

ticipation in abortion, making contraception available or carrying out euthanasia, in which the feeling of caring for the patient and relieving the pain is mixed with the patient's annihilation as a method of getting rid of suffering. Discussing many manifestations of the so-called *culture of death*, father Melina refers also to the mission of the *culture of life* which, in a prophetic way, can protect the world from showing unfaithfulness to God, the giver of life, through the renewal of family and moral reflection.

It seems that if reason and faith are to be *two wings on which believers rise*, bioethics is an attempt to create a bridge between empirical sciences and ethics, especially its theological variant. The development of medicine brings new dilemmas and questions. Reflection of a priest who has been studying John Paul II's thought for years reduces the distance between science and ethics. Reflection resulting from the Revelation and deeply embedded in detailed medical, biological and psychological knowledge, confirms that also the Church today is capable of responding to new humanity questions in a clear way rooted in the Truth.

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The preparation of the English version of *Roczniki Teologiczne* (Annals of Theology) no. 3 and its publication in electronic databases was financed under contract no. 753/P-DUN/2017 from the resources of the Minister of Science and Higher Education for the popularization of science.

OSSERVATORIO CARDINALE VAN THUAN SULLA DOTTRINA SOCIALE DELLA CHIESA. *Settimo Rapporto sulla Dottrina sociale della Chiesa nel Mondo „Guerre di religione, guerre alla religione.”* Ed. Giampaolo Crepaldi, Stefano Fontana. Siena: Edizioni Cantagalli, 2016, pp. 218.

DOI: <http://dx.do.org/10.18290/rt.2017.64.3-14en>

Observatory Cardinal Van Thuân on the Social Doctrine of the Church was established in 2003 by Archbishop Giampaolo Crepaldi, the then secretary of the Pontifical Commission “Iustitia et Pax” and now Archbishop of Trieste. It is named after the head of Pontifical Commission “Iustitia et Pax” who died in 2001 and who spent 13 years in prison of the communist regime in Vietnam (9 years of which in solitary con-

finement). The Observatory is situated in Trieste. Its main goal is to monitor the international development and dissemination of social science of the Church. It is done, among others, by means of a website www.vanthuanobservatory.org which is edited in three languages: Italian, English and Spanish. It is instantly updated and contains documents, information, publications and formation materials connected with the social science of the Church. Other forms of Observatory's activity include: quarterly "Bollettino di Dottrina sociale della Chiesa," published in Italy, Latin America and Spain; the publishing series "Collana dell' Osservatorio" edited by Cantagalli publishing house in Siena and containing studies and monographs on the subject of the social science of the Church; report on the state of the social science of the Church in the world published since 2009; and the annual conference on the anniversary of cardinal Van Thuân's death devoted to various issues related to social life. Observatory cooperates with the Episcopal Conferences of various countries, church organizations, centers for research on Catholic social science and many associations that popularize Catholic social science.

Annual reports have a fixed structure. They analyze the development of Catholic social science in a given year. They describe initiatives aimed at its dissemination, and discuss the most important documents on Catholic social science and the state of research on five continents. The reviewed report on the state of Catholic social science published at the beginning of 2016 was the seventh report and concerned the year 2014. It was entitled: "Guerre di religione, guerre alla religione" (Religious wars, wars against religion).

The report opened with a greeting addressed by the President of the Christian Associations of Italian Workers (Movimento Cristiano Lavoratori), Carlo Costalli, followed by an introduction by Archbishop Giampaolo Crepardi, one of the editors of the volume, and an introductory synthesis by Stefano Fontana, Director of the Observatory Cardinal Van Thuân. The synthesis presented the issues of the current report, including the leading topic and pointing to an increasingly dominant religious factor in the ongoing armed conflicts, which very often merges all other motives, thus having a huge mobilizing power. On the other hand, analyzing the most important elements of contemporary biopolitical debate, the report sees more and more visible forms of war against religion, and against the Catholic religion in particular. It is not about a straightforward war declared in a formal way, or a conventional war with the use of army and military strategies, but war in an analogous sense. It is a conflict with the use of legislation, intimidation, exclusion from public debate, using the media and propaganda against the Catholic religion and its assumptions. While religious wars take place in the caliphates, the war against religion is seen primarily in the West, especially in Europe. Actually, Europe has become the epicenter of both trends, as the Old Continent is not lacking in the repercussions of typically religious wars, due to the phenomenon of terrorism and the recruitment of Islamic fighting squads among the immigrants from the second or third generation in the suburbs of large European agglomerations.

The main part of the report includes a discussion of Pope Francis' social teaching of 2014 by Archbishop Clepardi, with particular emphasis on the pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Korea and Turkey, speeches in the European Parliament in Strasbourg and

in the Council of Europe, as well as speeches on poverty and marginalization. Next, the report presents the social science of the Church on five continents discussed by their representatives. The first part shows activity and teaching of the Holy See in an international context. The greatest concern of Vatican diplomacy is the fight against various manifestations of contemporary slavery and threats against religious freedom. This issue was addressed during the meetings with the representatives of various religions, in the activity of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community COMECE and the representatives of the Holy See in various countries, during the visit of UN representatives to the Vatican, or the already mentioned visits of Pope Francis to the European agendas in Brussels and Strasbourg. Other discussed areas of active involvement of the Church, either in terms of the doctrine or through various types of initiatives or meetings, concerned family, migration, globalisation and development. In this context, the special role was taken on by the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops devoted to family which took place on 5–19 October 2014 at the Vatican.

Later, the report discusses the most important events of 2014 in the area of biopolitics. These include, among others, the publication on January 14 of a document by the Pontifical International Theological Commission entitled *God the Trinity and the unity of humanity. Christian monotheism and its opposition to violence*, which is the current interpretation of the Church's position regarding war. The report also addresses the appeal of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) calling the Holy See to review the position regarding abortion, contraception (in order to protect the youth and prevent AIDS) and homosexuality, and calling the Church to "use her moral authority to condemn all forms of harassment, discrimination and violence against children because of their or their parents' sexual orientation." The report reminds that father Silvano Tomasi, permanent observer of the Holy See in Geneva, described the appeal as astonishing and ideological, and reminded that the Church's position on the above-mentioned issues is unchangeable. Other issues discussed concern, among others, medical support for procreation (PMA), the exchange of embryos at the Pertini hospital in Rome, the problem of anonymity, the issue of procreation tourism to poor countries, or the so-called homosexual marriages.

In the part describing the most important tendencies in the area of economics in 2014, Giorgio Miona presented the following issues: the evolution of the Chinese economic model, the issue of Brazil's development and the development model of emerging countries, the crisis of Europe and its division into two parts as well as the situation in Ukraine. Next, the most important geopolitical changes and challenges were presented. First, Cristian Melis presented, in special reports, the situation in the USA, Russia, China, India, the Middle East and Italy, and then, the representatives of various countries presented the detailed reports from all continents. Among the most important public debates in Poland, the report by Grzegorz Sokołowski discussed the question of free conscience on the basis of the case of prof. Bogdan Chazan, destructive works of the PO-PSL government concerning marriage and family related to the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, called the anti-violence convention and the introduction of the Large Family Charter.

Next, the report goes back to the main issue of the year, i.e. the question of religious wars and wars against religion. This issue takes up the entire essay “La guerra a pezzi e le nuove guerre di religione” by Silvia Scaranari Introvigne, a lecturer on the history of philosophy, writer and expert in Islamic affairs. The report is complemented with Pope Francis’ speech to the European Parliament, delivered on 24 November 2014 in Strasbourg, a transcript of the speech by Archbishop Crepardi, given on 10 April 2014 at the Laterano Basilica in Rome, entitled “Politics in *Evangelii Gaudium* by Pope Francis” and a chronological list of the most important events. The report not only allows to look at what happened in the area of social science of the Church, but can also be an important research tool for the future generations of researchers.

The reviewed publication is undoubtedly a manifestation of the vitality of Catholic social science and a testimony of its irreplaceable role in monitoring the threats to the dignity of a person and social life, as well as a tool to promote the civilization of life and love. It also highlights the importance of social science of the Church for the dynamic processes discernible in contemporary world and its crucial role in the new evangelization. Social teaching of the Church in its integrity (as a magisterial doctrine and a scientific reflection) is an element of preaching faith and an essential element of Christian identity and experience. It is worth mentioning in this context that its primary purpose is not to create alternatives to the existing models of social life, but a prophetic and critical function of understanding based on anthropological concept, how well contemporary social reality ensures the respect for the dignity of the human person. Social science of the Church hence combines two dimensions: on the one hand, it becomes a place for discerning and describing the integral vision of man and society, a vision based on Christian revelation. On the other hand, based on this vision, it is trying to understand social reality subjected to constant dynamic processes of transformation in order to promote the dignity of the human person and the common good.

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