

ANDRZEJ OCHMAN

Uniwersytet Opolski, Wydział Teologiczny

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0180-6789>

On the need of social dialogue

Reflection on the pastoral letter of the Episcopal Conference of Poland

Abstract

The Church as an institution, but also a community of believers, is a part of a society. Thus, it is present in the range of processes and changes taking place in a society. A society is extended in tension between conflict and harmony. In that context, the Episcopal Conference of Poland reflected on the current social issues in Polish society in the form of a letter. It is focused on the necessity of common efforts in favour of dialogue and order and in the face of existing destructive phenomena. The letter has become a perspective for considerations on elements of social life like social mission of the Church, conflict, solidarity, the truth, dialogue. Discussing particular questions draws from the Tradition and the teaching of the Church Magisterium. The undertaken reflection is an attempt to argue for social dialogue which is necessary, especially in more and more pluralistic and at the same time full of tensions society. Genuine dialogue includes being directed to respect, and striving for solutions in the perspective of searching the truth and taking into account human dignity.

Keywords: dialogue, social solidarity, social conflict, common good, Catholic social doctrine, Polish Episcopal Conference.

O potrzebie społecznego dialogu

Refleksja nad listem społecznym Konferencji Episkopatu Polski

Abstrakt

Kościół jako instytucja, ale i wspólnota wierzących, jest częścią społeczeństwa. Jest zatem obecny w przestrzeni dziejących się w nim procesów i zmian. Społeczeństwo rozciągnięte jest w napięciu między konfliktem a harmonią. Konferencja Episkopatu Polski podjęła w tym kontekście refleksję w postaci listu nad problematyką bieżących zagadnień społecznych w polskim społeczeństwie. Skupiony jest on na temacie konieczności wspólnego wysiłku na rzecz dialogu i ładu wobec istniejących destrukcyjnych zjawisk. List ten stał się perspektywą dla podjęcia namysłu nad takimi elementami życia społecznego jak: społeczna misja Kościoła, konflikt, solidarność, prawda, dialog. Omówienie poszczególnych zagadnień czerpie z Tradycji i nauczania Magisterium Kościoła. Podjęta refleksja jest próbą argumentowania na rzecz dialogu społecznego, który jest konieczny zwłaszcza w coraz bardziej pluralistycznym, a tym samym pełnym napięć, społeczeństwie. Rzeczywisty

dialog zawiera w sobie skierowanie na szacunek i dążenie do rozwiązań w perspektywie poszukiwania prawdy i z uwzględnieniem ludzkiej godności.

Słowa kluczowe: dialog, solidarność społeczna, konflikt społeczny, dobro wspólne, katolicka nauka społeczna, Konferencja Episkopatu Polski.

There is nothing revealing in a statement that a person is a social being while also being political at the same time. Such a thesis has been propagated by ancient philosophers, with Aristotle in the foreground. Person as *dzoön politikon* is engaged, though not always directly and not always in an intended way, in interactions both on micro and macrosocial scale. A society, its institutions, and organizations, as well as particular individuals, have to be guided by rules and values.

Through writing the pastoral letter, the Polish Episcopal Conference have pointed out its aim evident in the title of that letter, namely the necessity of the existence of social order for the common good¹. Humankind is called to build “a truly human society, to be responsible for it, and to inhabit that society it in such a way that in an atmosphere of mutual kindness, solidarity, and cooperation, as well as in the mutual exchange of gifts, a community is created in which everyone can develop integrally within the framework of the common good”².

That has not been the first typically social letter of the Conference. It has only been in the past ten years that there have been several social letters: about marriage and family (2009), about the common good (2012), and about patriotism (2017). The aim of that article is to indicate: firstly, the necessity to discuss socially important issues and secondly, to indicate the need of social dialogue which is also the main topic of that reflection. It is necessary to take into account various social attitudes including the voice of the Church. The point is to seek to implement one of the guiding principles, namely the common good despite the diversity of opinions of particular environments.

The voice of the Church in Polish society has always been essential, especially during the period of communism. The Primate Stefan Wyszyński was an important person at that time. He often expressed his views on urgent social issues, in particular when human rights were violated. The reality in Poland now is different, however, it includes equally significant problems that the Church should not keep quiet about. On the contrary, she should discuss them in the light of Divine Revelation.

¹ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski (10.12.2019). <https://ekai.pl/dokumenty/o-lad-spoeczny-dla-wspolnego-dobra-list-spoeczny-episkopatu-polski>.

² Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

1. The social mission of the Church

The Church is strongly built in social and political reality. Over the centuries, her engagement in secular structures has varied. Often that presence was excessive and reached into areas which should be reserved for secular authority. However, the presence of the Church is necessary as she is not only the hierarchy but she includes lay people with their problems and participation in different areas of life. Thus, from the very beginning the Church has felt obliged to make social representation, especially in cases when the good of the human beings and human dignity are involved. John Paul II stated that man is the main way of the Church and the focus of her mission and activity are connected with people. Above all, she should support them to fulfil their basic calling, namely their salvation, to which they are led through what is earthly and temporal. That is also why human beings should be seen in the whole context of their life, in the spiritual, physical, economical, social, political, and cultural dimension³.

All the areas of the earthly life of a person can either help or hinder him or her to achieve eternal life. If the basic calling of the Church is to prepare people for eternity, she cannot be indifferent in the face of all kinds of engagement of particular individuals. That is the justification of the presence of the Church in social and political life. Of course, it is not about replacing temporal authorities or conducting political activity⁴. In *Gaudium et spes* one reads that the Church has an evangelical right and even obligation to proclaim faith and her social doctrine, including moral evaluation concerning political and social issues, especially when the good of people and their salvation require that⁵.

The Polish bishops state that the “prophetic and critical attitude to the social reality constitutes a part of the evangelising assignment that is fulfilled by the Church through the triple mission of teaching, sanctifying, and the ministry of love”⁶. The social influence of the Church is based on the hierarchy and all others who are called to teach as well as on the lay Catholics who “live in the world” and are directly present in politics and a society. John Paul II wrote even directly about each individual’s obligation and not only the right to political participation. Passiveness in this dimension is described by him as guilt. In case of Catholics,

³ Jan Paweł II. 1979. *Encyklika “Redemptor hominis”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: RH), No. 14.

⁴ Henryk Skorowski. 1998. “Rola i miejsce Kościoła w życiu społeczno-politycznym”. *Studia Gdańskie* 10 (1): 42.

⁵ Sobór Watykański II. 1965. *Konstytucja duszpasterska o Kościele w świecie współczesnym “Gaudium et spes”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: GS), No. 76.

⁶ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. *O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski*.

the attitude of passiveness is not acceptable⁷. The task of lay people is the practical implementation of the truths of the Gospel. They are called to dialogue in the world and with the world.

2. Social conflict

A society is a heterogeneous structure. Existing differences are natural, though they can cause social conflicts, as the bishops notice⁸. The words of John Paul II from the encyclical *Centesimus annus* are the confirmation of such a conviction: “The Church is well aware that in the course of history conflicts of interest between different social groups inevitably arise”⁹. Each of them strives for its benefits, as noticed by one of the leading theorists of conflict, Carl Marx. He saw the cause of conflict in only one way, namely uneven distribution of resources. It led to dichotomy: to the division into the owning and the subordinated. Such a point of view was a simplification, as complex social relationships cannot be reduced to just one stimulus causing social antagonisms. That was noticed by Max Weber who subjected that theory to critical examination. Not only should an economical criterion have been taken into account, but an account should also have been given to different options, such as power and prestige¹⁰.

Conflict itself does not have to be something negative. This was noticed previously by Max Weber who spoke about the multi-faceted criterion of change (social progress). Often it is a socially desired element since, as in the concept of Alfred Lewis Coser, it can be a factor activating and causing positive social changes. A conflict understood in that way is both positive and rehabilitative in some way, for it does not only divide but also can contribute to social integration¹¹. A conflict, as the bishops indicate, can also be “a form of struggle for freedom, justice, the just rights of the weaker or

⁷ Jan Paweł II. 1988. *Adhortacja apostolska “Christifideles laici”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: ChL), No. 3 and 42.

⁸ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. *O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski*.

⁹ Jan Paweł II. 1991. *Encyklika “Centesimus annus”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: CA), No. 14.

¹⁰ Karol Marks, Fryderyk Engels. 1992. *Manifest komunistyczny*. Transl. T. Zabłudowski. In *Dzieła*. Vol. 4. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 511–549; Max Weber. 2002. *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo. Zarys socjologii rozumiejącej*. Transl. Dorota Lachowska. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 158–185.

¹¹ Alfred Lewis Coser. 2009. *Funkcje konfliktu społecznego*. Transl. Stanisław Burdziej. Kraków: Nomos; Jerzy Szacki. 2006. *Historia myśli socjologicznej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 830; Jan Turowski. 2000. *Socjologia. Wielkie struktury społeczne*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 60–61.

the exploited”¹². Thus, a dispute should be a conflict about something, about achieving some good, rather than a struggle against somebody in order to eliminate an adversary¹³.

A particular form of social conflict is political struggle, which, for some of those involved is similar to a specific performance. It can, especially through the media, cause anxiety and divisions in a society, or weariness with politics and withdrawal from the public sphere towards the individual one¹⁴. Erving Goffman, using the notions from the terminology of theatre, states that if an individual enters a role, it is done so that the public gets exactly such an impression that is intended by the person creating that role. Those can be cynical performances, aimed at specific influence on the audience¹⁵.

In a similar way the philosopher Jürgen Habermas, perceived it to be a typical example of public sphere. For him, that sphere is a space anchored to a private sphere in which problems are thematised and then brought under the deliberation of the participants of the public sphere. Obviously, it is a kind of ideal construct for him, as understood by the above mentioned Max Weber, though it is not only a scientific idea but it has been empirically confirmed. According to J. Habermas, characteristic qualities describing this ideal space include, among others, accessibility, openness, rationality, discursiveness, communication, publicity, and agreement. In such a way the world of individuals’ life should be introduced into the sphere of power and politics¹⁶. For J. Habermas, the breakdown of that state of things is the moment when the media should stop reporting on events and start interpreting them. That is the way that the media starts to influence citizens’ thinking and actions. The media do not deliver stimuli for discussion but they change citizens into media consumers of prepared contents instead of participants of a discourse¹⁷.

Unresolved social conflicts can thus lead to less and less engagement in the building of a community and alienate feelings of loyalty towards that community, while at the same time being negligent of the common good¹⁸ which is the basis

¹² Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

¹³ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

¹⁴ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

¹⁵ Erving Goffman. 2000. *Człowiek w teatrze życia codziennego*. Transl. Helena Śpiewak. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo KR, 47.

¹⁶ Jürgen Habermas. 2007. *Strukturalne przeobrażenia sfery publicznej*. Transl. Wanda Lipnik, Małgorzata Łukasiewicz. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 279.

¹⁷ Habermas. 2007. *Strukturalne przeobrażenia sfery publicznej*, 349–354.

¹⁸ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

of social life. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church indicates, it is an obligation of an authority to resolve conflicts between particular interests¹⁹. Conflicts and attempts to manipulate reality directly oppose the common good and this is a fundamental rule of all other rules of public order, safeguarded in the Polish constitutional system as an example for norms of acting. The philosopher and lawyer, Marek Piechowiak, expresses the belief that the rule of the common good should be treated as a leading rule that indicates the basics and axiology of a political system, expresses an individual's relation to social groups and a state, and set directions of social activities²⁰.

3. Social solidarity

According to the bishops, the way to eliminate social divisions and restore the sense of national togetherness is restoration of the sense of solidarity that, citing *Centesimus annus*, is a form of loving neighbours and an opportunity to renew social bonds²¹. Solidarity “is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all”²².

Thus, there are two possibilities: dialogue and solidarity or conflict and division. Only the first choice gives any chance of real development and peace. Still, it requires overcoming limits, distrust, and the ability of compromise²³. Therefore, solidarity helps to overcome social passiveness and withdrawal from the public sphere. According to the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, it plays the role of a rule that organises social life²⁴. In the message of John Paul II for the World Day of Peace we read: “In the spirit of solidarity and with the instruments of dialogue we will learn: respect for every human person; respect for the true values and cultures of others; respect for the legitimate autonomy and

¹⁹ Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego. 1992. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: KKK), No. 1908.

²⁰ Marek Piechowiak. 2012. *Dobro wspólne jako fundament polskiego porządku konstytucyjnego*. Warszawa: Biblioteka Trybunału Konstytucyjnego, 38–41.

²¹ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski; CA, No. 10.

²² Jan Paweł II. 1987. *Encyklika “Sollicitudo rei socialis”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: SRS), No. 38.

²³ Stanisław Kowalczyk. 2011. “Solidarność jako zasada życia społecznego w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II”. *Annales. Etyka w życiu gospodarczym* 14 (1): 19.

²⁴ Papieska Rada Iustitia et Pax. 2005. *Kompendium nauki społecznej Kościoła*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 193.

self-determination of others; to look beyond ourselves in order to understand and support the good of others; to contribute our own resources in social solidarity for the development and growth that come from equity and justice; to build the structures that will ensure that social solidarity and dialogue are permanent features of the world we live in”²⁵.

The notion of solidarity, in addition to trust, loyalty, or mutuality, is one of the most important components of the cohesiveness of social groups. All those notions, as a Polish sociologist Piotr Sztompka notices, constitute broadly understood social capital. Relationships based on such values are an essential condition for cooperation and achieving social goals²⁶. As one can conclude from the survey by the CBOS from 2018, general trust in Polish society is at a very low level, since only 22% of respondents claim that they trust others. Without trust there is no mutual understanding and smooth running of social processes which consequently results in more conflict and tension²⁷. In such an atmosphere it is undoubtedly difficult to build solidarity.

Treating others with mutual respect is a necessity when searching for a solution or remedy for low levels of trust and low levels of loyalty towards by inhabitants of communities. John Paul II wrote about it: “The exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognize one another as persons”²⁸. That results from the cited definition of solidarity which is the determination to commit oneself for others and their good. Thus, it requires mutual sharing of the world of life, participation, and activity because, as Benedict XVI stated, a lack of solidarity leads easily to social particularism²⁹.

4. The social truth

“Solidarity cannot exist without the truth”³⁰ and without solidarity and the truth a real social dialogue becomes impossible. One of the basic truths to which

²⁵ Jan Paweł II. 1986. Orędzie na światowy dzień pokoju: „Pokój” jest wartością, która nie zna podziałów na północ-południe, wschód-zachód: Jest tylko jeden pokój (16.12.2019), No. 5. <https://papiez.wiara.pl/doc/378713.Pokoj-jest-wartoscia-ktora-nie-zna-podzialow-na-polnocpoludnie/5>.

²⁶ Piotr Sztompka. 2012. *Socjologia. Analiza społeczeństwa*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 191.

²⁷ Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej. 2018. Raport z badań “O nieufności i zaufaniu” (01.02.2020). https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2018/K_035_18.PDF.

²⁸ SRS, No. 39.

²⁹ Benedykt XVI. 2011. Przemówienie do przedstawicieli Krajowego Stowarzyszenia Gmin Włoskich “Bądźcie promotorami współpracy, solidarności i humanizmu” (16.01.2020). https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt_xvi/przemowienia/gminy_12032011.html.

³⁰ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

the bishops pay their attention is the truth about inviolable human dignity³¹. Such convictions were expressed also by John XXIII in *Pacem in terris*: “Hence, before a society can be considered well-ordered, creative, and conversant consistent with human dignity, it must be based on truth”³². A great eulogist of human dignity was Janusz Franciszek Mazurek, a representative of the Lublin school. According to him, dignity is the basic foremost criterion of all rules and behaviour in a society and a State. Moreover, J. Mazurek claimed that the truth cannot be considered without reference to human dignity³³. The achievement of appropriate social goals is possible only through promotion of human dignity based on the truth about man³⁴. The truth is “*lógos* creating *diálogos*, namely communication and communion. The truth, allowing people to leave the circle of subjective opinions and feelings, gives them the possibility of acting beyond cultural and historical conditions as well as meeting each other in the evaluation of value and essence of things”³⁵.

Based on that foundation, as the bishops continue, we can talk about the truth in economical and political life³⁶. Following the theory of philosopher Wojciech Chudy, it should be said that “when lying becomes normal, that is the beginning of the end of truly human culture”³⁷ and the end of recognition of inherent human dignity. Without references to fundamental values, in a society assuming pluralism of opinions and the possibility to express them, the truth about human can be endangered. In the author’s opinion, it is not pluralism but unity that is the social goal³⁸. Pluralism, thus, is the readiness of members of a society to confront their opinions with others and to search for the truth, as “the truth (...) introduces order into social life”³⁹.

Another social truth, highlighted in the letter of bishops, is the truth related to authority. The shepherds of the Church indicate that no authority possesses a monopoly on the truth nor do they have miraculous solutions to state problems. They

³¹ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

³² Jan XXIII. 1963. *Encyklika “Pacem in terris”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: PT), No. 35.

³³ Franciszek Janusz Mazurek. 1990. “Uniwersalność praw i obowiązków człowieka”. *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych* 18 (1): 161.

³⁴ Benedykt XVI. 2009. *Encyklika “Caritas in veritate”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: CV), No. 73.

³⁵ CV, No. 4.

³⁶ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

³⁷ Wojciech Chudy. 2003. *Filozofia kłamstwa*. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza Volumen, 8.

³⁸ Wojciech Chudy. 2007. *Esej o społeczeństwie i kłamstwie*. Vol. 1: *Społeczeństwo zakłamane*. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa, 59.

³⁹ Wojciech Chudy. *Esej o społeczeństwie i kłamstwie*. Vol. 1, 65.

emphasize the rule of the common good and the necessity for democratization of actions, not concern about statistics, surveys and re-election, and those positive factors should be reflected in all activities of authorities⁴⁰. An authority is a part of a society which has resulted from the existence of conflict of interests between individuals and social groups. As the only force, according to the classical definition of Max Weber, it can use compulsion and overcome resistance in order to fulfil its own will⁴¹. Still, as Catholic social doctrine reminds us, an authority and a political community exists mainly in order to create the necessary conditions for the development of each member of its community⁴². That conviction is confirmed by the Second Vatican Council in the declaration *Dignitatis humanae*: “all people are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise ways that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits”⁴³.

Pope Benedict XVI draws attention to the main demand addressed to an authority which is the concern for the personal good of every human being, including his or her dignity. The requirement of that demand is courage of people in power to proclaim the truth about people and their life, and thus to oppose everything what is against humanity⁴⁴. Defending man, John Paul II emphasized that one cannot make compromises. Though it is often necessary in political life, it may change into a false compromise that undermines the absoluteness of the truth that is an impassable limit of actions⁴⁵.

5. Social dialogue

It is the truth that is necessary for genuine social dialogue, especially in public debate which unfortunately is often dominated by a one-sided and untrue picture, as well as discourse that is both offending and stigmatizing of opponents. That concerns not only politicians but also media people and all who take the floor on social and political issues in their work or life environment or

⁴⁰ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

⁴¹ Max Weber. 2002. *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo*, 39.

⁴² Papieska Rada Iustitia et Pax. 2005. *Kompendium nauki społecznej Kościoła*, 779–780.

⁴³ Sobór Watykański II. 1965. *Deklaracja soborowa “Dignitatis humanae”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: DWR), No. 2.

⁴⁴ Benedykt XVI. 2009. Pomagajcie ludziom budować lepsze życie (16.01.2020). https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/benedykt_xvi/przemowienia/akademiaapar_10022007.html.

⁴⁵ Jan Paweł II. 1993. *Encyklika “Veritatis splendor”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: VS), No. 96.

in the area of social media⁴⁶. During his journey to Azerbaijan, Pope Francis said: “This common effort to harmonize differences is of particular importance in our time, as it shows that it is possible to bear witness to one’s own ideas and worldview without abusing the rights of others who have different ideas and perspectives. (...) In order to effectively oppose these dangerous deviations, we need to promote a culture of peace, which is fostered by an untiring willingness for dialogue and by the awareness that there is no reasonable alternative to patiently and assiduously searching for shared solutions by means of committed and sustained negotiations”⁴⁷. The attacks on a particular person cannot fit in the perspective of dialogue. It concerns especially statements which are injurious or even false, which evidently depart from respect for a person and his or her good name⁴⁸.

A crucial issue in public dispute is, as presented by the bishops, the virtue of temperance. It calls for wise rather than hasty judgment and the avoidance of biased opinions, while at the same time it obliges those involved to engage in constructive and substantive discourse⁴⁹. Doing the opposite can thus lead to an information crisis. That is the consequence of the lack of responsibility and even contempt for a society which is submerged in disguised falsehood and manipulation. In the encyclical *Mater et magistra* John XXIII states that, despite existing differences of views, individuals or social groups going into a conflict situation should show each other respect while at the same time work together look for answers to problems. They should also make an effort to eliminate obstacles to understanding the issues under consideration and achieving intended goals for the common good⁵⁰.

Another virtue essential in the perspective of dialogue, indicated in the letter of the bishops, is fortitude. It is necessary to take responsibility for one’s own words and actions. It enables one to skilfully manage a conflict situation in which he or she should refer to the objective criteria of issues and to the recognition and respect of inalienable dignity of opponents. Fortitude in public discourse leads to openness, rather than hiding one’s views behind a façade of anonymity, it means the defence of peace, justice, and freedom as well as ac-

⁴⁶ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

⁴⁷ Franciszek. 2016. Podróż apostolska do Gruzji i Azerbejdżanu. Spotkanie z władzami (17.01.2020) http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/pl/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161002_azerbajjan-autorita-baku.html.

⁴⁸ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

⁴⁹ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

⁵⁰ Jan XXIII. 1961. *Encyklika “Mater et Magistra”*. Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana (henceforth: MM), No. IV.3

cepting criticism and admitting mistakes⁵¹. This requires the virtue of humility by all those involved.

Thus, genuine dialogue is required to draw attention to the other, be they a person or a group, with whom we are engaged in dialogue⁵². By only focusing on a partner and not on one's own view, vision, or conviction, it then leads to entering a dialogue without there being any ready theses or solutions at the very beginning. Therefore, a dialogue consists in listening attentively and accepting the interlocutors' arguments and the problems they encounter in their lives. Dialogue understood this way is an exchange. It is essential from the perspective of pluralistic society, in which differences of views and interests clash with each other again and again. It is through dialogue that attempts are made to introduce peaceful competition, marked by mutual respect, between individuals and social groups instead of tensions⁵³.

The Church has been sent to the world with her evangelising mission which includes dialogue and resolving the conflicts of people and particular societies. God in his act of creation required all the people to care for the world created by Him. Vatican Council II indicates that responsibility stating that "all people (...) should contribute to proper building of the world in which they commonly live; and this certainly cannot happen without honest and wise dialogue"⁵⁴.

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"Unity is more important than a conflict"⁵⁵. We are being called to continuous dialogic attitude. "That atmosphere should be created not only by nations and states but also all people free from geopolitical, ideological, social, economical, or even generational conditionalities"⁵⁶. Achieving unity, to which the bishops call, is a process. It cannot be achieved once and for all. When some factors of tensions disappear, another ones appear. A society is a constantly developing organism. It is not a static but dynamic formation where divergent aims and values cross each other continuously.

It is not possible to create a conflict-free society. Such ideas are utopian and harmful. As it has been presented above, a conflict itself does not have to

⁵¹ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

⁵² RH, No. 11.

⁵³ GS, No. 27.

⁵⁴ GS, No. 21.

⁵⁵ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2019. O ład społeczny dla wspólnego dobra – list społeczny Episkopatu Polski.

⁵⁶ Władysław Piwowarski. 1988–1989. "Dialog w społecznym nauczaniu Kościoła". *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych* 16–17 (1): 13.

be negative and is rather a call for development, searching for solutions and dialogue with the aim finding the truth. The Church can be and even should be one of social forces fostering dialogue. From the very beginning Jesus called her to be a tool for reconciliation (John 17:20-23). That requires competences and openness as well as concern for her own identity in order not to accept attitudes contrary to the Gospel. Thus, genuine solidarity with social problems needs the truth. That is the only way to conduct dialogue that serves the common good.

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