

Abstract

The doctoral thesis entitled: *The Role and Significance of the Christian Attitude of Community Service in the Light of the Teachings of Blessed Stefan Wyszyński (1901–1981)* by Rev. Stanisław Wroński, MA, Lic. Stanisław Wroński, supervised by Rev. Dr. Rafał Bednarczyk, Professor at the Faculty of Theology of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. The main sources were the teachings of Blessed Stefan Wyszyński published in “Słowo Kujawskie”, “Ateneum Kapłańskie”, “Kronika Diecezji Włocławskiej”, “Prąd” and in “Wiadomości Archidiecezjalne Warszawskie”, “Wiadomości Archidiecezji Gnieźnieńskiej”, “Wiadomości Diecezji Lubelskiej”, “Ład Serca”, and the Pastoral Letters published in Paris. Many of these were published in the 23 volumes of *Collected Writings*, whilst all the *Authorised Sermons and Speeches*, in an edition signed as KiPA and covering the years from 1956 to 1981. He also left behind a diary from his internment between 1953 and 1956, published under the title “Prison Notes”, as well as the “Pro memoria” diaries kept from October 1948 to May 1981. Most of these writings are of a parenetic rather than purely academic nature, in which he generally employs an appropriate methodology. Given the sheer volume of these writings, a selection had to be made to choose the most representative passages that reflect the authentic teaching of Blessed Stefan Wyszyński. It should also be noted that, whilst there is no exhaustive treatise on the attitude of service amongst the numerous documents, references to it—though numerous—appear within a specific sociological context and are addressed to representatives of various social groups and different communities and ministries within the Church. Whilst the articles are organised in terms of argumentation, the references to the attitude of service in homilies and speeches are of a kerygmatic and parenetic nature. The study therefore employs an analytical and comparative method to highlight the originality of the reflections of the Primate of the Millennium. The entirety of Blessed Stefan Wyszyński’s teaching on the attitude of service can essentially be divided into four segments: the Church, marriage, the family and the nation. Promoting the attitude of service in married and family life was of exceptional importance to the Primate of the Millennium throughout his pastoral teaching. As a statesman and a responsible shepherd of the Church, he viewed the family, its tasks and the threats to it both from a sociological perspective—with particular regard to Catholic social teaching—and from a theological perspective, particularly in moral terms. He addressed his reflections not only to the laity (publishing, among other places, in the magazine “Ład Boży”), but also to the clergy responsible for the formation of future priests. In the second chapter, entitled “The Role of the Attitude of Service in Married Life”, marriage is presented as a covenant of self-sacrificing love

in the teaching of Blessed Stefan Wyszyński. Particular emphasis is placed on the sacramental nature of marriage, its characteristics (sanctity, unity and indissolubility), the vocation to marriage, and the purposes of marriage. Blessed Stefan Wyszyński saw abuses (e.g. divorces) in relation to the sacrament of marriage promoted by the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland, to which he strongly objected, and he called for marital fidelity. In the third chapter, entitled 'The Family as the Domestic Church and a Community of Servant Love', the focus is on Blessed Stefan Wyszyński's teachings regarding the Family of Nazareth as a model for Christian families. A family built upon the sacrament of marriage participates in the prophetic, priestly and kingly missions of Jesus Christ, in which an attitude of service constitutes an essential element of the Christian life of parents and children within the family. This chapter highlights, in particular, the task of fostering an attitude of service within Catholic families. Chapter Four explores the attitude of service in its socio-moral dimension. In the teachings of Blessed Stefan Wyszyński, the duties of a Christian towards the nation—which is the 'family of families'—are particularly evident; therefore, in this context, the following should be emphasised: service to life, which must be promoted in public life and opposition to abortion practices that destroy the biological fabric of the Nation; charitable work, which aims to support individuals and families in difficult financial circumstances; service as a principle of social life and political activity, which promotes respect for human dignity and protects human rights; and service as the path of the Christian vocation, which is the faithful imitation of Christ.