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Marzena Kuczyńska

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

Terrorism pictured by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI

Abstract

The article presents the reflections of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI on the phenomenon of terrorism. The understanding of the essence and sources of this phenomenon have been discussed. The author has analysed the teachings of the Pope before he took up the pontificate and during his ministry, focusing on the messages, speeches and pilgrimages. One of the Pope's key texts was the Regensburg lecture. Proposals for counteracting terrorism in order to build a lasting peace in the world have been presented.

Key words: Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI, terrorism, persecution of Christians, peace, freedom, dialogue, irrationality, Islam, Christianity, faith, religion.

Contact: marzena.kuczynska@student.uksw.edu.pl

1. Historical context of the thought of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI

Joseph Ratzinger took up the topic of terrorism in a series of reflections on Europe. The historical and ideological context accompanying the reflections of the Bavarian theologian were the 1980s and 1990s and the atmosphere at the turn of the millennium. The old continent, having overcome the yoke of wars, Nazism and communism, headed for a new beginning, which was to guarantee peace and order for future generations. It is also the aftermath of the division of Europe and the world into two opposing blocs: liberal-capitalist and Marxist, the decades that pass under the sign of the moral revolution, the intensification of protest movements, the crisis of culture and the loss of religious sense, progressive secularization, de-Christianization and Christianophobia, driving the aspirations of Western civilization to cut itself off.¹ It is a commitment to the cult of progress, the scientific and technological revolution, which is the driving force of prosperity and enables eugenic treatments.² This time is marked by the end of the Second Vatican Council, the interpretation

¹ Ratzinger (2005): 60. The context of rapid changes has raised the question of preserving European identity. According to Ratzinger, it was very important for the establishment and maintenance of order for future generations to guarantee in writing all the fundamental rights derived from the Christian vision of man and the world that lay at the heart of European civilization, i.e. respect for human dignity, the institution of marriage and the family, and due respect for Christ in the face of attacks and spreading blasphemy. In the latter, Ratzinger saw Europe's paradoxical hatred of itself, the West's reluctance towards what is its own and fascination with what comes from abroad. See Ratzinger (2005a): 28–31.

² Cf. Babiński (2016): 14–22.

of its provisions and the legacy of John Paul II.³ Reflections on this phenomenon constantly accompanied the deliberations of Benedict XVI also during his pontificate, focusing on Islamic fanaticism. The considerations were underlain by the same unresolved problems of the reality, which still included fear caused by the threat of terrorism.

The dimension of personal, specific life experiences is not without significance for the overall reflection on terrorism. From an early age, the Pope was a witness of the terror of Nazism.⁴ His youthful experiences made him highly sensitive to violence and injustice. He looked at Europe primarily from the perspective of his origin, with great attention to his homeland⁵ and other parts of the continent, marked by progressive nihilism, which is the aftermath of, among others, German and Italian terrorism in the 1970s.⁶

2. The definition of terrorism in terms used by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI

Basing on the reflections of the Bavarian theologian, the following definition can be coined: terrorism is one of the most brutal forms of violence, a new world war without clearly defined fronts that can break out anywhere. It resorts to attacks on specific, important targets (sites, people), without distinguishing between combatants and civilians. Focused only on defeating the opponent, ready to reach for the last resort, it does not care about the health and life of innocent people. It is a subversive strategy, typical of some extremist

³ See Mazurkiewicz (2017): 236–238.

⁴ Sowiński (2013): 41–53.

⁵ Benedict XVI (2011).

⁶ Ratzinger (1999): 18–19; (2005b): 141–143; Cf. (1977): 171.

organizations, religiously or politically motivated. Often, sophisticated technical means, huge financial resources and large-scale projects are involved in achieving a goal that justifies any form of cruelty, negating international law and human values.⁷

3. The causes of terrorism

Initially, Joseph Ratzinger wrote about the problem of terrorism, which is one of the *characteristic signs of our time* in the Eurocentric aspect, having political and ideological motivations. With time, along with the changing reality, the topics of his lectures focused mainly on Islamic fanaticism.⁸

As he noted, in many cases terrorism has its roots in injustices that have accumulated over the years. Unstoppable in time, they turned into a vicious circle of aggression.⁹ This category includes poverty, injustice of the ruling elite, exploitation, internal conflicts, discrimination, increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons, difficult relations between emigrants and the local population, natural disasters, and many others, contributing to chaos, favouring the existence of extremist organizations with impunity.¹⁰

⁷ See Benedict XVI (2011a); Ratzinger (2005a): 89.

⁸ By appealing to Osama bin Laden, Ratzinger showed a way to inspire terrorism by trying to morally justify violence. The leader of the emerging Al-Qaeda contrasted the oppressed, weak, pious world of Islam with the cruelty, power and godlessness of the West. The fiery messages, especially addressed to people in a specific political and economic situation, consistently distorted the concept of justice, justifying terrorism as a means of bringing it about, See Ratzinger (2005a): 76.

⁹ Ratzinger (2005a): 89.

¹⁰ See Benedict XVI (2007); (2007a); Cf. Stańczyk-Minkiewicz (2004): 117–153.

Joseph Ratzinger focused on this problem, taking as his starting point the moral dimension of human action. Terrorism is misdirected *moralism*, rooted in a protest against spiritual emptiness of the temporal reality and the desire to change it for the better, the realization of which must be taken care of by man himself.¹¹ The reflection shows the problem of understanding individual freedom, which wants to free itself from all boundaries.¹² So it becomes absolute, anarchist, and consequently abolishes itself. Without reference to the common measure of law and good, defined by Joseph Ratzinger as a safeguard of human rights,¹³ it becomes violence toward others.¹⁴ Lawlessness and self-determination raise the problem of treating the power of a distorted conscience as the last resort. Consequently, this results in a denial of the existence of truth, dehumanization, rejection of authority and indifference.¹⁵

The perpetrators of terrorist acts are always guided by a subjectively understood *good*, using violence as a means to sanctify the end (means justify the end).¹⁶ In the name of creating a *better world*, they take matters into their own hands and commit the greatest cruelty in the name of a new, better political and religious order.¹⁷ Violent establishment of lawlessness, most often taking place under the mantle of a liberation movement, creates serious difficulties in the social dimension (blurring the boundaries of law, drugs, prostitution, arms

¹¹ See Ratzinger (1997): 172, (2005b): 16–17.

¹² Ratzinger (2005b): 135; Cf. Benedict XVI (2008); Mazurkiewicz (2007a): 72–83.

¹³ Ratzinger (1999): 15.

¹⁴ Ratzinger (1999): 62.

¹⁵ Ratzinger (1999): 39.

¹⁶ Benedict XVI (2011a); Cf. Ratzinger (1977): 172–173.

¹⁷ Cf. Ratzinger (2005b): 113–114.

dealing, and others). In the opinion of Joseph Ratzinger, these pathologies pose a greater threat to international peace than wars.¹⁸ The lack of a fixed point of reference leads to negating the order of the state and the law, and imposing one's own will, which over time becomes the only instance, ready for anything to implement one's own totalitarian ideas. The new order, emerging from the previously provoked chaos, actually enslaves man, making him a victim of his own subjectivism, and freedom moving towards true enslavement.¹⁹

Joseph Ratzinger, even before his accession to the Holy See, clearly emphasized that *terrorism is based on the way of self-authorization of man, and not on the study of the Qur'an*.²⁰ Terrorism can be excused neither by religious motives nor by any other reason why the reference to God is often merely a cover.²¹ This type of manipulation raises doubts as to the nature of religion and provokes voices calling for its elimination in order to get rid of the source of intolerance in the name of progress and freedom.²²

According to this thought, terrorism is, first of all, an erroneous reference to the truth and, to put it deeply into its essence, an erroneous relation of man to God. In his considerations, the Bavarian theologian often juxtaposed the phenomenon of religious fanaticism with the reality of negation and exclusion of God.²³ The common denominator of both, despite their different origins and cultural context, is pride,²⁴ contempt for human dignity and an insult to God, which

¹⁸ Ratzinger (2005b): 39–40.

¹⁹ Ratzinger (1999): 62–63, 71.

²⁰ Ratzinger (2005): 60.

²¹ See Benedict XVI (2006); (2009): n. 29.

²² Ratzinger (2005a): 71a.

²³ See Benedict XVI (2006a): n. 9–10.

²⁴ Cf. Ratzinger (1995): 96–97.

is completely denied by nihilism and entirely distorted by fanaticism.²⁵ This implies a distortion of man's self-understanding and narrows the relationship with one's neighbour and with all reality; *where people do not fear God, they become terrible to one another.*²⁶ Letting go of the fear of God, which stems from faith in the constant presence of the Lord, removes the fear of violating it (this presence of God) in others, generating jealousy and hatred.²⁷

This has serious consequences for the personal and social dimension. The actions of religious fanatics violate the principles of justice, freedom, and God's natural law. They are an attack against faith – which they will distort, love – which is expressed by hurting and killing innocent people, and against hope – by trying to create the world based on subjective justice.²⁸ Moreover, the use of violence in the name of religion is in fact a perversion of its nature and is aimed to destroy it²⁹ giving some the false argument that religion is the cause of divisions in the world and should be relegated solely to the private sphere.³⁰ Radical secularization, gaining more and more supporters in the Western world, on the other hand, leads to the problem of eugenics and places the source of power and existence in the hands of other people.³¹ Both religion and reason distancing themselves from God can lose their orientation and succumb to the temptation to instrumentalize, becoming a means in the service of destructive

²⁵ See Benedict XVI (2006a): n. 10; Cf. Benedict XVI (2007b): n. 18–19; Cf. Wielomski (2013): 31–34.

²⁶ Ratzinger (1999a): 140–141; Cf. Benedict XVI (2006b).

²⁷ Ratzinger (1999a): 141; (1998): 128.

²⁸ See Wielomski (2013): 34.

²⁹ See Benedict XVI (2012).

³⁰ See Benedict XVI (2009a); Cf. Ratzinger (1969): 50–51.

³¹ Ratzinger (2005a): 71.

goals, against which Europe and the world were repeatedly warned by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI.³²

3. A program of mutual understanding with the followers of Islam

After taking over the Holy See, Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI continued his reflection on the sources and nature of terrorism as well as the possibilities of preventing and counteracting it in the future. The Pope's actions, however, were not limited to solemn words. Through concrete gestures, he consistently carried out the call of the Second Vatican Council³³ to develop a common understanding with the followers of Islam on the occasion of speeches, audiences, meetings and foreign pilgrimages that were popular with the media.

Already in the first year of his pontificate, while on a trip to Cologne, he met a delegation of German Muslims, making clear the difficult issue of Islamic fanaticism. During his speech, he clearly distinguished Islam from the stereotype of terrorist religions, encouraged common prayers and firm defense of the dignity of every person's life. Following the example of his predecessors, he pointed to the need for interreligious and intercultural dialogue between Christians and Muslims as a hope for a peaceful coexistence in the future.³⁴ The program of mutual opening and seeking cooperation opportunities in the perspective of the common good, formulated in this way at the beginning of the pontificate, was successively implemented in subsequent speeches to the followers

³² Ratzinger (2005a): 94.

³³ See Paul XVI (1965): n. 3.

³⁴ See Benedict XVI (2005); Cf. Regoli (2017): 334–335; Cf. Mazurkiewicz (2017a): 423–425.

of Islam and during meetings.³⁵ A month before his visit to Cologne, during an impromptu press conference, the Pope, when asked about international terrorism and the clash of civilization, said: *They are just fanatics. It's not a civilization as such – at least I think so.* He expressed the hope that the dialogue between the three religions would prove to be an invitation for some to abandon *terrorism*, which, he added, was *irrational*.³⁶

4. The Regensburg lecture – a turning point in building a dialogue

The aspect of irrationality of religious violence was mentioned by Benedict XVI during his Regensburg lecture. The papal argument, during his visit to the University of Regensburg, concerned primarily the relationship between reason and faith, and the defense of the rationality of faith. The speaker took a fragment of the dialogue between Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus and an educated Persian about Christianity and Islam and their relationship to the truth as the starting point. The emperor addressed the Persian with the words:

Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached, and added: God is not pleased by blood – and not acting reasonably is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats...

³⁵ See Babiński (2011): 378; Cf. Benedict XVI (2006c).

³⁶ See Benedykt XVI (2005a).

To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death...

Faced with the confrontation of the Emperor's premise of the rationality of God's nature with the radical transcendence, the absolute freedom of God, not even bound by the category of truth, the Pope formulated the following problem: Is the belief that unreasonable action is against God's nature only a Greek concept, or is it always and by nature true?³⁷

Due to the reference to the ancient text of Emperor Manuel Palaeologus, the lecture was met with a strongly negative and emotional reaction, but most of all with the Muslim world not understanding the words of the Pope.³⁸ The intention of the Head of the Church was to unequivocally and emphatically condemn religiously motivated violence and to manipulate religion to achieve one's own goals. The content of the papal lecture was far from resolving the problem of whether and to what extent violence is inherent in the religion of the Prophet. He concluded his lecture with the words: *Not to act reasonably, not to act with logos, is contrary to the nature of God*", said Manuel II, according to his

³⁷ Benedict (2006d); Cf. Stróżewski (2009): 11.

³⁸ The rest of the argument focused on compatibility between the Greek logos and the Christian understanding of faith in God, and the importance of integrity of these two planes for the emergence of European civilization. The Pope's thought focused on the need for theology within academia, for it undoubtedly belongs to the field of science, despite the obvious differences between it and the sciences; the particular sciences describe the nature of a thing, while theology focuses on knowing its essence. Theology's task is to search for answers to questions beyond the competence of specific sciences and to direct cognition to problems fundamental to human existence, See Babiński (2009); Cf. Mazurkiewicz (2017a): 414–416.

Christian understanding of God, in response to his Persian interlocutor. It is to this great logos, to this breadth of reason, that we invite our partners in the dialogue of cultures. To rediscover it constantly is the great task of the university.³⁹

Media reports citing the initial quote made the Pope the indisputable enemy of the Muslims calling for conflict.⁴⁰ Many religious and state leaders condemned the Pope's words in an extremely severe, offensive and aggressive manner.⁴¹ In the official text of the already published lecture, Benedict XVI added a footnote to the controversial quote:

In the Muslim world, this quotation has unfortunately been taken as an expression of my personal position, thus arousing understandable indignation. I hope that the reader of my text can see immediately that this sentence does not express my personal view of the Qur'an, for which I have the respect due to the holy book of a great religion. In quoting the text of Emperor Manuel II, I intended solely to draw out the essential relationship between faith and reason. On this point I am in agreement with Manuel II, but without endorsing his polemic.⁴²

To agree with the statement that Islam only brought evil and inhuman things (expressed in a specific place and time)⁴³ would cancel any effort to take any action to open up and build relationships with each other. Creating the possibility

³⁹ Benedict (2006d).

⁴⁰ See Rodari, Tornielli (2011): 20–39.

⁴¹ Cf. BBC News (2006).

⁴² Benedict (2006d); Cf. Majewski (2008).

⁴³ Stróżewski (2009): 11–17.

of a common coexistence on the way of a dialogue understood in this way is a vital necessity on which common future depends to a large extent.⁴⁴

In the fall of the same year, 38 Muslim scholars replied to the Head of the Catholic Church in an open letter, which was, in fact, the first polemical document of this type.⁴⁵ They presented their arguments in a manner devoid of prejudices and aggression, which at the same time proved that dialogue is possible. Another proof of good will were the Pope's numerous meetings with representatives of the Muslim world during his apostolic journeys, cordial greetings and visits to mosques.⁴⁶ At the turn of November and December of the same year, Benedict XVI went to Turkey. In his declarations, he expressed his warm feelings and sympathy for the Turkish society and the state; during meetings with religious leaders, he emphasized the similarities between the children of one Father in the Abrahamic faith; once again expressed his respect for Muslims and Muslim civilization, and expressed his hope for joint efforts in the service of man and life, peace and justice.⁴⁷ The Mufti of Istanbul then said:

⁴⁴ Benedict XVI (2006c).

⁴⁵ Amman Message (2006).

⁴⁶ Pope John Paul II was the first ever governor of Christ to visit a mosque in Damascus in 2011. Continuing the achievements of his predecessor in terms of the willingness to build understanding and dialogue with the followers of Islam, Benedict XVI visited, among others, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, the Hussein bin Talal Mosque in Amman, and the Al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem.

⁴⁷ Benedict XVI (2006e).

With his gestures during his visit to the Blue Mosque, Benedict XVI has overcome the misunderstandings related to the lecture in Regensburg.

He considered the actions more significant than the apologies expressed in words.⁴⁸

On 13 October 2007, the first anniversary of the first letter, 138 Muslim scholars addressed the spiritual leaders of various factions of Christianity with another document of a similar nature, entitled significantly: *One word for you and us*.⁴⁹ This initiative met with an open and cordial response from scholars of Islam, Christian scholars, heads of Christian churches and Pope Benedict XVI himself, who, through Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, expressed thanks and appreciation to all signatories. This unprecedented event, although it did not gain worldwide publicity, became an opportunity for diagonal unification of many Muslim circles and was a counterbalance to the actions and message of the extremists.⁵⁰

5. Apostolic journeys as an opportunity to build understanding

During his apostolic journeys to many parts of the world, the Pope repeatedly called for mutual understanding, respect and peace. At that time, it required a lot of courage, because, according to media reports, before his visit to Turkey and

⁴⁸ Skowron-Nalborczyk (2010).

⁴⁹ Letter written in English and Arabic, coordinated by Jordan's Royal Institute for Research on Muslim Thought Al al-Bait, approved by an extremely large group of representatives of the Muslim community. Never before has such a large group of scholars of various branches of Islam prepared a joint statement, See Skowron-Nalborczyk, Grodz (2008): 31–34; The Royal Aal al-Bait Institute for Islamic Thought (2007).

⁵⁰ Was (2008).

the United States, threats had been made against him,⁵¹ following the echo of the Regensburg lecture in the media. Despite all the adversities, the Viceroy of Christ made a pilgrimage to all inhabited continents, also to the countries where conflicts were taking place at that time. Benedict XVI prayed for the victims of terrorist attacks and expressed concern about the growth of this phenomenon. He expressed gratitude and appreciation to all those involved in restoring peace.⁵² Faced with the threat of violence, he called for respect for international humanitarian law, but, above all, he encouraged the victims and their loved ones.

In 2008, the Pope gave a clear sign of solidarity to the whole world by standing on *Ground Zero*,⁵³ the land marked with the blood of victims of terrorist attacks. On the last day of his pilgrimage to the United States of America, he prayed there for eternal life for the heroic rescuers and all innocent victims of the 2001 tragedy,⁵⁴ for the healing and strength for the mourning families, and for the conversion of those whose hearts and minds were consumed by hatred.⁵⁵ Three years later, on the 10th anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Centre, Benedict XVI addressed a special letter to the Archbishop of New York, Timothy Michael Dolan, in which he strongly emphasized that no circumstances can ever justify terrorist attacks, especially invoking God's name.⁵⁶

⁵¹ TVN24 (2008).

⁵² Benedict XVI (2006f).

⁵³ Ground Zero is the name given to the devastated site of the World Trade Center towers in New York that collapsed on 11 September 2001.

⁵⁴ The Pope refers also to the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks in Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania.

⁵⁵ Benedykt XVI (2008a).

⁵⁶ Benedict XVI (2011b).

A year later, the Pope travelled to the Holy Land on pilgrimages to Jordan, Israel and Palestine. In Amman, like in Istanbul and Jerusalem, he visited a mosque. Faced with the then fierce conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, Benedict XVI tried to be an ally of all parties, calling them to show mutual respect, and persuading them to reach an agreement. Entering Palestine, in Bethlehem, the city of David and the birthplace of Jesus Christ, the Pope argued that peaceful coexistence of nations is possible, and that the experience of violence and terrorism can strengthen the will to build peace.⁵⁷ Saying goodbye to the delegation at the Ben Gurion airport, he made a dramatic appeal to all the inhabitants of these lands:

No more bloodshed! No more fighting! No more terrorism! No more war! Instead let us break the vicious circle of violence. Let there be lasting peace based on justice, let there be genuine reconciliation and healing.⁵⁸

During his pontificate, the Pope also visited the countries of Africa, where many persecutions of Christians take place, and Lebanon, over which he lamented in 2006.⁵⁹ During a meeting with the diplomatic corps, state and religious leaders, he exclaimed:

If we want peace, let us defend life! This approach leads us to reject not only war and terrorism, but every

⁵⁷ Benedict XVI (2009b).

⁵⁸ Benedict XVI (2009c).

⁵⁹ In recent days news from the Holy Land has been a cause of serious alarm to everyone, particularly because of the extension of aggressive actions also to Lebanon and the many victims among the civil population. At the root of these merciless contrasts, unfortunately, are objective situations of the violation of law and justice, as cited in Benedict XVI (2006).

assault on innocent human life, on men and women as creatures willed by God.⁶⁰

6. The distorted meaning of martyrdom and the perspective of Christian hope

It is also very significant that the Pope mentioned terrorism when he delivered the first *Urbi et Orbi* address after taking the office. This procedure was aimed at drawing the attention of the whole world, because, especially during the most important holidays for Christians, the statements of the head of the Church are quoted by the media.

Benedict XVI focused on the victims of the effects of terrorist attacks and violence, pointing out that especially the most vulnerable, i.e. children, women and the elderly, are denied basic rights.⁶¹ In his last messages, just before his abdication, he carried words of encouragement to the persecuted Christians in Africa, who were targeted by bloody terrorist attacks in 2012.

At this point, it is worth noting that the persecution of Christians in the 21st century is ever more often and boldly assessed by researchers as the greatest in the history of mankind.⁶² Not without significance for the reflection made here is the great care and devotion of Benedict XVI, whose pontificate fell on such a difficult time, to the cause of the persecution of Christ's witnesses. The Pope repeatedly looked at the fate of those persecuted who fell victim to terrorism and terror for the sake

⁶⁰ Benedict XVI (2012a).

⁶¹ Benedict XVI (2007a).

⁶² Mazurkiewicz (2017): 218–228 (section: Persecution of Christians and the silence of the West).

of Jesus.⁶³ The theology of martyrdom, close to the Pope because of the special love of the Fathers of the Church and personal experiences, requires a separate study.⁶⁴ It is worth recalling the speech he made in 2004 on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the landing of the Allied Forces in France. Joseph Ratzinger, facing the spectre of terrorism plaguing Europe and the threat of using nuclear weapons, pointed out that terrorists, ready for self-destruction according to their own ideology of martyrdom, do not face any dilemmas or limitations.⁶⁵ The act of desperation, followed by the promise of rewarding the daredevils with eternal happiness, in fact results from a misunderstood martyrdom, originates from a deformed image of God and inability to distinguish good from evil.⁶⁶ It is, therefore, a complete contradiction of the Christian understanding of being a witness who, in truth, inner freedom, humility and humbleness, out of love for Christ, endures the world full of oppression,⁶⁷ and does not rebuild it, fights it at all costs, seeking media coverage.

In the messages of Benedict XVI, an inseparable element of the diagnosis of difficult reality was the reflection stemming from Christian hope, which had its source in the events of Christmas and Easter. *True* peace and hope come from Christ, who is true God and true man.⁶⁸ It is the mystery of Christ's love and redemptive death that allows us to look

⁶³ Modern science has distinguished between these concepts. In Polish literature, the most common view is that terror means rape and violence of the strong against the weak, and terrorism is rape and violence of the weaker against the strong, as cited in Resztak (2012): 149.

⁶⁴ See Bachanek (2012): 141–154.

⁶⁵ Ratzinger (2005a): 88–91.

⁶⁶ See Bachanek (2012): 147.

⁶⁷ See Ratzinger (1999): 45.

⁶⁸ Benedict XVI (2007a).

at the misfortunes tormenting humanity in an eschatological dimension, i.e. in the light of hope, giving meaning to undeserved suffering and allowing us to go through a hard test of faith.⁶⁹

7. Remedy for overcoming terrorism – factors constituting peace in the world.

Terrorism, due to the lack of internal logic and willingness to make radical sacrifices, makes it impossible to implement effective safeguards and security systems.⁷⁰ However, overcoming this evil cannot be achieved merely by force, which is constantly at risk of lawlessness and loss of control. Ratzinger, critical of extreme solutions, an eye for an eye approach and pacifism, pointed to the principle of proportionality of the means used and the need to subordinate them to the criteria acceptable for everyone.⁷¹ Faced with the helplessness of state structures, he called for action on the ethical, cultural and civilizational levels. As he noted, the goal of the state and politics, which aims to bring about peace and justice, belongs to the order of a moral nature, not a technological dimension.⁷²

The Pope appealed for concrete actions to heads of states and international organizations. Thanks to a joint effort to build solidarity between nations and respect for the inalienable rights and dignity of individuals and nations,⁷³ it is possible

⁶⁹ See Benedict XVI (2007c); Benedict XVI (2007b): n. 36.

⁷⁰ Ratzinger (2005): 41–42.

⁷¹ Ratzinger (2005a): 89.

⁷² Ratzinger (2005a): 58; Cf. Benedict XVI (2008b); Cf. Mazurkiewicz (2017a): 201–217.

⁷³ Benedict XVI (2011b).

to prevent the cruel phenomenon of violence. He encouraged to follow the path of reason,⁷⁴ to jointly strive to strengthen the will to bring about peaceful coexistence of races, cultures and religions,⁷⁵ and to use proportional measures to guarantee the rights and obligations of individuals and communities, always bearing in mind that they should be guided by fundamental principles.⁷⁶

In order to restore the lost order, it is therefore necessary to raise ethics and morality in contemporary societies above politics, to relate them to good and justice in a universal dimension,⁷⁷ taking into account God, to whom the social issue is related: the problem of mutual responsibility for another human being and the universal values becoming the deciding force for the world order. Working out the basis of the minimum of moral values acceptable to everyone⁷⁸ will allow us to maintain the right to individual freedom, while maintaining the right to life due to every human being.⁷⁹ Individual freedom can be duly exercised only in relation to a common measure, in the name of mutual respect and care for others.⁸⁰

Terrorism is a threat to peace, understood by Benedict XVI primarily in terms of the blessing that the Lord gives to His

⁷⁴ Benedict XVI (2006).

⁷⁵ See Benedict XVI (2012b); (2012c); (2006g).

⁷⁶ See Benedict XVI (2012d). As fundamental rights the Pope understood above all respect for the life of every human being from conception to natural death, protection of the sanctity of marriage and children in the family, helping the poor, the oppressed and the weakest, especially those who are persecuted for their faith, and combating the negative effects of materialism; protection of the created world and the environment. See Benedict XVI, Williams (2006h).

⁷⁷ Ratzinger (2005b): 125–127.

⁷⁸ Benedict XVI (2006b).

⁷⁹ Ratzinger (2005): 81–84; Cf. Benedict XVI (2011).

⁸⁰ Cf. Ratzinger (1996): 110.

people (Ps 29(28), 11). Referring to the seventh Beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount, he explained that the reality of peace is first reconciliation with God⁸¹ (the condition of which is to live according to His will), then it is personal inner peace, from which flows external peace with one's neighbour and with all creation.⁸² There is also a need to return to respect for holiness, i.e. rebirth in the hearts of God's fear, which is an indispensable element of true tolerance.⁸³ The grace of peace requires completion on the part of the human will, which is a kind of co-builder of the possibility of realizing God's gift.⁸⁴ Therefore, the Pope showed in a very specific hierarchy that to achieve it one must pray and then build it with all one's might.

Benedict XVI turned to the representatives of the Muslim world with a request for prayer, deeply believing in its spiritual power.⁸⁵ He also called on Christians to do the same,⁸⁶ entrusting the victims of terrorism and wars to the maternal intercession of Mary, Queen of Peace. The Pope pointed to the need to convert to a God who is love,⁸⁷ stating in his first encyclical, aptly entitled *Deus Caritas est*, that a

personal relationship with God and an abandonment to his will can prevent man from being demeaned and save him from falling prey to the teaching of fanaticism and terrorism.⁸⁸

⁸¹ See Ratzinger (1977): 170.

⁸² Benedict XVI (2013).

⁸³ Benedict XVI (2006b).

⁸⁴ Benedict XVI (2013a).

⁸⁵ Benedict XVI (2005).

⁸⁶ Benedict XVI (2006).

⁸⁷ Benedict XVI (2006i).

⁸⁸ Benedict XVI (2005b): n. 37.

Accepting the truth about God Logos and God of Love enables real solidarity and expansion of the cultural community. Conversion to God, whose essence is love, will generate in mankind the capacity for forgiveness that has the power to effectively break the vicious cycle of violence.⁸⁹

Joseph Ratzinger also clearly outlines the task of returning to rational faith, to the Eternal Logos.⁹⁰ With regard to radical Islam, he pointed to the relationship between reason and religion as the right centre of efforts to restore peace. Disagreement between the two planes destroys the source of morality and law,⁹¹ and fosters violence. Law is conditioned by truth and good, discernible by the ability to reason unlimited by any ideology.⁹²

Summary and conclusions

In view of such a diagnosis, a question arises about the relationship between the culture and religion of the world of Christianity and the world of Islam. These two great opposing systems indisputably interact.⁹³ However, a question arises whether Europe, tired of the dictates of reason, will be able to offer attractive values to other continents. Assimilation of the cultural influences of Europe (rationalism, Christianity) collides with the simultaneous striving to maintain one's own identity and distance.⁹⁴ Benedict XVI clearly distances himself from proselytism and imposing his faith by force. Admitting

⁸⁹ Ratzinger (2005b): 104–105; Cf. Ratzinger (2005a): 89.

⁹⁰ Cf. Gózdź (2013): 43–52.

⁹¹ Ratzinger (2005a): 91.

⁹² Ratzinger (2005a): 95.

⁹³ Ratzinger (2005a): 90.

⁹⁴ Ratzinger (2005a): 76–77.

to God, who defied evil – mercy, and violence – his suffering, is by no means goodness of God. Which was revealed most fully in Jesus Christ, who died for humanity on the cross, a symbol of love to the end.⁹⁵

The inhabitants of other continents admire knowledge and technical achievements, but rationality, which considers the exclusion of God from man's field of vision as its most perfect form, evokes fear in them. They see real threat to their identity not in Christian faith, but in disregarding the Creator, absolutizing freedom, making the highest criterion of usefulness and scientific achievement. There is also the problem of the level of abstractness of world ethics, which may not find fertile ground outside the Old Continent, for which the obviousness of rationalism is inscribed in its own cultural context.⁹⁶ Europe seems to have forgotten that an increase in technical capacity does not imply simultaneous development of moral strength. The old continent, however, still retains its responsibility and mission, despite the crisis and the marked weakening of the importance of the Church in Europe in the universal Church.⁹⁷

The reflections of the Bavarian theologian on the phenomenon of terrorism continue to provide a necessary contribution to the comprehensive understanding thereof. Along with reasons of a political and social nature, one should also take into account the deepest religious and ideological motivations.⁹⁸ Only taking into account all dimensions of the problem's complexity can one hope to find lasting solutions.

⁹⁵ See Benedict XVI (206b).

⁹⁶ Ratzinger (2005a): 77.

⁹⁷ See Ratzinger (2005): 43; Seewald (2016): 55; Cf. Mazurkiewicz (2017): 241–245; Cf. Babiński (2011): 369–382.

⁹⁸ Benedict XVI (2006a): n. 10.

The Pope has made an in-depth study of the sources of violence, focusing on free and rational nature of man. When studying the phenomenon of terrorism, the focus of Joseph Ratzinger was man and his ways of relating to God. The key to restoring peace is conversion to God, *because goods are not protected when Good itself is lacking.*⁹⁹ The fight against evil is the most urgent task shared by the Church, the state, international organizations, religious leaders, and most of all ordinary people.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Ratzinger (1998): 128.

¹⁰⁰ Ratzinger (1998): 128.

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