

Abstract

Shi Xiaowang, *Pastoral care of Chinese immigrants in Poland from 2000 to 2020*

The phenomenon of migration has a great impact on the development of human societies, both positive and negative. This phenomenon poses a great challenge to countries, both those losing their citizens and those receiving them. It is also a great challenge for the faith community. The Church must confront this phenomenon not only in order not to abandon its disadvantaged children, but also to seize a new evangelization opportunity towards non-Christians who have suddenly found themselves within the sphere of influence of already established Catholic communities. This doctoral dissertation was written at a seminar in missiology. The author was inspired by examples from other countries, where work among Chinese immigrants has borne visible fruit not only in the growth of the faith of already believers, but also in the discovery of faith among Chinese non-Christians.

The dissertation presented here analyzes the experience of the formation of the beginnings of the pastoral ministry of Chinese immigrants in Poland. The dissertation consists of four chapters. The first three chapters are based on the scheme of the most recent Vatican document - the instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*. This was the most up-to-date document when the research was started. Accordingly, the first chapter of the work first presented an outline of the theology of the role of migrants in the history of salvation history. In the first section it was a reference to the Old Testament, in the second to the New Testament and the pastoral role of migrants in the history of the Church. Attention was paid to the historical-salvific significance of the role of the original migrations of mankind, the unique significance of Abraham as an immigrant, the immigrant Joseph in Egypt was emphasized, the world's most famous migration, the exodus of Israel from Egypt, to the life of Ruth, a stranger among the Israelites, who became the ancestor of Jesus Christ, was mentioned. Attention was also given to the rights of migrants in the Old Testament. The second section, after looking at the message and teaching of Jesus Christ, mentioned the pastoral care of Catholic migrants in apostolic times, in antiquity and the Middle Ages, and in the modern era.

The third section of the first chapter featured a presentation of the three most important (at the time) Vatican documents on the pastoral care of migrants, namely *Exsul familia*

nazarethana, *De pastorali migratorum cura* and *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*. The fourth section traces the formation of the Vatican dicasteries responsible for the pastoral-missionary care of migrants, from the first offices, through the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Travelers, to the contemporary Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development. The last two sections of the first chapter focused on the right to migrate and on pastoral and missionary care for migrants.

Collecting the conclusions of this chapter, it is clear that the story of salvation that God led through immigrants in Old Testament times is the best reference for pastoral care among Chinese immigrants in Poland today. Since God did great things through various immigrants in biblical times, the pastoral care of immigrants is not just a mere addition to the classical pastoral care, but an essential part of it, even if in percentage terms these immigrants do not constitute a great number. The Catholic Church has also been involved in the reflection on the rights of immigrants in the secular community.

The second chapter traces the presence of Chinese immigrants in Poland and the first initiatives of the Church in Poland. From roughly the 16th century, the Chinese began to migrate around the world on an increasing scale. Nowadays, especially since the reform and opening up of China in the early 1980s, more and more Chinese are moving out of China to other countries. Poland has not been a particularly attractive country for the Chinese until recently, but it is gradually beginning to attract more and more because of its good investment, living and living conditions. Since the Catholic Church in China does not have the capacity to provide adequate pastoral care for Catholic migrants, so gradually the issue of initiating pastoral care for Chinese in Poland began to emerge. The first such initiatives came from such people as Fr. Roman Malek SVD, Fr. Antoni Koszorz SVD, Sr. Aleksandra Huf SSpS and Fr. Czesław Noworolnik. They aroused awareness of the duty of care of the Polish Church for the Chinese Church and for Chinese Catholics living in Poland. On the institutional side, the framework for creating pastoral care for Chinese immigrants in Poland was taken by the *Fu Shenfu* Migrant Center and the *Sinicum* Association. There was also the *Made for China* initiative originating from the Diocese of Tarnów. These initiatives came not only from religious circles, but also from diocesan circles.

The third chapter was dedicated to faith formation in this, for now, small community, which nevertheless has all the characteristics of development. The community of Chinese Catholics represents less than one percent of the thousands of Chinese migrants in Poland, but a large part of it did not even come from Catholic families. The small number, in the early days

of organizing structures, also has its advantages. The activity is more likely to reach every family and even every person, and it's easier to have fraternal and sisterly relationships among community members. The members of this community are generally young, dynamic and well-educated, which provides a good foundation for future faith formation. In recent years, in addition to regular monthly Masses in Chinese, the community's ministries have included Masses in Chinese on some important church celebrations and traditional Chinese festivals, as well as catechetical formation for catechumens and premarital formation for couples preparing for marriage. At this stage, it is impossible not to mention Fr. Grzegorz Kowalczyk, who, as pastor of the parish of the Nativity, has now become the main coordinator, hosting two Chinese priests at his home.

Summing up the conclusions of this, in a sense the most important, third, chapter, it is worth noting that Polish pastors are generally open-minded. However, taking into account that Chinese Catholics in Poland live in different localities, it would be worthwhile to think about establishing some kind of Chinese pastoral unit. Not yet a personal parish, but some other unit to which Chinese Catholics living in Poland in other dioceses could belong. For now, the jurisdictional powers of the pastoral care of Chinese Catholics apply only to the Warsaw metropolis.

It seems worthwhile to preserve the current practice of Chinese Mass at Nativity parish on the third Sunday of each month and to give special emphasis to Mass on the "four feast days." On other Sundays, depending on the needs, Chinese Masses could be celebrated in other places, where Chinese people in the neighborhood, especially those who do not speak Polish, would be invited to attend.

As for missionary outreach with the Gospel, the number of baptisms does not yet allow for the systematic development of a single way of catechumenate. Practically every baptismal preparation is tailored to the particular situation. In the case of marriages, the situation is even more difficult, since not only the problems of the modern world and the problems of intercultural, but also interreligious marriages are involved. It is also difficult to organize a catechization program for Chinese-speaking children, although it seems that in the case of school or kindergarten children, they integrate quite quickly with their Polish peers and can benefit from catechization in Polish.

Helping them develop spiritually and sustain the practice of daily prayer is also a challenge. Some attempts are being made to popularize the Liturgy of the Hours. Much more

popular are prayer rosary groups and the familiar Chinese practice of reading and learning by heart certain passages of the Bible. So far it has not been possible to organize Chinese retreats, although, unlike in China, there are quite a few retreat centers in Poland where such retreats could be held for a smaller group. As for walking pilgrimages, it would be difficult to organize a Chinese walking pilgrimage to Jasna Góra for the time being. A pilgrimage to nearby churches and shrines could be a good idea. There is no shortage of such places in the Warsaw area. At this stage, the community is not yet able to maintain its place of prayer and pastors on its own, so the help and hospitality of the parish of the Nativity is very valuable.

At the end of writing the paper, the latest Vatican instruction on the pastoral care of immigrants was published a year ago. An analysis of this document and an attempt to apply its conclusions to the situation of the pastoral care of Chinese immigrants in Poland is the content of the fourth chapter. From the methodological point of view, it turned out to be a "blessed fault," because unlike *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* and earlier documents, the instruction "Pastoral guidelines for intercultural ministry among migrants" is not so much a legal document, but more of a program manifesto, which would be worth paying attention to in the development of pastoral care for immigrants. It is well suited to outlining the prospects for the development of the activity of interest.

Although much more of its content relates to the attitude of the receiving Church than to the pastoral care of immigrants itself, we can conclude from the instruction that the pastoral care of Chinese immigrants is a great opportunity for the renewal of Polish pastoral care. It helps raise awareness of the catholicity (universality) of the faith and the need for cultural openness. The indications of this instruction clearly indicate the necessity of including the pastoral care of migrants within the traditional Polish pastoral ministry. However, the author does not feel called to evaluate pastoral ministry in Poland. Leaving these issues to those responsible for this on the part of the Episcopal Conference and individual dioceses, the work highlights several issues where Polish pastoral programs could help pastoral care for Chinese immigrants.

Summing up the work, the author notes that as more and more Chinese immigrate to Poland, it is worthwhile for this group to receive more attention in theological, pastoral and missionary studies. This pastoral ministry is only taking its first steps, but some experiences are already worth analyzing.