

Editorial

The first issue of “Theological-Historical Studies of Opole Silesia” of the year 2023 opens with three articles presenting questions in the field of the theological ethics. The first of them concerns the question of ethics of masculinity in the contemporary world from the perspective of St. Joseph. The author presents the prospect of morality, that abandons the paradigm of control and domination and embraces a style of sharing, and of caring.

The next paper concerns a question which during the actual war in Ukraine brought up the principle of the Christian or Catholic ethics of war and of peace. The author justifies, that the Christian or Catholic understanding of the ethics of war and peace is far from radical pacifism, and that their principles demand in light of the war in Ukraine a rethinking and reformulation over some specific questions.

The third article in the field of theological ethics examines the suitability of the ethical argumentations of Church statements on the COVID-19 vaccination. The author analyses and evaluates critically the argumentation on this topic and gives indications as to how such statements could be formulated more successfully in the future.

The next article is a synthesis of several historical-theological studies of the thought of Joseph Ratzinger / Benedict XVI. The author writes about various themes of Ratzinger’s theology, which are structured around the theological principles of his thought: Christ, Sacred Scripture, Ecclesiology, Mariology, and Liturgy and appreciates the unifying and integral perspective present in his ideas.

The moral catechesis of St. Ambrose addressed to catechumens on the basis of the treatise *De Abraham* is the matter of the next article. The author shows how the Bishop of Milan, using episodes from the life of Abraham, presents him as a model to follow, and for those who wish to enter the community of the Church.

The last theological article talks about God’s mercy, as revealed in the New Testament. The author relied on selected biblical texts which present mercy as an attribute of God the Creator and Savior perfectly revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ.

The historical part of this issue opens with an article concerning the graphic motifs used to decorate initials on medieval documents of Wrocław bishops. The author writes about their classification according to several dominant tendencies and describes the applied animal, floral, grapevines, and geometric motifs.

The next article is an analysis of letters written by St. John Fischer (1469–1535), Catholic Bishop of England. In the period of rule of Henry VIII Fischer wrote two letters during his incarceration, shortly before his martyred death: *A Spiritual Consolation* and *The Ways to Perfect Religion*. The first of them, edited in the spirit of medieval theology, is a warning against the possibility of God's punishment. The second, contains perspectives of Renaissance thought, and indicates ways to achieve mature religiosity in order to reach heaven.

The topic of the next paper is the life of Sister Teresa Janina Kierocińska (1885–1946), Mother Superior of the Convent of the Carmelites of Infant Jesus, who during the second world war offered refuge and hid both Jewish children and adults in the convent house in Sosnowiec. The author presents the circumstances resulting in the nun's involvement in aiding the Jewish community and memories of the convent sisters and inhabitants of Sosnowiec, drawing her depiction as the "Mother of the Zagłębie region".

The next article introduces the reader to the post-war account of German Jesuits who survived the atrocities of 1945 in Opole and described it in a report, a copy of which is kept in the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* in Rome. The article is a supplement to the account of the Polish Jesuits from August 1945, well known in the reading circle, who took over the Opole monastic institution after their German confreres.

An attempt to analyse the actions taken by the Catholic Church in defence of school retreats and to assess their effectiveness in the light of documents from the party-state authorities in the 1950s is the topic of the next article. The author confirms that the action "R" initiated by the communist state aiming at separating children from the faith and from the Church became a great discredit for the representatives of government.

The last article concerns the history of the diocese of Gliwice which in 2022 celebrated the 30th anniversary of its founding. The author provides information on the Gliwice bishops, the institutions of church administration existing in the diocese, the sanctuaries, formation houses, and more important events in the history of this young unit of the local Church in Poland.

The rubric *Reviews – Materials – Reports* contains three reviews and one report. The first text is a review of the book on experimental thought in the contemporary ethics written by Hungarian theologian Gusztáv Kovács. The next text is a review

of a book written by Norbert Jerzak on the conflict about rights of the Church and of the subjects between the prince of Wrocław Henry IV Probus and the bishop of Wrocław Thomas II Zaręba in the 13th century. The third review concerns the book written by Józef Mandziuk on the Wrocław cathedral chapter. The last text of this issue is the report on the international conference *The War in Ukraine and the Church*, which took place at the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Erfurt, Germany in May 2023.

