

SUMMARY

The topic of this doctoral thesis is *The identity of a teacher of religion in the light of Church Documents in the years 1992-2022*. The inspiration for this topic came from the scientific work of Fr Dr Robert Szewczyk: *The identity of the catechist in the light of Church Documents in the years 1965-1991*. Fr. Szewczyk described the identity of a catechist in his work, while my work searches for the identity of a teacher of religion. At the same time, it is a kind of continuation of the work of Fr Szewczyk, because it analyzes Church Documents in the next thirty years, after the period discussed in the work of Fr. Szewczyk.

The thesis has been divided into two parts: biblical-historical and empirical-research. The biblical-historical part contains three chapters, titled: *The Holy Bible as a source in building the identity of a teacher of religion*; *The identity of a teacher of religion in historical perspective*; *The identity of a teacher of religion in The Catholic Church Documents after The Second Council of Vatican*; *Teacher of religion – lecturer or witness? Profession or vocation? – analysis of contemporary literature and research results*; *Establishing new recommendations for the attitudes of teacher of religion - analysis of research results*.

The first chapter is a historical and chronological look at the role of teacher of religion. Until the Enlightenment and the introduction of religious education to public schools, there was no distinction between a catechist and a teacher of religion. The faith was taught by a catechist. However, by analyzing historical sources about the catechist, interesting conclusions can be drawn about the attitude of teacher of religion. Teacher of religion appeared as one of the catechist's specializations. Every catechist can be a teacher of religion, but not every teacher of religion is a catechist in the full meaning of the word, because religion education at school is also not catechesis. Catechesis has three functions: teaching, upbringing, initiation. Teaching religion at school fulfills only the first two: teaching and upbringing. It is unable to initiate because it has no access to the celebration of the sacraments and liturgy. It can only lead the student to initiation, but it does not initiate like catechesis.

The primary source is the Holy Bible. The author focused on the terminology used in the Bible to describe a “teacher of faith”. The etymological meaning of words and the context of their use help to draw interesting conclusions for the work of a teacher of religion. Attention of the author were also drawn to the attitude of Jesus as a Teacher and the characteristics of His disciples, as well as to the figure of St Paul and his teaching methods aimed at different groups of followers.

Analysis of subsequent sources was divided into historical eras: the Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

In the ancient times, the author analyzed the *Didache* document which describes the catechesis of the Apostles times. What is interesting in the analysis of the letters of St Justine is that catechesis serves to defend faith and doctrine. St Augustine, St Ambrose, St John Chrysostom and St Cyril of Jerusalem were distinguished in the golden age of the catechumenate. The work of St Augustine *De catechizandis rudibus* is particularly important because it describes the work and teaching methods of a catechist and presents

models of two examples of catechesis - today it would be called outlines of religion lessons and the first methodological manual in the history of religious education.

Due to its duration, the Middle Ages introduced many new themes for the catechist's ministry. Emphasis was paid to the role of a catechist as a missionary. It was important to discover the role of the family in transmitting the faith and family catechesis. Catechesis for adults was developed where the catechist was primarily a priest. The Fourth Council of the Lateran undertakes more systematic reflections on catechesis and proposes systematization of teaching. It is when the first textbooks for teaching religion, textbooks for clergy and schools of Christian science appear.

The Fifth Council of the Lateran directly discusses a teacher of religion, distinguishing him from a catechist. Then the author examined the Council of Trent and the work of the Counter-Reformation which was a response to Luther's Reformation. The Council of Trent was a huge breakthrough in the life of the Church, laying the foundations of the life of this community for the next 400 years. Great changes took place in catechesis and religious teaching. The teaching of doctrine through catechisms came to the fore which meant memorizing the definitions of the catechism. The catechist's task was to teach *apologia*, i.e. the ability to defend the Roman Catholic faith against the Reformation.

The Enlightenment is a completely new era, also in catechesis. The National Education Commission, the emergence of public schools, accessible to everyone, became a challenge for catechesis. Until then, it took place in parishes and monastic schools. With the beginning of the Enlightenment it was time to find a place for it in a state school. A historical catechism emerged and it referred not only to doctrine, but also to biblical stories and the history of the Chosen People. Its objectives and methods were ahead of its time. This idea will only return during the Second Vatican Council. The Sulpician method in religious education was created as a method of working with the Bible. It was during the age of Enlightenment that a distinction was made between a religious teacher teaching at school and a catechist at a parish. Unfortunately, the transfer of teaching religion to schools resulted in the decline of importance of parish catechesis or its disappearance. Models of work of a teacher of religion at school were created. Authors such as St Jan de La Salle, J.I. Felbiger and B. Strauch created such models.

The 19th century began a new perspective on teaching religion at school as pedagogy developed. New models of teachers of religion emerged: teacher of religion as an educator; teacher of religion as a narrator of a Bible story; teacher of religion as a herald according to the definition of Augustinus Gruber.

When analyzing the 20th century, the Church Documents written from the beginning of the 20th century to the Second Vatican Council were focused on.

The third chapter is titled *The identity of a teacher of religion in The Catholic Church Documents after The Second Council of Vatican*. The author made a summary of the results of Fr Szewczyk's doctoral thesis in which he described The Catholic Church documents from 1965 to 1991. Then there is an analysis of the papal documents of John Paul II from 1978 to 2000. Regarding the 21st century, guidelines for the work of a teacher of religion were analysed in the papal documents of John Paul II from 2001 to 2005, Benedict XVI and Francis until 2022. The author made an analysis the General Directory

on Catechesis, the Directory on Catechesis of The Catholic Church in Poland and the Directory on Catechesis.

The fourth chapter tries to answer the question: Teacher of religion – lecturer or witness? Profession or vocation? For this purpose there was a questionnaire survey among teachers of religion from the Łowicz diocese. The survey was conducted with the help of the Institute of Statistics of the Catholic Church. The survey results allowed to describe difficulties such as: transmitting the faith to students; communication between the teacher of religion and students; the identity of a teacher of religion; the role of individual talents of a teacher of religion during school classes; participation of teacher of religion in school life.

Chapter fifth creates new recommendations for the attitudes of a teacher of religion. New methods of activating which lead to Christian initiation are discussed. The school subject of Religious education as part of the catechisation of the Church is described. Attention is drawn to: teaching the doctrine of faith combined with the practice of spiritual life during religion classes; attitudes of the teacher of religion towards the headteachers, teaching staff and other school employees; the attitude of a teacher of religion when cooperating with the parish and other teachers of religion.