

Changes of Religious Pluralism with Regard to Conditions in the Czech Lands

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Abstrakt

Der Beitrag befasst sich mit der Frage des Glaubenspluralismus, so wie er sich im Laufe der Zeit in der Gesellschaft manifestiert hat, und anschließend auch im Rahmen der einzelnen Kirchen. Die erste neuzeitliche gesellschaftliche Äußerung war die Glaubentoleranz, die offiziell von dem Herrscher im 17. Jahrhundert bestätigt wurde, die aber erst zwei Jahrhunderte später eine praktische Auswirkung hatte. Eine Form des Glaubenspluralismus, der Ökumenismus, fand Widerhall in der tschechischen Gesellschaft vor allem nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. Einen wichtigen Schritt in Richtung Glaubenspluralismus in der katholischen Kirche stellten die Beschlüsse des II. Vatikan Konzils dar. Ein Anstoß für die Änderungen waren auch der politische Wandel in Mittel- und Osteuropa und die parallel verlaufenden Globalisierungsprozesse. Vor dem Hintergrund dieser historischen, religiösen und politischen Änderungen erreicht der Pluralismus eine bestimmte Entwicklungsstufe und spiegelt sich dann konkret in einzelnen Kirchen, bzw. in der katholischen Kirche wider. Die Folge ist auch Auffächerung der Theologie in viele Disziplinen und der damit verbundene Pluralismus.

Abrégé

Cette contribution traite du pluralisme religieux, de la façon dont il est progressivement apparu d'abord dans la société puis dans les Eglises elles-mêmes. Ses premières manifestations modernes se sont traduites par la tolérance religieuse, officiellement confirmée au XVII^{ème} siècle par le souverain, mais véritablement instaurée seulement deux siècles plus tard. Une des formes du pluralisme religieux, l'écuménisme, a trouvé un écho dans le contexte tchèque, surtout après la seconde guerre mondiale. Les conclusions du Concile Vatican II constitueront un pas marquant vers l'établissement du pluralisme au sein du clergé catholique. Les changements des systèmes politiques en Europe centrale et orientale ainsi que, parallèlement à cela, la mise en marche des processus de globalisation, ont donné une impulsion au pluralisme. En toile de fond à ces changements, le pluralisme est arrivé à un certain stade et s'est exprimé concrètement dans les différents clergés, dont le clergé catholique. Il y a aussi comme résultat le morcellement de la théologie en un grand nombre de branches et partie liée à cela son pluralisme.

Introduction

The scientific reflection of religious pluralism has a variety of aspects, the “external one“ being the most frequent. An article called *Secularisation or Pluralisation of Christianity*, published by a leading international religious sociologist, Martin D., is a good illustration of this phenomenon – two exceptions, no rule to analyse the relation between the church and the state. The contribution is based on a different ideological background. It uses a rather broad historical approach, seeking to define the “internal“ dimensions of religious pluralism first and, subsequently, its “external“ incentives. In my opinion, the key aspect is the way plurality has manifested itself in Christian churches, especially in the Catholic Church. I will also point out the circumstances of pluralisation processes of Christian churches in Central Europe and the Czech Lands. However, in connection with the so-defined approach, let me mention the importance of Martin’s universal methodological standpoint that any church would compromise itself if affected and co-formed by political power.

Development of Pluralism in Christianity

Evaluating processes associated with pluralism in Christianity, we cannot help mentioning the historical background as provided through irony by an outstanding ancient critic of Christianity, philosopher and writer Celsus. He speaks of fractionalisation in the Christian church, claiming that it is just the name that links the fractions¹.

There was no church unity at all in the first centuries (Filipi 2000: 68). The plural form of the term church (ekklesiai) occurred, along with the singular, as early as

¹ The work is called *The True Word on Christianity and Judaism*, dated 178. The author’s ideas are known from Origen’s polemic response (approximately 185 – 250).

the New Testament. This fact, however, evokes the existence of local churches with separate developments, full autonomy, peculiar liturgical traditions and, presumably, unique confessional and adoration practices. Despite these specific variances, the churches were aware of and obeyed the principle of interrelated community (Filipi 2000: 94).

Later developments resulted in such gaps between individual ecclesiastical formations that any further Eucharist was out of the question. Nevertheless, the emerging system was accompanied by separation-preventing efforts during the whole history of Christianity.

It is difficult to define the separating factors on the basis of historical studies because almost all the cases were influenced by “theological, less theological and non-theological” aspects at the same time (Filipi 2000: 94). Moreover, it is uneasy to pinpoint the moment in which the legitimate pluralism changed so much that the Eucharistic community ceased to exist.

The German theologian Edmund Schlink openly admitted three types of motives leading to religious streaming: a) The fight for unity in the church took place on the confessional and theological levels. Concurrence in the importance of Christ is the core of unity despite all ecclesiological variances. b) The second group includes differently perceived consequences of the faith in Christ. The separating factors got further and further from the Christologic core, approaching the worldly and religious consequences of this faith. c) The third group includes “political” factors in the widest sense of the word. They had the following two contrasting forms: 1. hegemonic demands of some centres, 2. emancipation efforts of certain marginal regions aiming at higher independence of the centre (Filipi 2000: 95-96).

The Christianity-splitting processes continued in the nineteenth century too. For example, the conclusions of the First Vatican Council held in 1870 aroused some

differentiation in the Catholic Church. As a result, the Old Catholic Church separated from the main stream.

Reunion efforts expressed by Ecumenism² occurred at that time. Common grounds were consciously sought that could draw the Christian churches, so distant in their theories, concepts of office and sacrament, close to each other again. Simultaneously, Ecumenism expresses a view that “streaming is inappropriate and should not be accepted without an attempt at a change” (Filipi 2000: 122).

However, it was not until the foundation of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam³ in September 1948, which instituted a fellowship of churches, that the ecumenical ideas started to spread widely. The Catholic Church joined the negotiations through five observers in New Delhi in 1961 for the first time.

The Second Vatican Council brought another incentive. The ecumenical movement was recognised by a Decree on Ecumenism⁴. Chapter 2 of this comprehensive and manifold document called Practical Implementation of Ecumenism says that it is unconditionally necessary to elucidate the whole theory clearly. Nothing is so alien to Ecumenism as the false irenism, which impairs the purity of the Catholic doctrine and obscures its genuine and undoubtful sense. Catholic theologians should bear in mind the existence of a certain hierarchy of various dogmas of the Catholic doctrine. Some authors refer to the texts of the Second Vatican Council, in which compromise is repeatedly expressed by means of so-called contradiction pluralism (Pesch 1996: 150). Studying the council

² The original meaning of the word was “decisions generally accepted by the church, i.e. unity with the universal church“, later it described efforts to promote cooperation, mutual understanding and close interrelations of Christian churches.

³ The founding assembly was attended by 351 delegates representing 145 churches from 45 countries. The number of churches had doubled by the end of the 20th century.

⁴ The introduction says that there exists no Catholic Ecumenism, that there are just Catholic rules for participation in the common ecumenical movement.

documents with the compromising nature, some “adhere and refer to them, claiming that “the Second Vatican Council said so”, while others argue that “the Council did not mean it like that” (Pesch 1996: 150-151). Either party may be right.⁵

In practice, Ecumenism is implemented through various activities on many levels under more prosaic circumstances. Communities and local parishes represent the basic ecumenical cooperation level, providing the largest space for mutual understanding without obeying strict formal principles.

Multi-church worship practices have specific, precisely defined rules. A common ecumenical mass, however, cannot replace regular divine services attended by the Catholics because ecumenical masses are a lower, marginal form of religious celebration due to the absence of Eucharist (Filipi 2000: 145-146).

The ecumenical dialogue represents another field of cooperation between churches. However, the considerable portion of energy invested in such common dialogues has yielded poor results so far. The American theologian Lindbeck G. called for a higher efficiency of the dialogue to make the churches “mutually structurally vulnerable” (Filipi 2000: 152).

The history of Christianity gives a clear evidence of temporarily suppressed religious diversity arisen at early times. The era of “unity” of the western Christianity was

⁵ Article 8 of the Decree on Ecumenism says to liturgical fellowships: “The expression of unity mostly forbids participation in divine services. The effort to attain grace is sometimes recommended.” This note is included among the general directives for implementation of Ecumenism and, moreover, is not limited to certain liturgies. This means that it basically does not exclude the Last Supper Fellowship. It is written elsewhere in the Decree that the reformation churches “did not keep the original and full essence of the Eucharistic secret because they are lacking the sacrament of priesthood.” (Pesch 1996:152). Not even Article 22 says explicitly that a Catholic is forbidden to take part in the Holy Last Supper with the reformation church (Pesch 1996: 153).

followed by reforming efforts leading to a rise of separate churches. Logically, this trend had to be completed with the search for the ecumenical dialogue. Both the “centrifugal” and “centripetal” processes represent the internal sources of religious pluralism.

Religious Pluralism in Central European and Czech Contexts

Along with the “internal” factors, there are “external” circumstances that influenced religious pluralism. They are characterised by responses of the public, scientists and particularly the ruling classes to the prevailing situation in religion and society.

The Christian communities in the Late Middle Ages in Europe had diverse and specific approaches to church practices.

Let us point out two relevant circumstances. First, the ongoing religious disputes and disorders accompanying the development of Protestantism and Reformation in the Renaissance era in the 16th century in Europe and the related problem of tolerance. Tolerance meant primarily non-persecution of people adhering to different religious faiths and practices at that time. Tolerance supporters sought to reform the law, i.e. prevent the state from defending the official religion “by sword” (Kolakowski 2004: 27).

Second, a somewhat different proportion of internal forces in the Czech Lands in the course of two centuries, from the beginning of the religion and society reforming movement, Hussitism (1419), until the defeat of the Czech Estates on the White Hill (1620), who, after the tolerance era⁶, succeeded in enforcing another stage – legality of various forms of religious and ecclesiastical pluralism.⁷

⁶ The tolerance era started in 1436 by an agreement between the Basil Council and Czech Hussites. It anchored and, particularly, authorised communion in both kinds in the Czech Lands.

⁷ At the end of this period, in 1609, Rudolph II issued the Imperial Charter, thus providing the most liberal religious law in Europe. The Charter guaranteed religious freedom for Old and New Utraquists,

Both the Reformation streams, one initiated by Luther and the other by Jan Hus, raised “internal” challenges of their own.

Lutheranism did not lay stress on activities and deeds of Christian believers. No deeds or religious acts were necessary for salvation – a good Christian just needed firm belief and devoutness to God. Luther preferred the Bible and the priest. He acknowledged the existing arrangement of human relations in a society and the necessity to have a secular authority that may not be opposed⁸ (Pojar 1995: 49). According to Luther, the only salvation lies in faith.

The spiritual concept of the Czech Reformation, which preceded the Lutheran movement, was different. The Law of God was in the first place. A Christian had to fulfil the Law through all deeds, activities and the daily life. The principle of God’s Law, which establishes the standards of the social life and calls for rectification of social relations, became the carrying element of the movement. The Czech Reformation drew upon international resources: Wycliffism, Waldenses and Chiliasm, on which Jan Hus’ and Chelčický’s theories⁹ were also based.

The Counter-Reformation era, however, put the Czech Lands on the level of the rest of Europe.

A significant step towards religious tolerance in the Czech lands and other national countries of the Habsburg Empire was not taken until 150 years later.

The Emperor Joseph II laid foundations for a long-lasting respect to other religions by issuing a key document in the ecclesiastical policy, generally called the Tolerance Act (1781). This solution was adopted thanks to the influence of Enlightenment as well as for political and economic reasons because the main purpose of the

Lutherans, Czech Brethren (Unitas Fratrum), and Catholics. It related both to the aristocracy, citizens of royal towns and serfs.

⁸ Lutheranism accepted the social arrangement much more than Catholicism.

⁹ They are the leaders of the reforming movement.

Tolerance Act was to integrate different, economically relevant layers of the population.¹⁰

The Tolerance Act meant a definitive end of the spiritual “monopoly” of Catholicism in the empire. The religious freedom declared in 1848 had not been fully enforced until the Protestant Act was issued in 1861, which not only tolerated but also made equal all Protestant confessions to the official Catholic religion.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries were characterised by a “consolidation” of the active non-Catholic churches and creation of spiritually oriented associations and organisations.

Now, we could conclude this brief general survey on the development of religious pluralism with regard to Czech conditions. Before we do that, let us mention that the variances between the Roman Catholic Church and other churches deepened after the Second World War and, especially, after the Communist coup d'état. For example, the Evangelic Bohemian Brethren joined the international family of Protestant denominations in 1948 and non-Catholic churches founded the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Czechoslovakia in 1955.

A brief historical excursus indicates essential changes in religious pluralism. Despite respecting people's spiritual interests and needs, religious pluralism had to struggle hard for its “place in the sun”. It was mainly the powerful of this world that fundamentally accelerated or decelerated pluralistic processes until the end of the 19th century, thus giving pluralism its basic features.

On Pluralistic Phenomena in Present-day Theology and Christianity

Plurality of today's theological streams is derived from the multilateral character of human life. The theological dictionary from K. Rahner and H. Vorgrimler says to this entry that “through unity in God and through common last

¹⁰ As the Emperor Joseph II said, over 60,000 serfs, labour forces, tax payers and one thousand soldiers had left the Czech Lands for Saxony and Prussia during the preceding 50 years (Pithart 1995: 162).

metaphysical structures, man and one's existential space is created of so many diverse and multiple facts that one's experience comes from originally diverse sources" (Rahner, Vorgrimler 1996: 247). The innovativeness of today's theological pluralism is based on specific theses and ways of thinking, which "exist beside each other as heterogeneous and incommensurable entities" (Rahner, Vorgrimler 1996: 248).

Like other disciplines, theology is divided into a high number of fields nowadays, each of them providing a lot of material and a specific methodology (Rahner 2004: 40).

Another aspect that influences theological plurality is associated with pluralism of human life. "The Christian is unable to integrate these diverse moments of his or her existence into a clear and easily controllable system" (Rahner 2004: 538).

Because of pluralistic trends in the present secular world, the church has been levelled with other organisations and evaluated using the same criteria. This significantly affects the life of laymen who directly participate in the church service. In this context, the presence of lay people in the church life is a natural thing and a consequence of confrontation of the Christian community with the ordinary secularised society rather than a secondary or historically forced service (Ambros 2002: 42). Today, theology occupies an irreplaceable position in one's orientation in the pluralistic world and religion because any fellowship or community combines both unity and plurality (Ambros 2002: 209).

Historically, religious pluralism used to draw new incentives for further development from social changes too. One of the changes was the reunification of Europe in 1990. The Christian churches joined this unification.

For the first time in the history, the Roman Bishops' Synod convened a meeting of representatives of European Bishops' Conferences to be held at the turn of November and December 1991, with the aim to discuss the key topics of the time. They included: liberation of Eastern Europe,

dialogue with the secular culture and new evangelisation of Europe. The participants pointed out the necessity of a dialogue and cooperation with all Christian churches and the Jews. However, there was no effort to establish a more detailed dialogue with the Western culture and Western pluralism from the very beginning (Maier 2005: 167).

The European Evangelic Assembly, the first assembly of its kind since the times of Reformation, held in Budapest March 1992, addressed its message to: "Evangelic Christian men and women, communities and churches in Europe", emphasising, like the Catholics, the challenge following from the new turn, and pointed out two values of historical heritage to be preserved: Reformation heritage and Enlightenment traditions (Maier 2005: 168).

The ecumenical dialogue between the Catholics and Protestants was hit by stagnation (Maier 2005: 169).

The All-Orthodox Convention at Istanbul in March 1992 was held in a spirit different from the preceding assemblies. The new developments were regarded as "a jeopardy to the Orthodox Church, which will have to confront itself with the Western secularism and Catholic and Protestant missionaries' demands"" (Maier 2005: 169). The relations between the Orthodox and Catholic churches "deteriorated" for over one decade. The new conditions brought "new and hard problems" to the existing ecumenical practices. The dialogue was not restored until the first half of 2006.¹¹

The pluralistic phenomena in today's theology and Christianity indicate an unparalleled width and variety of pluralism. Theology is "forced" not only to take the existing situation into account but also to respond properly to the reality of a secularised society. Christian church practices are facing a similar assignment. Hence, the ecumenical dialogue should also include an "obligation" to follow and

¹¹ An international conference took place in Vienna in May 3-5, 2006, co-organised by the Department of Foreign Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Pope Council for Culture. Among others, the contributions put the accent on the importance of a dialogue between the Orthodox and Catholic churches.

analyse events that take place outside the Christian sphere and perceive all processes in the world actively.

Pluralism and Its Consequences from Second Vatican Council till Today in Czech Lands

The Czech Catholic Church ceased to occupy traditional positions, being influenced by both the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council and the Prague Spring events. The development was not free of conflicts both in the church and the society. Every event became a source of a certain diverse tension. The priests, deprived of power by the Prague Spring, became a source of political tension. Ideological conflicts escalated between those who accepted the Council, liturgical reform, Ecumenism and enhanced rights and obligations of laymen in the church with pleasure, and those who opposed the Council and its conclusions with distrust and even hatred. "Thus, Catholic fundamentalism was restored in our country, including symptoms of intolerance and reluctance to conduct a dialogue with those who think differently" (Vaško 1999: 289). This was probably one of the reasons why the home authors emphasised repeatedly the necessity of cultivated discussions.

Mádr Oto a leading Czech theologian, pointed out that part of the Vatican Council conclusions that urged the need to give both the clergymen and laymen "a proper freedom of research, thinking and humble yet brave interconnection of views of things they are experts at" (Mádr 1992: 28). He also presents his concept of a dialogue that avoids arguing, battles of words, self-assertion, and situations in which emotions prevail and the "might is right" principle is used instead of "let's know the truth". The core of the dialogue is a discussion based on humbleness. "Everyone may be wrong, so I can be wrong too; everyone may be right, so the opponent may be right too. Let's seek the truth jointly" (Mádr 1992: 28). He placed a scientific dispute, i.e. a critical evaluation of an issue from various aspects, on a different level. The essence is the same – search for truth.

But an ethical public or scientific discussion has one more aspect - a good relation to the partner (Mádr 1992: 29), who is not a mere mediator of knowledge. The above-mentioned attitude is characterised as “polite and tactful yet ready to use emphatic words if necessary to defend the truth and man’s interests” (Mádr 1992: 29). This is the genuine dialogue, one of the foundation stones of the civilisation of love.

The necessity to specify the principles of a discussion concerning the present-day church was also considered by Ambros P. . He approaches them a bit differently, considering the following four criteria: truthfulness, love, refusal of disregard, and quality of language used (Ambros 2002: 13). If these criteria are applied, no “monologue” instead of “dialogue” arises.

The post-Council discussion dealt with rather general topics, which related, e.g., to the Czech history and thus gained an ecumenical dimension. For illustration, such names as Saint Wenceslaus, Charles IV, Saint Jan Nepomucky, Master Jan Hus , Jan A. Komensky and T. G. Masaryk are approached differently in the Catholic and Evangelic environments. These personalities have become symbols of two ideological lines since a certain time. How to explain this? “ It is because we seek our truth and fear for our certainty”. In this context, an essential question has arisen: “Can I be a Catholic when my church was not right all the time”? (Mádr 1992: 260). There is one answer to both the questions. Let us seek the truth jointly, objectively, no matter whether it is “light and dark” or “famous and shameful” and accept the whole truth. This approach could be proved right, e.g., by liberation of Master Jan Hus from the then and later purpose-bound ideological engagement (Mádr 1992: 262).

Logically, the development of pluralistic views resulting from the proceeding democratisation of the society after 1989 initiated significant changes in the approach to theological issues and religious practices. It also made it possible to react more profoundly to the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council.

For example, the President of the Christian Academy, Halík T., noticed changes among Catholic believers at that time. He states that the numbers of both standard believers and convinced atheists keep falling. "No matter if we like it or not, the type of a believer with reservations will prevail clearly in the future" (Jandourek 1997a: 49). Despite this, church pastorship focuses on the traditional believer, who is "dying out".

The Evangelic Church also contemplates the believers' characteristics. Dividing ordinary believers into confessions is a mere chimera today (Vokoun 2005: 198). Non-Catholic churches are dying of consumption, while numerous crowds of Roman Catholics long for such church as the Czechoslovak Evangelic and Czechoslovak Hussite churches and believe their doctrine because Protestantism is a chimera too. These processes are symptoms of a post-confession age according to Vokoun (Vokoun 2005: 199).

The fact that shared values represent the linking element of Christianity fails too. "The theoretical expression of these values, however, is not bound to one specific ideological direction and Christian values are contemplated in various philosophical directions today" (Kašný 2005: 274).

Some theologians contemplate the hierarchy of God, man and church. One legitimate approach believes that God created the church as an intermediate stage between Himself and the believers and it is the church that addresses individuals, turning them into believers. A reforming concept, also complying with the Holy Scripture, points out that "God addresses individuals and it is individuals, people who form alliances and create churches, and so there is nothing holy about the church" (Kohák 2005: 229). In this approach, the church is a framework for cohabitation, "which is created, for their purpose, by people who felt the touch of holiness" (Kohák 2005: 229).

In addition to general theological issues, specific situations in churches are discussed. The Catholic bishop

Malý V. evaluated the post-Council situation in the Czech Republic in the course of three decades. "We have found out that hardly anybody is ready to meet the incentives of the Second Vatican Council. In this respect, we are very far from the door opened by the Council." (Jandourek 1997b: 27). He identified the following key objectives of the Catholic Church in connection with the beginning of the new millennium:

- seeking of points of contact between international religions and Christianity,
- role of a woman in the church,
- perception of the church unity,
- revealing of rich traditions of other churches including mutual enrichment (Mišovič 2001: 143-144).

The Czech church representatives expressed different opinions on the last-named issue. The Cardinal Vlk M. evaluated the Protestants in the "traditional" spirit of the documents. In his opinion, they had no faith guarantee. They even refused things that had been maintained in the church for a long time. These things included not only religious sediments, but also some essential things (Pirnosová 1997: 64).

Štampach I., an ex-Dominican, now a representative of the Old Catholic Church, has adopted an absolutely different approach to non-Christian religions. He regards Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism as religions despite the fact that God is not always mentioned in them. "These ways had been religious or spiritual long before the first Taoistic and Confucian temples appeared" (Hanuš 1997: 85). Similarly, Halík T. finds a certain similarity between the three streams of the three biggest religions: Zen in Buddhism, Franciscanism in Christianity, and Chassidism in Judaism (Mišovič 2001: 146). The representatives of different churches show readiness to promote the inter-religious dialogue¹² by publishing texts and arranging public meetings.

¹² One of the first talks concerning the Spiritual Development of Mankind took place in the Ball Games Pavilion of the Prague Castle in October 1998, attended by the representatives of the Catholic Church,

Both mutual communication and practical cooperation were achieved. The strive after mutual understanding between churches, the present-day situation in the society resulting in low religiousness¹³ and lack of clericals create “a sociological background for forming of inter-church ecumenical structures in the Czech conditions” (Přibyl 2005: 194), which are active in the penal system and army on the basis of an agreement between the churches and the state. An example is an religious service agreement in the sector administered by the Minister of Defence, concluded between the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Czech Bishops’ Conference in 1998, which is based on the principle of mutual substitutability¹⁴ (Filipi 2000: 142). It is a unique agreement in the world.¹⁵

Pluralism is reflected specifically not only in approaches to religious issues but also within the Czech Catholic structures. The layout of various approaches in the present-day Catholic Church is indicated in the Cardinal Vlk’s Statement published in late July 1999. This document was commented on by the representatives of the Kairos 98 Initiative. They claimed that they had read the characteristic of the right-left division in the church mentioned by Vlk with anxiety and bitterness, considering it an example of simplification that is unable to capture the complexity and variety of the church life and that makes

Evangelic Czech Brethren and svámí Mahéšvaránanda, and arousing great interest in the public (Mišovič 2001: 146).

¹³ This situation was proved by the Gfk research in 2004 for the last time, which recorded the lowest rate of belief in God in the Czech Republic of all European countries.

¹⁴ The agreement says: “In the sector of the Ministry of Defence, every clergyman represents not only the church he or she is a member of but also and primarily is a common representative of all churches associated in the EC and CBC, which, jointly, appoint him or her to execute the spiritual mission” (Filipi 2000: 143).

¹⁵ According to the Pope’s constitution *Spirituali militum curae*, it is the responsibility of the Catholic Church to form its own military bishoprics instead of joining the ecumenical structures in the army as stipulated in the Czech agreement (Přibyl 2005: 194).

the church image too political (Mišovič 2001: 146). Vlk's approach and all responses to it indicate the existence of contrasting attitudes in the Catholic Church, which polarise and even take the shape of a certain typology. The following four groups of people can be identified according to their approach to polarisation :

a) indifferent or disparaging people, indicating aloofness and superiority;

b) pragmatic people, preferring proper work of an institution or organisation and trying to get along with polarisation;

c) involved or engaged people, showing an interest to understand polarising trends and overcome them;

d) people identifying themselves with polarisation, showing strong commitment aimed at victory (Ambros 2002: 230).

di) The roots of the polarisation-arousing tension are connected with a number of processes: from the ability to understand the modern world, via fear of negation of one's identity, to fear of moral and spiritual relativism prevailing in the society (Šebek 2002: 232), and with the effort to defend the position of the Catholic Church in the society (Kabele, Spousta 2002: 232). Sociologically, polarisation occurs between: the active minority and the majority on the church margin, the minority young generation and the majority older generation, the "Moravian" and Czech parts of the church, and the "orthodox" minority and "syncretic" majority (Kabele, Spousta 2002: 232). Polarisation is clearly seen in positive or negative attitudes towards cultivation of views in the church based on the desire to argue or predetermine topics to be discussed in the church (Frei 2002: 232). Polarisation manifests itself in pastoring practices too. There are diverse approaches to the world, authority, church, and sources of hope, i.e. to elements that influence and determine the Christians' views and behaviours. Diverse views result in different pastoring procedures and strategies, which arouse consent and acknowledgement, or opposition and hostility (Opatrný 2002: 233).

The diversity of views is reflected in religiously oriented periodicals. In late 1990s, the Report magazine was politically linked with the Civic Institute, the Perspektivy monthly became a forum interpreting views of a narrow group whose views were close to Ota Mádr's and Prague Dominicans, and the diversity of views and interests within the Czech Bishops' Conference affected the character of the Catholic Weekly (Štampach 1999: 199-202).

Recently, a Catholic two-monthly *Te Deum* has appeared among the religious magazines. It obviously addresses traditionalistically oriented Christians. A close relationship to the schismatic Lefebvre-influenced priests' fellowship of St. Pius¹⁶ can be noticed (Machula 2006: 1). The Czech Bishops' Conference commented on the rise and orientation of the magazine too.

Speaking of pluralism in the Catholic Church, which often shows signs of polarisation, it is stated that "this polarity is not primarily a cognition-deepening phenomenon, but an effort to monopolise its cognition of truth" (Ambros 2002: 285-286). The recent rise of a conservative Catholic magazine proves this evaluation right.

Let us illustrate a situation in the context of the Czech Catholic Church: Where social circumstances are stagnant or "conserved", attention is paid mainly to the inner religious and church life and all the other things "take a back seat". However, the moment a political change occurs, the church gets activated and "vitalised", unveiling the diversity of views, "veiled" by the everyday requirements of the church organisation before.

¹⁶ The second issue of the magazine presents an idea of Pius X's saying that endeavours may come to nothing unless a suitable offensive and defensive weapon is at hand – a faithful and genuine Catholic press (*Te Deum* s.1).

Conclusion

Obviously, religious pluralism is a natural part of the Christian life. The variety of forms of relations to sanctity cannot be incorporated in clear and unambiguous requirements. Even the early Christian communities did not try to do so and the entire history of Christianity has mostly tended to diversity.

The organisation of the religious life, however, was a factor that, through political and social circumstances, affected the state of pluralism significantly. By seeking support only among the powerful of this world, the church reinforced its structures yet often to the detriment of pluralism and connections with ordinary people, believers.

The times of stability were always beneficial to the common church life. Any significant political turmoil resulted in new approaches to the surroundings and the whole world both in social structures and inside the church. In this context, it was the upheavals in Europe around 1990 that brought the most relevant stimuli for pluralism in Christianity, accentuating the need to conduct a mutual internal dialogue and discussions with the wide public. Moreover, it is obvious, in the Czech church in particular, that thanks to “unfavourable external objective conditions”, opponents, who normally negotiate only, are ready to cooperate actively.

Religious pluralism is accompanied by a diversity of attitudes and views between and inside the churches. Multilateral discussions may have contrasting effects. They include both people who flexibly promote the Christian, inter-religious and social dialogues, and individuals who adhere to their positions tenaciously. The endeavour to spread love is anchored in the very essence of Christianity and supports the assumption that religious pluralism can substantially enrich the church life now and in the future.

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