompaniment for the catechised in their self-development is part of education-related analyses. It can be presented from the various

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Prof. Dr Hab. ANNA ZELLMMA—University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Faculty of Theology; address for correspondence: ul. Kard. Hozjusza 15, 11-041 Olsztyn; e-mail: [anna.zellma@uwm.edu.pl](mailto:anna.zellma@uwm.edu.pl); ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3612-3454>.

points of view of catechists, pupils, parents and priests and includes detailed issues associated with the commitment of the catechised and with supporting them in their holistic development. Education of the catechised, which includes their holistic development, has been dealt with extensively in the literature on the subject. However, changes that have been taking place in society cast a new light on the catechists previous educational activity. It requires reflecting upon and verifying the solutions applied in everyday practice. Earlier considerations and solutions can adopt new meanings in the changing social reality and provide inspiration for creative activities in education. Although education is covered extensively in the literature on the subject, accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development is dealt with sporadically, both in a theoretical and practical approach.

The analyses presented in this study aim to seek answers to the following questions: what does accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development involve? What solutions—regarding the essence, methodology and form—are included in the activities of these catechists? These questions are linked directly to the educational objective, i.e. the holistic development of the catechised. Seeking answers requires a more detailed study based on an analysis of the catechetical documents of the Church and the literature on the subject. The first step involves defining the key terms: accompaniment and holistic development. This is because reliable analyses cannot be started without precisely defined terminology. Presentation of the adopted understanding of the key terms protects one from ambiguity and lack of precision and, therefore, from methodological errors. This will be followed by a synthetic description of the socio-cultural context in Poland, which presents challenges concerning the accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development. This direction of the analyses will help to show the ways in which they will be performed.

This issue was elaborated on by analysing Church documents and the literature on the subject and by the method of synthesis and comparison. The outcome of the analyses will be presented in a way allowing the research questions to be answered.

## 1. TERMINOLOGY

Modern education concepts proposed by pedagogues and catechists include diverse approaches and interpretations of the terms accompaniment and hol-

istic development.<sup>1</sup> Hence, for the purpose of this study, more precise definitions need to be provided. The term accompaniment is commonly regarded as equivalent to being with someone, wandering together, being together, staying with someone, assisting someone, sharing their joys and trials, and overcoming obstacles together.<sup>2</sup> It occupies a specific place in the concept of education inspired by the assumptions of the non-directive current of thinking about it.<sup>3</sup> The non-directive educational trend does not provide for a ready path to be taken by the tutor or the pupil.<sup>4</sup> It only shows the direction which should be taken by the tutors actions and a certain type of tutor-pupil relations, in which the tutor is a guide, a liaison with the world, which is next to the pupil, stimulates his activities, supports him on his way to personal development, walks together with him, respects his dignity, his choices and is always ready to help.<sup>5</sup> The role of the tutor—a companion on the road who should be nearby, near enough to the pupil to support him, but far enough to not disturb him—is particularly emphasised in accompaniment.<sup>6</sup> This is generally about a kind of interaction between the tutor and the pupil, which assumes the pupils activity, cooperation with the tutor, experiencing, developing his own capabilities, satisfying his needs and curiosity and becoming himself.<sup>7</sup> The pupil is treated as an independent person—one who participates in building interpersonal relations, an active entity who requires reliable cognition, who explores and searches, asks questions, discovers the world of values and is on the path of permanent development.<sup>8</sup> The tasks of a tutor include creating proper conditions in which the pupil can develop holistically, satisfy his curiosity and develop his passions, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Ewa Dybowska, "Towarzystwo wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjaskiej," *Teologia i Moralność* 2 (2014): 193; Marek Dziewiecki, "Wychowawca w dobie ponowoczesności," *Horyzonty Wychowania* 9 (2010): 145–164; Anna Zellma, "Pedagogiczne aspekty adhortacji papieża Franciszka *Amoris laetitia*," *Roczniki Teologiczno-Historyczne Śląska Opolskiego* 37 (2017): 235–248.

<sup>2</sup> *Słownik języka polskiego PWN*, accessed January 4, 2022, <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/towarzystwo.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Bogusław Śliwerski, *Współczesne teorie i nurty wychowania* (Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, 1998), 115–134.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 120–122.

<sup>6</sup> Lucyna Telka, *Towarzystwo w rozwoju*, accessed January 5, 2022, [http://encyklopediadzieceinstwa.pl/index.php/Towarzystwo\\_w\\_rozwoju](http://encyklopediadzieceinstwa.pl/index.php/Towarzystwo_w_rozwoju).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

discover difficulties and methods of overcoming them.<sup>9</sup> The tutor is obliged to respect the pupils freedom, to be a witness and to set an example, to provide support to the pupil in perceiving his own dignity and subjectivity and to inspire him to discover the world through the promotion of values and the sense of human life.<sup>10</sup> This, in turn, requires good knowledge of the pupil, acknowledging by the tutor that the pupil is entitled to his own choices, personal and responsible decisions, his own activity and his own way of searching, exploration and love of the truth.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, accompaniment for the pupil focuses on the processes of education, self-education and formation. It is based on true relations between the tutor and the pupil, in which the tutor perceives the pupils expectations, opportunities and choices and he respects them.<sup>12</sup> Accompaniment requires from the tutor respect for the pupils autonomy, caring, attention, love, devotion, sacrifice, listening to the other persons needs, authenticity, selflessness, dedication, sensitivity, ability to work with and for others, commitment, creativity, time, dialogue, reflection, ability to listen and to build a bond with the pupil.<sup>13</sup> The concept of accompaniment assumes that the tutor can learn from the pupil, can listen to him and trust him, respect his choices and decisions, and learn to give the pupil time for his activity, taking into account his capabilities, expectations, needs and interests.<sup>14</sup> This is because the pupil has a right to express himself, and he needs sufficient space for this type of activity while respecting the norms and rules of social life. Therefore, the tutor is obliged to read the signals sent by the pupil and respond adequately, teaching the pupil how to overcome difficulties, solve problems and cope with stress and frustration.<sup>15</sup>

This approach of accompaniment embraces the holistic development of the pupil, which is understood to denote—after Christian pedagogues—changes in [the pupils] life in the biological, mental and spiritual sphere, according to the regularities typical of each of the spheres and involving a transition from a worse to a better state, leading to maturity, expressed as a positive attitude to

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<sup>9</sup> Dybowska, “Towarzyszenie wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjańskiej,” 81–93.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 86–89.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.; cf. Zbigniew Marek, and Anna Walulik, “Towarzyszenie wychowawcze w formacji człowieka,” *Horyzonty Wychowania* 19 (2020): 105–116.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.; Dybowska, “Towarzyszenie wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjańskiej,” 81–93.

<sup>14</sup> Dybowska, “Towarzyszenie wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjańskiej,” 81–93; Marek Walulik, “Towarzyszenie wychowawcze w formacji człowieka,” 105–116.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

God, people and oneself ultimately, in the desire for a life with God in eternity.<sup>16</sup> Thus defined, holistic development is directed toward striving for the fullness (perfection) in all the spheres of human life.<sup>17</sup> It is accomplished by means of internal (human mind and will, his capabilities, talents, physical and mental predispositions) and external measures (family, school, social environment, Divine grace).<sup>18</sup> Of special importance is the persons own activity, especially his personal commitment, which clearly corresponds to the concept of accompaniment. In this context, Christian pedagogues rightly point out that the holistic development in man a chance and imperfect being is not possible.<sup>19</sup> It is not possible for anyone to have accomplished more than average in each field of life and culture.<sup>20</sup> However, one should point out that development does not have to mean that one strives for maximum accomplishments but a transition from a less to a more perfect state. So Christian pedagogues rightly point out that the pupil needs to be accompanied in as holistic development as possible, for example, by being with him, by wandering together, by dialogue, searching for and discovering values, active listening, developing his interest, stimulating his creativity and overcoming barriers.<sup>21</sup> This is about supporting the pupil in a transition from an imperfect to a more perfect state and in achieving maturity, expressed in a positive attitude towards God, people and oneself ultimately in the desire to live with God in eternity.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Agnieszka Salamucha, "Pojęcie rozwoju w pedagogice," *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych* 2 (2000–2001): 165 (159–166); cf. Anna Zellma, "Rola szkolnego nauczania religii w rozwoju osobowym katechizowanej młodzieży," *Etckie Studia Teologiczne* 4 (2003): 265–280.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. e.g. in: Dariusz Kurzydło, *Pedagogia przejścia. Wprowadzenie do metodologii katechetyki skoncentrowanej na dorastaniu* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, 2020); Marian Nowak, *Podstawy pedagogiki otwartej. Ujęcie dynamiczne w inspiracji chrześcijańskiej* (Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1999); Sobór Watykański II, "Deklaracja o wychowaniu chrześcijańskim 'Gravissimum educationis'" (28.10.1965 r.), in Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucje, dekrety, deklaracje* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 2002), no. 1; Anna Zellma, and Edward Wiszowaty, *O Policję bliższą ludziom. Inspiracje pedagogiczne w służbie funkcjonariuszy* (Szczytno: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Policji w Szczytynie, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Salamucha, "Pojęcie rozwoju w pedagogice," 165.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.; Zellma, "Rola szkolnego nauczania religii w rozwoju osobowym katechizowanej młodzieży," 265–280.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

## 2. SUBJECTIVE AND SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Holistic development of the catechised is the outcome of the cooperation of various factors. It is without a doubt that it is based on qualitative and quantitative development changes, owing to which pupils transition from early-aged schoolchildren to middle-aged schoolchildren, and they subsequently enter the age of (early and middle) adolescence.<sup>23</sup> This is—among other things—about the pupils transition to a higher level of moral reasoning and more mature ways of expressing their own emotions and feelings. Quantitative changes determine growing and growth.<sup>24</sup> They are expressed in enriching the forms in which the catechised function. Each of the categories determines not only the direction but also the quality of the progressive changes appearing in the pupils personal development. It makes the catechised activity or ability affect the quality of his life. They sometimes contribute to dramatic changes in an individual or in the social functioning of the pupil, especially during puberty. For example, the emergence of a new developmental capability, personal reflection, discovering and experiencing values, seeking his identity, rebellion, and negation of authorities makes the pupil change his attitude towards his own body, life, health, passing away and death. He often feels rejected and lonely, deprived of strong bonds with others (parents, peers). He also often experiences a lack of contact with himself and a lack of understanding and acceptance from adults (parents, tutors).<sup>25</sup> All of this can lead to a feeling of abandonment, suffering and emptiness.

The holistic development of the catechised is also affected by inheriting certain anatomical and physiological traits and features, such as the functioning of the central nervous system, the structure and function of analysers, genome and temperament.<sup>26</sup> They are the material base for abilities and

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<sup>23</sup> Stanisław Kulpaczyński, *Psychologia rozwojowo-wychowawcza nie tylko dla katechetów* (Lublin: POLIHYMNIA, 2009), 13–16, 33–36, 149–150.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.; cf.: Maria Tyszkowa, “Pojęcie rozwoju i zmiany rozwojowej,” in *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Zagadnienia ogólne*, eds. Maria Przetacznik-Gierowska, Maria Tyszkowa, vol. 1 (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2000), 47–49.

<sup>25</sup> Zellma, “Rola szkolnego nauczania religii w rozwoju osobowym katechizowanej młodzieży,” 265–280.

<sup>26</sup> Kulpaczyński, *Psychologia rozwojowo-wychowawcza nie tylko dla katechetów*, 13–16, 33–36, 149–150; Maria Przetacznik-Gierowska, “Zasady i prawidłowości psychicznego rozwoju człowieka,” in *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Zagadnienia ogólne*, eds. Maria Przetacznik-Gierowska, Maria Tyszkowa, vol. 1, 57–101.

other individual features, although they are not decisive factors. They can be the basis for various abilities affected by how pupils function and by the socio-cultural conditions in which the catechised live, including the teaching of religion at schools. Neither the inherited nor the innate features are sole and final developmental factors. This is because the same features can give rise to different abilities, depending on what actions a person takes and in what kind of conditions he will be brought up and educated.<sup>27</sup>

A very important role in the accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development is played both by the educational environment and by the society and contemporary culture. The specified context is socio-cultural, but also religious. It includes everything that the catechised have contact with, within which they live and what affects them, i.e. their family, school, peer group and digital media. It is beyond doubt that all these circles suffer from a crisis of values, pluralism of ideas, moral permissiveness and a progressive process of contesting all norms.<sup>28</sup> It affects greatly the process of education in the family and at school, as well as the religious life and the pastoral work in parishes. One can see a distinct crisis of education and of tutors as well as the crisis of the Church authority, which affects the institution, the hierarchy (bishops, priests), as well as the laymen and priests—teachers of religion. The need for unchanging, permanent authorities is disappearing. The apotheosis of self-love is being promoted.<sup>29</sup> Well-established authorities are often rejected to be replaced by various pseudo-authorities under the influence of the new media (including social media). This also applies to fundamental aspects of human existence: the sense and purpose of life, the concept of happiness, interpersonal relationships, the model of society and family life.<sup>30</sup> Scepticism about objective truths, doubts regarding the true knowledge of any subject, as well as consumerism and materialism are common.<sup>31</sup> The categories of good and evil become blurred. Man becomes the highest authority to himself. The objective moral standards are often rejected as they prove too narrow and uncomfortable and limit man in

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Wojsław Czupryński, “Wychowanie w rodzinie w zderzeniu z ideologią gender,” *Studia Ełckie* 4 (2019): 455.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Wiszowaty, “Przepowiadanie w ponowoczesności,” *Studia Pastoralne* 9 (2013): 182–185, 178–190.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.; Czupryński, “Wychowanie w rodzinie w zderzeniu z ideologią gender,” 455.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

his striving to achieve what he wants. They are replaced with pragmatic values. All of this results in axiological emptiness.<sup>32</sup>

Increasing numbers of people, not only young ones, show no interest in religious matters and negate the sense of the institutional Church.<sup>33</sup> Religion is regarded as a product to choose from and be used in creating one's own individualised and eclectic religiousness. People's trust in the Catholic Church in Poland is decreasing rapidly.<sup>34</sup> In consequence, it is losing its faithful, especially young people, who do not see faith as a necessary choice, but only a possible one.<sup>35</sup> The young pursue what is pleasant, easy to achieve and what gives them autonomy. They give up the Decalogue and clearly defined social rules, especially caring about the truth, honesty and the common good, and replace them with rivalry, possession of material goods, individualism, egoism and ruthlessness.<sup>36</sup> They push religious life to the private sphere and make it a marginal issue.<sup>37</sup> The number of people attending the Sunday Mass and the number of those who attend religion lessons at schools is decreasing.<sup>38</sup>

The contemporary digital culture, which amplifies the globalisation of life models and factors affecting economic and political systems, very quickly transmits diverse information whose value constantly changes and becomes uniform and shallow.<sup>39</sup> Processes of mass communication precipitate the creation of a global mentality.<sup>40</sup> They facilitate the transmission of informa-

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<sup>32</sup> Anna Zellma, "Formacja sumienia uczestników lekcji religii w czasach 'płynnej nowoczesności,'" *Forum Teologiczne* 15 (2014): 110–114, 109–120.

<sup>33</sup> Joanna Podgórska, "Najmłodsza Polska jest już w jednej trzeciej niewierząca," accessed February 10, 2022, <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/spoleczenstwo/2144868,1,najmlodsza-polska-jest-juz-w-jednej-trzeciej-niewierzaca.read>.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. in: Wojciech Sadłoń, Luiza Organek, and Karol Kamiński, *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia. Dane za rok 2020* (Warszawa: Instytut Statystyki Kościoła Katolickiego SAC im. Witolda Zdaniewicza, 2021).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Wojśław Czupryński, *Małżeństwo i rodzina w świadomości policjantów na przykładzie studentów Wyższej Szkoły Policji w Szczytnie. Studium teologicznopastoralne* (Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego w Olsztynie, 2021), 75–98, 90–108.

<sup>37</sup> Wojśław Czupryński, "Przygotowanie do małżeństwa w obliczu współczesnych wyzwań kulturowych," *Studia Warmińskie* 12 (2015): 215–225.

<sup>38</sup> Sadłoń, Organek, and Kamiński, *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia. Dane za rok 2020*, 16–22, 31–39.

<sup>39</sup> Papieska Rada ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji, *Dyrektorium o katechizacji* (Kielce: Jedność, 2020), no. 359–369 (from now on: DK).

<sup>40</sup> DK 323.



tion (often false, permeated with hatred and prejudice). At the same time, they broaden and enrich human cognitive abilities, thereby helping people to make decisions.<sup>41</sup> Access to the Internet, including social media, favours combining various concepts (and styles) of teaching and education, instability of the systems of values and discrepancies in educational circles. Digital media are often the only means of socialising children and adolescents.<sup>42</sup> They often lead to a feeling of loneliness, manipulation, addiction, aggression and hatred. They can also create a false image of reality.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, digital culture has a very strong impact on the concept of time and space, on perceiving oneself, others and the world, on the ways of communication, learning, acquiring information, establishing relations.<sup>44</sup> It changes the language, shapes mentality and generates a new way of thinking, multitasking, interactivity and hypertextuality. It also establishes a new hierarchy of values in all parts of the world<sup>45</sup> and favours developing only negative opinions and giving up looking for what is good and real, reasoning and seeking compromise.<sup>46</sup>

The Covid-19 pandemic, which broke out over two years ago, affected not only the intellectual development and lower effectiveness of online teaching but also the new quality of education (including religious education) by means of the new telecommunication technologies.<sup>47</sup> It has changed young peoples motivation to be at school and study together. It has considerably diversified pupils involvement in the teaching process learning and education and, in consequence, their knowledge, skills, social competence and attitudes.<sup>48</sup> Long-term work with a computer during the pandemic had an adverse effect on pupils (particularly mental) health. Online teaching, which brought about longer use of telecommunication technologies (including a laptop or a desktop computer) during the day, has contributed to emerging

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 369.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 362.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 359.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 359, 363.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 364.

<sup>47</sup> Cf.: Roman Buchta, Wojciech Cichosz, and Anna Zellma, "Religious Education in Poland during the COVID-19 Pandemic from the Perspective of Religion Teachers of the Silesian Voivodeship," *Religions* 12 (2021): 1–13.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. e.g.: Jacek Pyżalski, "Zdrowie psychiczne i dobrostan młodych ludzi w czasie pandemii COVID-19 — przegląd najistotniejszych problemów," *Dziecko Krzywdzone. Teoria, badania, praktyka* 2 (2021): 92–115.

eyesight defects, headaches and faulty postures.<sup>49</sup> It has also intensified pupils presence on social media and contributed to addiction to the Internet.<sup>50</sup> It also affected pupils mental health, especially their well-being and mood.<sup>51</sup> By restricting direct inter-peer relations to phone and social media, the Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to alienation and disrupted the process of establishing the right interpersonal and inter-peer relations and of maintaining contacts in the form of meetings or spending time together.<sup>52</sup> It has had a negative impact on the relation quality, but also on their durability.<sup>53</sup> It has often caused problems in functioning in a peer group, which will have an impact on the life of pupils unprepared to live in a social group, on their preparedness for adulthood to life in society.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic has tested pupils religious motivations. Some young people, mainly those without solid roots in communities, in formations, in a living relationship with Christ, for whom the Church is just an institution, have given up on religion lessons and religious practices.<sup>55</sup> However, it does not mean that mans religious and spiritual needs have vanished, but they are satisfied by other choices.

The contemporary socio-cultural context of accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development also includes the social, religious and political situation in Poland in connection with the war in Ukraine. There are many children and adolescents among the refugees who escaped the war with their mothers or guardians. This situation presents new challenges to education in Poland, which are taken up and coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science.<sup>56</sup> These challenges concern, for example, the inclusion of refugees from Ukraine in education in Polish schools. They need both psy-

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Sylwia Jaskulska, Barbara Jankowiak, Mateusz Marciniak and Michał Klichowski, "Edukacja zdalna w czasie pandemii COVID-19 w doświadczeniach uczniów i uczennic: ocena relacji szkolnych i jej uwarunkowania," *Wychowanie w Rodzinie* 2 (2021): 133–146.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Buchta, Cichosz, and Zellma, "Religious Education in Poland during the COVID-19 Pandemic from the Perspective of Religion Teachers of the Silesian Voivodeship," 1–13.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. about the educational and psycho-pedagogical activities undertaken in Poland for refugees from Ukraine, in: Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki, "Wsparcie na rzecz Ukrainy — najważniejsze działania MEIN," accessed March 15, 2022, <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja-i-nauka/wsparcie-na-rzecz-ukrainy--najwazniejsze-dzialania-mein>.

chological-pedagogic and spiritual support. The educational activities addressed to Polish pupils should also be regarded as important. Initiatives of an informative and psychological nature (e.g. talking to pupils about the war, about emotions aroused by this situation) should be accompanied by an appreciation of the voluntary workers at schools who focus on helping Ukraine and refugees from that country. It must be borne in mind in this context that the influx of refugees from Ukraine to Poland is going to increase religious and ethnic pluralism. This situation breeds new challenges with respect to supporting the catechised in stimulating their attitude of positive tolerance and organising religion teaching at schools and pastoral work in parishes. It requires openness, dialogue and cooperation for evangelisation and catechisation of the refugees.

### 3. WAYS OF ACCOMPLISHING THE GOAL

Given the context of the analyses, it is of key importance to provide an answer to the question about a catechists commitment to accompanying the catechised in their holistic development. This is mainly a question about the ways of accomplishing this task. According to the catechetical directory, a catechist is *a companion and a tutor of those entrusted to him by the Church*.<sup>57</sup> He wanders next to the pupil, observes each pupil carefully—his developmental opportunities, he explores his personality, talents and weaknesses, establishes contact, and develops a personal relationship with the pupil.<sup>58</sup> He discovers who the catechised pupil is. He shows empathy, sensitivity and understanding, individual care and respect for the pupils dignity and individuality.<sup>59</sup> He focuses on the pupils needs—his individual predispositions, talents, his life story, strengths and limitations.<sup>60</sup> He listens to the pupils needs and desires, but he also makes demands suited to the pupils capabilities. He respects them consistently.<sup>61</sup> He helps the pupils to grow in the human and Christian dimensions. He not only teaches them how to live,

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<sup>57</sup> DK 113.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 113, 135.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. 135–142.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.; cf. e.g. Elżbieta Osewska, “Nauczanie religii jako towarzyszenie: od powierzchowności do duchowości, do osobistego poznania Boga wcielonego,” *Studia Pastoralne* 13 (2017): 46–61.

<sup>61</sup> Dybowska, “Towarzyszenie wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjańskiej,” 82–91.

but he also shows them (with complete effort) what is good, what helps them to find the truth and the sense of life and what boosts their own creativity and fruitful self-development.<sup>62</sup> In the accompaniment process, the catechist transmits universal values, supports the pupils in discovering and internalisation and encourages them to establish a personal relationship with God.<sup>63</sup> He also helps them to discover gradually the mechanisms that are destructive to personal development. Moreover, he encourages his pupils to be persistent and faithful in the hardship of self-development and in maturation in faith.<sup>64</sup> He creates a relationship based on trust. Moreover, he is an expert in the *art of accompaniment*,<sup>65</sup> he has tutorial capabilities, he can listen to and explore the dynamics of the human maturation. He becomes the companion in a journey patiently and gradually, he submits to the action of the Spirit, helping his brothers to mature in Christian life and wander in it towards God. Being an expert in human nature, the catechist knows human joys and hopes, sadness and anxieties (cf. GS 1), and he can refer them to Jesus Gospel.<sup>66</sup> He regards it as important to build good relations in a catechetical group. This group plays an important role in holistic development. It satisfies the basic social needs, including those of emotional contact, belonging, the experience of a community and constructive dialogue. It can also facilitate the opening of the pupils to God's grace and interiorisation of values, enabling them to act and serve other people, especially those in need and the poorest ones.<sup>67</sup>

Pope Francis talks about the apostleship of the ear, which expresses the attitude of the patient and merciful listening to another person, listening to his needs and expectations and offering one's time to him.<sup>68</sup> The catechised mainly look for someone who is ready to listen to them and sacrifice their time to learn about their dramas and dilemmas.<sup>69</sup> The process of accompaniment for pupils in their holistic development requires a catechist to devote time to the young

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.; cf. DK 112–113, 139.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> DK 116.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 113; cf. Franciszek, *Adhortacja apostolska "Evangelii gaudium" o głoszeniu Ewangelii w dzisiejszym wiecie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2013), 169–173 (from now on: EG).

<sup>66</sup> DK 113.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 218–220.

<sup>68</sup> EG 105; cf.: Marek Fijałkowski, "Papieża Franciszka inspiracje dla duszpasterstwa młodzieży," *Polonia Sacra* 4 (2016): 89–90, 87–99.

<sup>69</sup> Fijałkowski, "Papieża Franciszka inspiracje dla duszpasterstwa młodzieży," 89.

man, to be with him, to listen and talk to him patiently.<sup>70</sup> It should be followed as part of individual contacts, in the atmosphere of dialogue and trust, and of authentic testimony.<sup>71</sup> This, in turn, requires time, patient presence and wise support in an effort of development. Listening, devoting ones time, help to identify what is right for the pupil, what God wants for him, is a manifestation of respect to the man.<sup>72</sup> It helps to create a climate of trust and openness, which are necessary when requirements are set.<sup>73</sup>

Effective accompaniment for the catechised in their holistic development requires reference to their personal experience as pupils, giving up on generalisation and using the learned, conventional methods of education and solving problems.<sup>74</sup> A key role is played by the principal rules of education and teaching, i.e. the rule of faithfulness to God and man, subjectivity, individualisation, multi-faceted and multi-aspect activation.<sup>75</sup> A starting point could be a sweatshirt, which a teenager individualised by writing his own motto the lyrics of a contemporary song, environmental slogans, video games, a line from a recent movie, digital media or mobile devices.<sup>76</sup> Creations in the virtual space and promoting oneself on social media (on Facebook and Instagram) are no less important to many of the catechised. All of this makes up the pupils everyday experience, which plays an important role in their holistic development. A catechist can be inspired by them to start a dialogue with the catechised, especially to ask many diverse questions, listen carefully and attentively, express interest in the pupils world, create challenges, and develop pupils creativity and openness to their ideas, while exposing any discrepancies, inconsistencies or weaknesses in their reasoning.<sup>77</sup>

By accompanying his pupils in the process of holistic development, the catechist encourages them to be themselves, discover their strengths and weaknesses and work on themselves. He exposes the caricatural visions of

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 89–90.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>74</sup> Dybowska, “Towarzyszenie wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjańskiej,” 82–91.

<sup>75</sup> DK 146.

<sup>76</sup> Osewska, “Nauczanie religii jako towarzyszenie: od powierzchowności do duchowości, do osobistego poznania Boga wcielonego,” 51–53.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.; cf. Wojciech Welskop, “Rola nauczyciela — tutora w procesie wspierania rozwoju osobistego uczniów,” accessed March 12, 2022, <https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/3620/W.Welskop%20-%20Rola%20nauczyciela%20e2%80%93%20tutora%20w%20procesie%20wspierania%20rozwoju%20osobistego%20uczni%20c3%b3w.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, p. 130.

man and destructive lifestyles. He does not provide ready-made solutions and answers, but he helps pupils to seek and discover them.<sup>78</sup> He identifies various tasks in the family, Church and the world, stimulating them to discover their own unique path to accomplish the tasks. His attention is focused on emotional and creative aspects of personal development, and he does not forget about leading the catechised ones to a meeting with Christ, establishing a personal relationship with Him and discovering their place in the Church community. A catechist can do it in a variety of ways, for example, through a dialogue, solving problems, correcting observations presented by the catechised, encouraging, referring to the role models and authorities, and applying methods, techniques and tools with which constructive conclusions can be drawn. However, it is more important to set an example with ones own life, as setting demands to oneself and then setting an example in accomplishing what one demands is the greatest strength of a catechist, as well as the strength of the testimony of faith, which has its source in the personal relation of a catechist with God.<sup>79</sup>

It is beyond doubt that an important place in accompanying the catechised in holistic development is occupied by seeking an understandable language for conversation, dialogue, prophesying the gospel and asking questions which stimulate one for reflection.<sup>80</sup> This is mainly about using images, abbreviations and verbal expressions, but without simplifications.<sup>81</sup> One should use the languages used by young people (e.g. in social media) and support pupils in developing the ability to communicate interpersonally, especially to communicate verbally and non-verbally.<sup>82</sup> This sets the task before catechists to learn about young people, devote proper attention and time to them, talk to them, listen to their expectations, listen actively, ask questions and be close to the pupils.

When accompanying pupils in their holistic development, a catechist should release their enthusiasm for actions and for working on themselves and for activities benefitting other people, despite possible obstacles and defeats.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, he should support pupils in eliminating negative emo-

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<sup>78</sup> DK 139–142; Dybowska, “Towarzystwo wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjańskiej,” 82–91.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Fijałkowski, “Papieża Franciszka inspiracje dla duszpasterstwa młodzieży,” 90–91.

<sup>81</sup> DK 209–210, 213.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.; DK 213–217.

<sup>83</sup> Dybowska, “Towarzystwo wychowawcze według pedagogiki ignacjańskiej,” 82–91;

tions and anxiety and in developing self-reflection, understanding an issue and coping with adversities. This requires one to encourage pupils to be creative in thinking and actions and to support pupils gradually in learning to recognise their emotions and coping with them, and in making decisions, choices and bearing responsibility.<sup>84</sup>

For a catechist who accompanies the catechised in holistic development, it is of key importance to interact with the pupil based on direct meeting, dialogue, creative thinking, his own activity and self-sufficiency in thinking and actions.<sup>85</sup> It is based on the love of pupils, openness, enthusiasm, simplicity, authenticity, communication abilities, and the ability to discuss and being present for each pupil.<sup>86</sup> These personal traits of a catechist favour supporting pupils in seeking the truth, discovering the best solutions in their lives, acquiring new knowledge, developing skills (including the ability to communicate effectively) and developing attitudes.

#### FINAL NOTES

The practice of religion teaching at a Polish school shows that catechists—more or less consciously—introduce to the teaching process elements of accompaniment for their pupils in the latter's holistic development. There is no doubt that a catechist plays a key role in the process. A competent and reliable tutor, full of love for his pupils, enthusiasm, and an authentic witness to the faith, can motivate the catechised to become involved in the process of holistic development. He skilfully uses specific existential situations, which emerge as a catechist-pupil relation or vice-versa. Meeting witnesses of the faith, who accept the primacy of spiritual values over material ones, whose actions are permeated with the care of others and loyal cooperation in spite of the cultural patterns of egoistic rivalry and individual greed—the pupils discover the world of authentic and unchanging values. He gradually develops the ability to accomplish his development so that it is harmonised with the needs and the good of other people. A proper atmosphere in lessons of reli-

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Osewska, "Nauczanie religii jako towarzyszenie: od powierzchowności do duchowości, do osobistego poznania Boga wcielonego," 51–57.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.; DK 148–150.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

gion, full of love, trust, openness, respect, and dialogue, favours the personal, social and religious development of the catechised.

Obviously, the professional development of a catechist is also important. A special place in it—along with permanent improvement in methodology and didactics—is occupied by vocation and passion. Only such catechists reflect on their work tools, cooperate with other catechists and tutors and care about their spiritual formation. Discovering new areas of knowledge and developing skills is not enough. A personal bond between the catechist and Christ is important, and it develops owing to prayer and sacramental life. Regardless of the situation, Christ should be in the centre. He strengthens the catechist in his vocation, enables selfless and sacrificial love, stimulates faith in the catechised, and helps them to radiate with hope and charity.

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## TOWARZYSZENIE KATECHIZOWANYM W ICH WSZECHSTRONNYM ROZWOJU

### S t r e s z c z e n i e

Analizy podjęte w artykule skoncentrowano wokół problematyki towarzyszenia osobom katechizowanym w procesie ich wszechstronnego rozwoju. Tak określona aktywność wychowawcza katechety jest zgodna z zasadą wierności Bogu i człowiekowi. Dotyczy zawsze konkretnego katechizowanego, który ma określone predyspozycje rozwojowe, żyje w konkretnej społeczności i podlega wpływom współczesnej kultury. Odwołując się do *Dyrektorium o katechizacji* i literatury przedmiotu zauważono, że towarzyszenie katechizowanym w ich wszechstronnym rozwoju jest podstawową kategorią pedagogiczną i katechetyczną. Przedstawiono różne aspekty towarzyszenia katechizowanym we wszechstronnym rozwoju. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na powołanie, pasję oraz świadectwo życia i wiary. W tym kontekście podkreślono znaczenie spotkania, obecności, bycia obok i bycia z wychowankiem, dialogu. Za ważne uznano również aktywne słuchanie, zaufanie, troskę, oddanie, życzliwość, empatię, wiarygodność. Tak określone cechy i predyspozycje katechety odgrywają ważną rolę w nawiązaniu autentycznych relacji z wychowankami. Świadczą o kompetencjach komunikacyjnych, pedagogicznych i realizacyjnych katechety oraz jego świadomości powołania i posłannictwa wychowawczego wobec katechizowanych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** towarzyszenie; katecheta; wszechstronny rozwój; wychowanek; wychowanie; pedagogika; katechetyka; nauczanie religii; katecheza.