

PIOTR MUSIEWICZ

SECULARIZATION, THE NEW PHASE OF EVANGELIZATION
AND POPE FRANCIS' IDEA
OF AN ECCLESIASTICAL UNIVERSITY

Abstract. The main goal of this article is to present the relationship between secularization and the Catholic Church's post-conciliar call for evangelization, including the new phase of evangelization, as well as to present the relationship between Pope Francis' idea of an ecclesiastical university and the new phase of evangelization. To realize this aim, meanings of secularization, the new phase of evangelization and the idea of an ecclesiastical university are defined and presented, which in itself fills – to some extent – a research gap on the new phase of evangelization (shown here concerning evangelization and the new evangelization) and Francis' idea of an ecclesiastical university. The paper argues that the call for evangelization is due to recognizing the secularization trend by the Catholic Church and that every ecclesiastical university receives the clear task of evangelization in the new phase of evangelization.

Keywords: new phase of evangelisation; ecclesiastical university; Pope Francis; secularization.

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper aims to present the idea of an ecclesiastical university (according to *Veritatis gaudium*) in the context of the Catholic Church's call for evangelization, especially of the new phase of evangelization, and to present this call for evangelization in the context of secularization. The context of secularization seems to be adequate for the topic, since the phenomenon has been frequently mentioned by post-conciliar popes and there is a direct con-

PIOTR MUSIEWICZ, PhD, is an employee of the Institute of Political Science and Administration at the Chair of Administration and Public Policy at the Ignatianum Academy in Kraków. Address for correspondence: ul. J. Zamoyskiego 40/7, 30-523 Kraków, e-mail: piotr.musiewicz@ignatianum.edu.pl.

nection, indicated in the paper, between secularization and the Catholic Church's calls for evangelization. The context of evangelization has been directly marked by Pope Francis in the introduction to Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium* on Ecclesial Universities and Faculties. At the same time, the relationship between the contemporary idea of evangelization and the concept of an ecclesiastical university has not been so far visibly explored in scholarship. The contemporary idea of evangelization means the post-conciliar teaching of the Church on the topic, including the most recent expressions made during the pontificate of Pope Francis, mentioned in this paper, and by Francis himself, entitled "The New Phase of Evangelization."¹ It is also worth noting that the new phase of evangelization itself has not been a subject of wider research.

2. SECULARIZATION

The wide issue of secularization will be presented here in two ways. First, some definitions acknowledged in contemporary scholarship are outlined, and second – the Catholic Church's understanding of secularization will be reconstructed and proposed.

Dominant theories of secularization tended to understand secularization as a "progressive decline of religious beliefs and practices with increasing modernization, so that the more modern a society, the more secular."² Indeed, Berger's definition, for example, insisted that secularization is "the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols."³ However, since Eisenstadt and Casanova proved that the decline of religious beliefs in the whole world is neither progressive, nor necessarily linked with modernization, and even modernization itself is not a unitary process,⁴ secularization started to be defined in many ways. Casanova eventually stated secularization does not have to include the three aspects considered indispensable – meaning functional differentiation, the decline of subjective religiosity, and the privatization of

¹ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 17, 287.

² José Casanova, "The Secular and Secularisms," *Social Research*, vol. 76, no. 4 (2009): 1053.

³ Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (Doubleday: Garden City, 1967), 107.

⁴ Shmuel Eisenstadt, 2000. "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129 (2000): 1-8; José Casanova, "The Secular and Secularisms," *Social Research*, vol. 76, no. 4 (2009): 1053.

religion. Apparently, it can also mean just one of them.⁵ Charles Taylor distinguished similar aspects of secularization and criticized the idea of secularization as the process of transition from earlier (religious) to more modern forms of knowledge.⁶

In search for a core that would allow defining secularization in a relatively uncontested and scholarly uncontroversial way, it could perhaps be stated that secularization is the transformation and differentiation of various spheres – from “the religious” to “the secular.”⁷ Weber, visibly embedded in Western intellectual tradition, would suggest secularization is leaving behind the “ethical postulate that the world is a God-oriented, and hence somehow meaningfully and ethically oriented cosmos,” while Eisenstadt argues that the central tenet of Western modernity (and therefore secularization) is “emphasis on the autonomy of man.”⁸

Before deciding on an appropriate definition of secularization, the Catholic Church’s expressions on secularization will be outlined. This paper intends to show the connection between secularization and evangelization (and then between evangelization and an ecclesiastical university), presenting the Catholic Church’s understanding of secularization happens necessarily.

Despite vivid scholarly debates on the term secularization, surprisingly, it is not frequently used and discussed in the Catholic Church’s official documents. Paul VI’s usage of the term was clearly positive, as he called secularization – “the effort, in itself just and legitimate and in no way incompatible with faith or religion, to discover in creation, in each thing or each happening in the universe, the laws which regulate them with a certain autonomy, but with the inner conviction that the Creator has placed these laws there.”⁹ However, later expressions started to see at times incompatibility between secularization and faith or religion. In *Christifideles laici*, John Paul II portrayed secularization as one of the factors that disperses Christian religion, with its moral and spiritual patrimony,¹⁰ while in *Redemptoris missio* he made it responsible for reducing Christianity to merely human wisdom, giving the example of the term *salvation* that – due to secularization – started to be reduced to man’s “merely horizontal dimension.”¹¹ The Synod of Bishops

⁵ Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, Marian Burchardt, “Multiple Secularities: Toward a Cultural Sociology of Secular Modernities,” *Comparative Sociology* 11 (2012): 878.

⁶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Harvard: Harvard University Press), 22.

⁷ José Casanova, “The Secular and Secularisms,” *Social Research*, vol. 76, no. 4 (2009): 1050.

⁸ Shmuel Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129 (2000): 5.

⁹ Paul VI, Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 55.

¹⁰ John Paul II, Encyclical *Christifideles laici*, 34.

¹¹ John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, 11.

on the new evangelization presiding under Benedict XVI considered both positive and negative aspects of secularization. The positives were creating *saeculum* – the space in which believers and non-believers interact together and “share in a common humanity” – and contributing to purification and inner reforms of the Catholic Church;¹² the negatives were mainly weakening spirituality and religious traditions, developing a mentality of God’s absence.¹³ Next, Pope Francis in *Evangelii gaudium* stated that secularization completely rejects the transcendent, causing “a growing deterioration of ethics” and relativism, thus reducing “the faith and the Church to the sphere of the private and personal.”¹⁴

It seems then that, although Paul VI clearly distinguished secularization and secularism, and understood secularism as “a concept of the world according to which the latter is self-explanatory, without any need for recourse to God,”¹⁵ the distinction becomes less clear when looking at the expressions of John Paul II and Francis. Although Benedict XVI pointed to both positive and negative aspects of secularization, the two popes seem to perceive secularization in a way closer to secularism. Eventually, the latter direction to define secularization will be used in this paper.

Secularization is to be understood here as a way of thinking and ordering socio-political life in non-religious terms, without reference to God; in this way, religion and faith are treated as private matters and are vulnerable to being diminished. In this version, secularization is linked with abandoning religion or de-Christianization. This definition may be called the negative Catholic definition, and the narrow one seems to be concerning solely or mostly Judeo-Christian culture.

3. EVANGELIZATION, THE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND THE NEW PHASE OF EVANGELIZATION

Before showing that calls for evangelization authored by the post-conciliar popes have become the response of the Catholic Church to ongoing secularization, the terms concerning evangelization should be clarified.

¹² Synod of Bishops, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of Faith – Lineamenta* (XII Ordinary General Assembly), 52, 54, 55, 63.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 52, 55, 63.

¹⁴ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 34.

¹⁵ Paul VI, Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 55.

The term “evangelization” has several meanings, some of which were specified in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1972) and in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997). In the first case, evangelization occurs as the first phase in the process of Christian initiation, followed by a second – the catechumenate;¹⁶ the aim of this first phase is the generation of faith and the initial conversion to God, which is not equated with catechesis. The second document describes evangelization more broadly – as all the phases of Christian initiation, the first of which is “pre-evangelization,” meaning the first or initial proclamation of Jesus Christ.¹⁷ The second understanding of evangelization was repeated in the exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, where pre-evangelization is called incomplete evangelization and is addressed both to those who have never heard the Good News and to the baptized who had lost their faith.¹⁸

Regardless of the differences in the meaning of the term in the above documents, they agree that in the process of Christian formation, it is necessary to spot the preliminary process, aimed at awakening faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and thus personal recognition of the content sometimes called the kerygma.¹⁹

At the Second Vatican Council, the addressees of evangelization were understood as nations or communities that had not yet embraced the Gospel.²⁰ Yet, from the time of Paul VI, evangelization was also addressed to the Church herself.²¹ This ambiguity was resolved by John Paul II. He confirmed that evangelization should not be understood simply as reaching new nations with the Good News, and for this reason, in 1979 in Krakow's Mogiła, he introduced the term “the New Evangelization,” addressing it to the nations previously Christianized, but experiencing deep secularization.²² The distinction was confirmed in *Redemptoris Missio*, where he called one type of evangelization *mission ad gentes* (to societies which have not heard the Gospel), and the other one *the New Evangelization* – to societies previously

¹⁶ Congregation for the Clergy, *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults*, 36-40.

¹⁷ *General Catechetical Directory*, 60-72.

¹⁸ Paul VI, Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 21.

¹⁹ Franciszek Blachnicki, *Sympatycy czy chrześcijanie? Katechumenat na dzisiejszą godzinę* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Światło-Życie, 2003), 22-32.

²⁰ Second Vatican Council, *Ad gentes divinitus*, 6.

²¹ Paul VI, Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 15, 21.

²² Czesław Parzyszek, “Treść pojęcia ‘nowa ewangelizacja’ według Jana Pawła II,” *Kultura – Media – Teologia* no. 2 (2010): 135-151; Piotr Musiewicz, “Nowa ewangelizacja jako przezwyciężenie sekularyzacji Kościoła,” *Horyzonty Polityki* 9 (2018): 107.

Christian, which now “live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel.”²³ The distinction was continued by Benedict XVI, who in 2010 established the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization, retaining the existing Congregation for the Evangelization of Nations for purposes of missions to new areas.

Interestingly, Pope Francis does not seem to respect the distinction between “evangelization” and the “new evangelization” made by these two pope predecessors. In his program document on evangelization, *Evangelii gaudium*, he seems to be understanding evangelization both as *mission ad gentes* and as a mission to secularized societies. The addressee of the evangelization is not clearly stated in the exhortation. The term new evangelization, used by him there much less frequently than evangelization, looks like nothing more than a synonym for evangelization.²⁴ Concerning the new evangelization, its addressees are indicated, but in fact, these are the same addressees about whom John Paul II spoke of when he presented evangelization in *Redemptoris missio* (the baptized who lost their faith, unbaptized and believers receiving ordinary pastoral ministry).²⁵

Blurring the two terms seems to have been sanctioned by the introduction in *Evangelii gaudium* of another term - the new phase (or chapter) of evangelization.²⁶ Because the term is used at the very beginning of the document – in the first point – perhaps it is the invitation to look at the whole evangelization issue through its prism. The new phase of evangelization would then mean both evangelization and the new evangelization, therefore, it is directed both *ad gentes* and to secularized societies. In *Evangelii gaudium*, the terms “mission” and “missionary” also mean those who practice the new evangelization. Apparently, it is the conscious work of the pope to focus on

²³ John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, 33. Here John Paul II also mentioned another type of evangelization – understood as pastoral activity of the Church in areas with solid ecclesial structures, but it is not relevant for this paper to discuss this understanding.

²⁴ The examples of treating evangelization and new evangelization as synonyms means that “we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. Many of them are quietly seeking God, led by a yearning to see his face, even in countries of ancient Christian tradition. All of them have a right to receive the Gospel. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 14). “Every form of authentic evangelization is always ‘new’” (Ibid., 11).

²⁵ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 14 – compare John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, 33.

²⁶ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 17, 287. Twice he uses the synonym – the New Chapter of Evangelization (*Evangelii gaudium* 1, 261).

the task of the Church concerning the new evangelization and to elevate it to the status of “a mission,” one of the Church’s main tasks. However, the new phase of evangelization also has other new traits worth noticing.

First, in the new phase of evangelization, the call to evangelization (and the new evangelization) is addressed not only to individual believers, but also, clearly and strongly, to ecclesial communities (parishes, dioceses, papacy, movements, associations, as well as universities).²⁷

Second, to carry out a fruitful new phase of evangelization, the communities of the Church must first be filled with the Gospel, which results in radiant joy.²⁸ Conversion and new evangelization are constantly needed by the Church herself, “that she may keep her freshness, zeal and strength in proclaiming the Gospel.”²⁹ The new phase of evangelization, therefore, must first take place “from within” to be able to take place “outside.”

Third, the new phase of evangelization requires a transition from “mere administration,” “from a pastoral care of the mere preservation of the state of affairs to a pastoral care that is resolutely missionary”; it is to shape the Church that sets out on the road – leaving behind its convenience, reaching out to all peripheries of the world in need of the Gospel light; it is the Church constituting a missionary community of disciples who take the initiative and live a missionary spirituality.³⁰

Fourth and finally, the kerygma must be at the center of the new phase of Church evangelization and renewal. The kerygma message is to inspire faith in Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection, and the infinite mercy of God the Father; it is to express God’s saving love, which is primal, preceding moral and religious principles, but remains closely connected with these. The kerygma is not supposed to inform, but to proclaim these truths from the perspective of a witness.³¹ This has become so important for Pope Francis that he recommends the kerygma’s presence also in the course of catechetical education, and thus the further phase of formation. Although this proposal is not unfamiliar to Catholic teaching,³² it has never before been placed so

²⁷ Andrzej Sionek, *Napełniajcie się Duchem! Współczesny etos Nowej Ewangelizacji* (Kraków: Misja EnChristo, 2018), 49, 73, 83.

²⁸ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 35.

²⁹ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 3, 15.

³⁰ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 15, 20, 24-25.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 164, 165; Peter Hocken, “Dobra Nowina o Królestwie,” in *Całą Ewangelię, Całe Ciało, Całemu Światu*, ed. Piotr Musiewicz and Dorota Trzcinka, (Kraków: WAM, 2014), 29-31.

³² Catechism of the Catholic Church (571); John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, 16, 19, 23.

clearly at the center of evangelizing activity, or even – as some say – at the center of the Church’s mission.³³

4. SECULARIZATION AND EVANGELIZATION

The definition of secularization has been confined here to the narrow version also because this version links secularization and the need for re-evangelization or the new evangelization. The connection cannot be directly seen in *Evangelii nuntiandi*, but it becomes evident in *Christifideles laici*. Directly after showing that Christian patrimony becomes dispersed under the impact of secularization, John Paul II stated that, “Only a re-evangelization can assure the growth of a clear and deep faith, and serve to make these traditions a force for authentic freedom.”³⁴ In other places, he speaks of “secularized societies” and the need to evangelize the contemporary “Areopagus”³⁵ of the phenomenon of people abandoning religion in practice, and of “de-Christianization that strikes long-standing Christian people and which continually calls for a re-evangelization.”³⁶

Although Benedict XVI in his encyclicals refrained from using the term secularization, he frequently pointed to the problem of loss of faith. He wrote: “In our days ... in vast areas of the world the faith is in danger of dying out like a flame which no longer has fuel.... The real problem at this moment of our history is that God is disappearing from the human horizon, and, with the dimming of the light which comes from God, humanity is losing its bearings, with increasingly evident destructive effects.”³⁷ It is worth noting that he also seems to have been applying the discussed process to the Church as early as 1958, when Joseph Ratzinger diagnosed that “This so-called Christian Europe for almost four hundred years has become the birthplace of a new paganism, which is growing steadily in the heart of the Church, and threatens to undermine her from within.”³⁸ However, perhaps

³³ Sionek, *Dziedzictwo Ewangelii, w którym stajemy*, 29-40.

³⁴ John Paul II, Exhortation *Christifideles laici*, 34.

³⁵ John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*, 38.

³⁶ John Paul II, Exhortation *Christifideles laici*, 4; with reference to the pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, 7.

³⁷ Benedict XVI, Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church concerning the Remission of the Excommunication of the Four Bishops Consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre (2009).

³⁸ Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger), *The New Pagans and the Church* (a 1958 lecture), translated by Kenneth Baker, <https://www.hprweb.com/2017/01/the-new-pagans-and-the-church/>, accessed: 2 June, 2022.

the strongest link between secularization and evangelization is indicated in *Lineamenta for the New Evangelization*, prepared under his surveillance, which states:

This critical situation in society — and also in the Christian life — demands a response. At this special moment in history, the Church needs to see how to muster greater energy in rendering an account for the hope we share (cf. *1 Pet* 3:15). The term "new evangelization" calls for a new manner of proclaiming the Gospel, especially for those who live in the present-day situation, which is affected by the growing trend of secularization, taking place to a great extent in countries with a Christian tradition.³⁹

Francis also presented a clear link between the two terms. When speaking of secularized countries, he indicated the need to spark the new process of evangelization of culture.⁴⁰ He has not directly specified which countries he meant, but his other expressions suggest he could mean countries in Europe and the Americas.⁴¹ For Francis, evangelization of culture, especially in those places, is inevitably connected with “evangelizing” many elements of the liberal worldview that has penetrated the modern mentality, diluting and diminishing Christianity, and therefore, it seems to be secularization. For example, the liberal focus on placing human rights higher than obligations seems to be associated by the pope with indifference to others, social exclusion, and inequality; it is a way of thinking focused solely on the individual and one’s rights, where every person remains separate and primal in relation to any community, including state and religious communities, whose role is minimized.⁴² The second example could perhaps be relativism, allowing very

³⁹ Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta*, 44.

⁴⁰ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 69. Also, the Synod of Bishops on the new evangelization spoke about culture: “The first sector calling for the new evangelization is culture. In our times, we find ourselves in an era of a profound secularism which has led to a loss in the capacity to listen and understand the words of the Gospel as a living and life-giving message. This is particularly the case in the western world, where history and identity have been deeply affected by events, changes in society and ways of thinking. In our cultures, many view the secularizing trend, in a positive sense, as a liberation from the things of the past or as the way completely to separate any idea of the transcendent from the world and humanity” (*Lineamenta*, 6).

⁴¹ In the paragraph directly following the one where Francis wrote about Secularization, he mentioned “the tide of secularism which has swept our societies” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 65), and it is worth noting that he distinguished between “countries of other religious traditions” and “profoundly secularized countries” (*Ibid.*, 69). Therefore, “our” might mean countries of Christian tradition that have become secularized – and these are mostly European and American countries.

⁴² Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 53, 55, 87, 272; Zbigniew Rau, “Liberalizm,” in *Doktryny polityczne XIX i XX wieku*, ed. Krystyna Chojnicka, Wiesław Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, 14-122 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2000), 14.

different ways of thinking to be accepted as equally true. Although pluralism in itself has been accepted by the Catholic Church as a natural phenomenon, in some extreme versions, it leads to the claim that all worldviews are equally good, which makes it much more difficult to accept the Good News proclaimed by Christianity.⁴³ These cultural marks seem to be calling for new evangelization.

Francis also pointed to the many new negative phenomena within the Church herself, and called, in many aspects, for a change of thinking and way of working of Church institutions, but this seems to be connected more directly with evangelization than secularization.⁴⁴

5. THE IDEA OF AN ECCLESIASTICAL UNIVERSITY IN THE NEW PHASE OF EVANGELIZATION

5.1 Introduction

The idea of an ecclesiastical university of Pope Francis should be understood as the concept of an ecclesiastical university and/or faculty outlined by him directly in the introduction to the Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiasti-

⁴³ Władysław Stankiewicz, *Niezbędność teorii politycznej. Klasyczne pojęcia w dobie relatywizmu* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2003), 152-154; Dorota Sepczyńska, *Katolicyzm a liberalizm* (Kraków: NOMOS, 2008), 222-223; Bogdan Szlachta, *Wokół katolickiej myśli politycznej* (Kraków: WAM, 2008), 182.

⁴⁴ One of them seems to be the Church “clinging to its own security” – closed in on herself, adopting defensive attitudes, not serving the evangelizing mission nor providing the help to which it has been called (*Evangelii gaudium*, 49). Francis emphasizes the need for the conversion of the Church, which includes the urgency to redirect ecclesial communities (parishes, dioceses, papacy, movements, associations and others) from “ordinary” pastoral forms to “pastoral ministry in a missionary key” (Ibid., 33). Another phenomenon is the need to convert from “spiritual worldliness” manifested, inter alia, by “Promethean neopelagianism” or the “ostentatious preoccupation for the liturgy, for the doctrine and for the prestige of the Church” noticed among some persons, without “any concern that the Gospel have a real impact on God’s faithful people and the concrete needs of the present time” (Ibid., 94-95). In the Catholic context, traditional determinants of secularization have been quite different: the percentage of people regularly attending Sunday masses, the percentage of people receiving communion, the frequency of other religious practices, the attitude toward the protection of unborn life, divorce, contraception, premarital and extra-marital intercourse, recognizing the existence of the personal God in three persons, the resurrection of Christ, the final judgment, heaven and hell, the resurrection of the dead, the Immaculate Conception, original sin, and immortality of the soul (Janusz Mariański, *Katolicyzm polski – ciągłość i zmiana. Studium socjologiczne* (Kraków: WAM, 2011), 42; Paula Olearnik, “Poland: a Case-study in Secularization,” *Horyzonty Polityki* 3 (2012): 112-114).

cal Universities and Faculties *Veritatis Gaudium* (2018) and indirectly in other documents authored by him.⁴⁵

According to Francis, the existing Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties *Sapientia Christiana* (1979) is “the mature fruit of the great work of reforming ecclesiastical studies initiated by the Second Vatican Council” and remains “fully valid in its prophetic vision and its clarity of expression.”⁴⁶ In *Veritatis Gaudium*, Francis repeats the fundamental statement of Paul VI and John Paul II that “the Church’s mission of spreading the Gospel not only demands that the Good News be preached ever more widely and to ever greater numbers of men and women, but that the very power of the Gospel should permeate thought patterns, standards of judgment, and norms of behavior; in a word, it is necessary that the whole of human culture be steeped in the Gospel.”⁴⁷ Since one of the crucial institutions tangibly affecting societies and their cultures is universities, the post-conciliar popes have prescribed a special role to ecclesiastical universities, the role connected with the Church’s mission.

As one of the key program postulates of Francis’ pontificate is the missionary transformation of the Church (towards evangelization and the new evangelization), it should be not surprising that the continuation of the post-conciliar thought in *Veritatis gaudium* also serves this end. He encourages the whole Church, all its levels and structures, to undergo pastoral conversion and adopt a missionary attitude that goes out with the Gospel message both to *ad gentes*, and to secularized societies.⁴⁸ The whole Church is to be prepared to undertake the new phase of evangelization, and in this phase, the “strategic role” is to be played by the renewed system of ecclesiastical studies.⁴⁹ Therefore, an ecclesiastical university should directly serve the new phase of evangelization.

⁴⁵ This concept is directly shaping an ecclesiastical university, as well as ecclesiastical faculties; therefore, it has no direct application to a Catholic university. An ecclesiastical university is a universities directly dependent on the Holy See which agrees to its establishment, programs, and promotions. A Catholic university abides by national law, and can be established by local authorities, with the acceptance of the Holy See. Certainly, it can and probably should give some inspiration to a Catholic university, but relations between ecclesiastical and Catholic universities are not within the scope of this research.

⁴⁶ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 1-2.

⁴⁷ John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana*, 1.

⁴⁸ Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 19-20, 25-27; Barbara Łysik, “Duszpasterstwo Misyjne według papieża Franciszka,” *Nurt SVD* 1 (2015): 8-24.

⁴⁹ Francis *Veritatis gaudium*, 3; Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, 5.

The novelty of Francis' approach to the role of an ecclesiastical university can be seen in his criteria "for a renewal and revival of the contribution of ecclesiastical studies to a Church of missionary outreach."⁵⁰ By formulating these criteria, which are actually postulates, and emphasizing that an ecclesiastical university is to serve the Church that is going on mission, the pope seems to be attempting to ensure that the tasks of an ecclesiastical university will not be understood too broadly or ambiguously, but that they would serve evangelization and the new evangelization.

5.2 Living the Kerygma

The pope's strong emphasis on the kerygma in the new phase of evangelization is also reflected in his idea of an ecclesiastical university. As for the whole Church, so for an ecclesiastical university, Francis has assigned the task of permanent, existential living according to the core kerygma.⁵¹ It is not only about teaching this core of the Good News, but first of all about improving and making it more specific in the life of the Church and the ecclesiastical university. Therefore, Francis evidently treats an ecclesiastical university as a community of the Church. Only a Church (university) that converts itself is capable of carrying out the mission of the new phase of evangelization. The ecclesiastical university must therefore live by the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection and the love of God the Father that follows. In this way, it is to become an instrument of salvation among people,⁵² and therefore an instrument of reverting the secularization trend.

The concept of the university as a community embedded in basic Christian truths shows the "mysticism of living together" and the "social dimension of evangelization" – God who heals interpersonal social relationships.⁵³ Living the kerygma leads to building an authentic "network of relationships," presenting a community of the Church that, with its very life rooted in Jesus, would evangelize simply through the relationships among its members. A community in which the ideals of the Gospel are embodied, a university community that lives by the kerygma becomes an evangelizing, attractive community.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4.

⁵¹ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4a; *Evangelii gaudium*, 164-165.

⁵² Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, 1; Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 65.

⁵³ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4a; *Evangelii gaudium* 87, 272; see more on this topic: Francis, Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*.

⁵⁴ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4a; *Evangelii gaudium*, 99; Sionek, *Napelniajcie się Duchem*, 83-89.

Apparently, to meet the above criterion, it is not necessary to change the institutional or legal system of the university, but rather to introduce the members of the university to permanently live by the core of the kerygma, and thus the “mysticism of living together.” The renewed ecclesiastical university, responding to the challenges of the present day, is to be first and foremost a living, evangelizing Church. Only the life of the kerygma and the community life rooted in the kerygma can lead to overcoming the gap between “theology and pastoral work, between faith and life,” and, as a result, to develop a “culture necessary to face (...) the crisis” of secularization.⁵⁵

5.3 Dialogue

The Second Vatican Council in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et spes* encouraged the Church to open up to the world, conduct dialogue with it, and perceive values also outside the Catholic Church. Later, John Paul II invited the Church to “exchange gifts” between Christians of various denominations.⁵⁶ Francis’ call to ecclesiastical universities to promote dialogue and a culture of encounter with Christians from other Churches, as well as with non-believers, therefore obviously continues the Council’s thought, but his new emphasis is subordinating dialogue to the evangelizing goal.

This dialogue is intended to serve evangelization and the new evangelization in a more indirect and long-term way. It is to lead to a closer acquaintance with the problems and points of view of various sciences, humanities and religious fields, which is to contribute to the development of new “architecture and dynamics” of ecclesiastical study programs, including directing them to discover new ways of establishing relationships with God, with other people and the environment and to the restoration of fundamental values; the ultimately renewed program of Church studies is to enable the analysis of various propositions and scientific directions in light of revealed truth, and then reaching for the Good News “where new narratives and paradigms are being formed.”⁵⁷ Eventually, the aim of the dialogue seems to be making an ecclesiastical university more effective in reaching a modern, secularized man with the Gospel.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 2, 3.

⁵⁶ John Paul II, Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, 40.

⁵⁷ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 3, 4b.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Appendix I to art. 70.

5.4 Cross-disciplinarity

Francis himself clarifies that the postulate of ecclesiastical cross-disciplinarity is not so much about approaching the subject of research from many different points of view and obtaining a better understanding this way, as about applying “strong” cross-disciplinarity “situating and stimulating all disciplines against the backdrop of the Light and Life offered by the Wisdom streaming from God’s Revelation”; it is about the need to apply the principle of the unity of knowledge and to look at it in the light of Revelation, although respecting “its multiple, correlated and convergent expressions.”⁵⁹

Francis noticed the lack of a synthesis of thought capable of pointing the direction for science, which was also noticed by, among others, Paul VI, Benedict XVI, John Henry Newman and Antonio Rosmini. The Pope particularly developed the thought of Rosmini, encouraging the ecclesiastical university to return, in some sense, to the educational model from the first centuries of Christianity, i.e., the model of “communion in learning, holy intercourse, habit of life, interchange of affection,” the model originating from the Word of God and rooted in it, having its own center and culmination in Jesus Christ.⁶⁰ Such a view of knowledge and cross-disciplinarity is clearly evangelical, since the goal of this cross-disciplinarity is not only and not even the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but, above all, the development of a perspective coming from Revelation (including the kerygmatic one) based on knowledge from various disciplines, as well as a “practical education” - the transmission of the tradition of life and holiness, leading to overcoming the “fatal separation of theory and practice,” to the development of the attitude of love and assimilating the doctrine intended for the salvation of the world.⁶¹ This seems to be a proposal for another instrument of reaction against secularization.

5.5 Cooperation

The postulate of cooperation between an ecclesiastical university and ecclesiastical and non-ecclesiastical institutions from different traditions and cultures seems to be the continuation of the task of building a “network of

⁵⁹ Ibid. 4c.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 31.

⁶¹ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4.

relationships.”⁶² The purpose of this inter-institutional cooperation is to develop an adequate Catholic perspective on unity and diversity, which would help to reach different cultures with the Gospel, and at the same time would foster respect for their diversity and customs.

It would be about understanding and accepting the ongoing and natural tension between what is particular and what is common, as the work of evangelization and the new evangelization do not pretend to instill a single cultural model, but are ready to take different forms in relation to different cultures while maintaining the same message of the Gospel.⁶³ In *Veritatis gaudium*, the Pope addresses such a call, above all, to theology, but to some extent also to other disciplines present in the ecclesiastical universities. He recommends that theology should also deal with conflicts in the Church and the world, particularly by working out intellectual solutions.⁶⁴ Also, in this way, the Church, through the ecclesiastical university, is to become a more outgoing Church, oriented not towards herself and her problems, but rather towards the needs of the world to which she is to reach out to with initiative and help.

5.6 Final postulate

Although the term “final postulate” is not used in *Veritatis gaudium*, it seems to adequately name or summarize the four presented criteria. The pope sensitized that the reform of an ecclesiastical university (and of the Church herself) is “a great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.”⁶⁵ Due to the challenges of modern times, especially secularization, it is not enough just to teach the truth at universities, nor to transmit knowledge or doctrines of salvation. It is necessary to develop spiritual and intellectual tools essential to proclaim the Gospel in today’s largely de-Christianized world. The goal of scientific research at an ecclesiastical university is to find “creative apologetics” – that is to work out a way for the functioning of ecclesiastical universities that would “encourage greater openness to the Gospel on the part of all.”⁶⁶ It is still worth emphasizing that, at the same time, the Pope does not

⁶² Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4a.

⁶³ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4d; *Evangelii gaudium*, 116; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio inuente* (2001).

⁶⁴ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 4d.

⁶⁵ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 6; Encyclical *Laudato si'* (2015), 202.

⁶⁶ Francis, *Veritatis gaudium*, 5.

mean only an academic reflection, but, in line with *Evangelii gaudium* and his call to the new phase of evangelization, he also intends to deepen enrooting (secularized) believers in the fundamental truth about Jesus Christ, and to bring the joy resulting from it to university communities. The message of the Gospel seems not so much the message of a great idea, but rather encountering an event or meeting a person. Such a meeting requires communication “heart to heart,” from person to person.⁶⁷ This seems to be one of the crucial tenets of the new phase of evangelization, and at the same time, one of the crucial calls to an ecclesiastical university.

6. SUMMARY AND CLOSING REMARKS

In the XX and XXI centuries, secularization has become the phenomenon of increasing interest in research, as well as a phenomenon more and more noticed by the Catholic Church. Among many possible definitions of secularization, a definition that seems to stem from the most recent Church’s expressions has been used, especially by Pope Francis; the definition has much in common with secularism, meaning a manner of thinking and ordering socio-political life in non-religious terms, without reference to God; it concerns how religion and faith are treated as private matters and vulnerable to being diminished. In this version, secularization is linked with abandoning religion or de-Christianization.

Secularization understood in this way has been regarded as a negative phenomenon by recent popes and has provoked a reaction. Beginning with John Paul II, the popes and the Church have made the calls to the new evangelization that has been directed to secularized believers, that is, the baptized who have lost their faith and/or ties with the Church – intending to preach the Christian Gospel to them again in an effective way. Although Pope Francis modified the terminology connected with evangelization – by blurring the distinction between evangelization and the new evangelization – he increased the efforts to make initial preaching of the Gospel the priority of the Church.

For this reason, he introduced the term the new phase of evangelization, directed both *ad gentes* and secularized nations. However, this new phase also

⁶⁷ Ibid.; Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (2005), 1; Judith Champ, “Heart speaks to Heart: Newman and Friendship,” in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 2 (2020): 131-141.

has other remarkable characteristics, including engaging ecclesial communities to evangelize by preaching the kerygma, the call to conversion of the communities first, and adopting more “missionary” attitudes instead of ordinary pastoral and administrative functions.

As the “missionary reform of the Church” became one of the crucial tenets of Francis’ pontificate, in *Veritatis gaudium*, he presented the idea of an ecclesial university as an institution or rather community serving first of all the aim of the new phase of evangelization.⁶⁸ Therefore, new calls have been given to the ecclesiastical university - especially the call to live the kerygma more profoundly, to present a cross-disciplinary perspective having its origins in revelation, and to dialogue and cooperate with other institutions and communities in order to work out effective instruments of evangelization. With these calls and the new mission of the new phase of evangelization, an ecclesiastical university should now directly work on evangelization issues and contribute this way to overturning the trend of secularization in the modern world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger). *The New Pagans and the Church* (a 1958 lecture), translated by Kenneth Baker. Accessed: 2 June, 2022, www.hprweb.com/2017/01/the-new-pagans-and-the-church/.
- Benedict XVI. Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*. 2005. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html.
- Benedict XVI. Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church concerning the Remission of the Excommunication of the Four Bishops Consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre (2009). Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20090310_remissione-scomunica.html.
- Berger, Peter. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Doubleday: Garden City, 1967.
- Błachnicki, Franciszek. *Sympatycy czy chrześcijanie? Katechumenat na dzisiejszą godzinę*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Światło-Życie, 2003.
- Casanova, José. “The Secular and Secularisms.” *Social Research*, vol. 76, no. 4 (2009): 1049-1066.

⁶⁸ The idea of an ecclesiastical university presented in the paper undoubtedly raises a question about the relationship between the evangelizing mission of an ecclesiastical university in the new phase of evangelization to the evangelizing mission of an ecclesiastical university expressed before, e.g., in *Sapientia christiana*, including the relation of the “classical” role of an ecclesiastical university, connected with research and teaching, to its present role. It does not seem Francis would invalidate the first role, but at the same time, he has not explained the relationship between these two in *Veritatis gaudium*. Further research on the topic is recommended.

- Champ, Judith. "Heart speaks to Heart: Newman and Friendship." *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* vol. 20, no. 2(2020): 131-141.
- Congregation for the Clergy. *General Catechetical Directory*. 2002. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccclergy_doc_11041971_gcat_en.html.
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel. "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus* vol. 129, no. 1 (2000): 1-29.
- Francis. Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium*. 2018. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzione-ap_20171208_veritatis-gaudium.html.
- Francis. Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. 2020. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_encyclica-fratelli-tutti.html.
- Francis. Encyclical *Laudato si'*. 2015. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_encyclica-laudato-si.html.
- Francis. Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*. 2013. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.
- Hocken, Peter. "Dobra Nowina o Królestwie." In *Całą Ewangelię, Całe Ciało, Całemu Światu*, edited by Piotr Musiewicz and Dorota Trzcinka, 29-40. Kraków: WAM, 2014.
- John Paul II. Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia christiana*. 1979. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15041979_sapientia-christiana.html.
- John Paul II. Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte*. 2001. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html.
- John Paul II. Encyclical *Redemptoris missio*. 1990. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html.
- John Paul II. Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*. 1995. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html.
- John Paul II. Exhortation *Christifideles laici*. 1988. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html.
- Łysik, Barbara. "Duszpasterstwo Misyjne według papieża Franciszka". *Nurt SVD* 1 (2015): 8-24.
- Mariański, Janusz. *Katolicyzm polski – ciągłość i zmiana. Studium socjologiczne*. Kraków: WAM, 2011.
- Musiewicz, Piotr. "Nowa ewangelizacja jako przewyciężenie sekularyzacji Kościoła." *Horyzonty Polityki* 9 (2018): 101-123.
- Novak Michael. *Duch demokratycznego kapitalizmu*, transl. Tadeusz Stanek. Poznań: W drodze, 2001.
- Olearnik, Paula. "Poland: A Case-study in Secularization." *Horyzonty Polityki* 3 (2012): 103-130.
- Parzyszek, Czesław. "Treść pojęcia 'nowa ewangelizacja' według Jana Pawła II". *Kultura – Media – Teologia* no. 2 (2010): 135-151.
- Paul VI. Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*. 1975. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html.

- Paul VI. Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World *Gaudium Et Spes*. 1965. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.
- Rau, Zbigniew. "Liberalizm." In *Doktryny polityczne XIX i XX wieku*, edited by Krystyna Chojnicka, Wiesław Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, pp.14-122. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2000.
- Second Vatican Council. *Ad gentes divinitus*. Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church. 1965. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html.
- Second Vatican Council. *Lumen gentium*. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. 1964. Accessed: 14 March, 2023, www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.
- Sepczyńska, Dorota. *Katolicyzm a liberalizm*. Kraków: NOMOS, 2008.
- Sionek, Andrzej. "Dziedzictwo Ewangelii, w którym stajemy, cz. I". In *Całą Ewangelię, Całe Ciało, Całemu Światu*, edited by Piotr Musiewicz and Dorota Trzcinka, 29-40. Kraków: WAM, 2014.
- Sionek, Andrzej. *Napełniajcie się Duchem! Współczesny etos Nowej Ewangelizacji*. Kraków: Misja EnChristo, 2018.
- Stankiewicz, Władysław. *Niezbędność teorii politycznej. Klasyczne pojęcia w dobie relatywizmu*. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2003.
- Synod of Bishops. The New Evangelization for the Transmission of Faith – Lineamenta (XII Ordinary General Assembly). Accessed: 10 May, 2023, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html#CHAPTER_I.
- Szlachta, Bogdan. *Wokół katolickiej myśli politycznej*. Kraków: WAM, 2008.
- Taylor, Charles. *A Secular Age*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Wohlrab-Sahr, Monika, and Marian Burchardt. "Multiple Secularities: Toward a Cultural Sociology of Secular Modernities." *Comparative Sociology* 11 (2012): 875-909.

SEKULARYZACJA, NOWY ETAP EWANGELIZACJI
I IDEA UNIwersYTETU KOŚCIELNEGO PAPIEŻA FRANCISZKA

Streszczenie

Głównym celem artykułu jest przedstawienie relacji między sekularyzacją a posoborowymi wezwaniami Kościoła katolickiego do ewangelizacji, w tym w nowym etapie ewangelizacji, a także przedstawienie relacji między ideą uniwersytetu kościelnego papieża Franciszka a nowym etapem ewangelizacji. Dla realizacji tego celu zdefiniowano i zaprezentowano znaczenia sekularyzacji, nowego etapu ewangelizacji oraz idei uniwersytetu kościelnego, co też może wypełniać – w pewnym stopniu – lukę badawczą nad nowym etapem ewangelizacji (pokazanym tutaj w odniesieniu do ewangelizacji i nowej ewangelizacji) oraz Franciszkowej idei uniwersytetu kościelnego. W artykule ukazuje się, że wezwania do ewangelizacji są spowodowane dostrzeżeniem przez Kościół katolicki trendu sekularyzacyjnego, oraz że uniwersytet kościelny w nowym etapie ewangelizacji otrzymał jasne zadanie ewangelizacyjne.

Słowa kluczowe: nowy etap ewangelizacji; uniwersytet kościelny; papież Franciszek; sekularyzacja