

Zbigniew Dziubiński (2020). *Sport w służbie osoby i wspólnoty w perspektywie papieża Franciszka* [Eng. Sport in the service of the person and community from the perspective of Pope Francis], Warsaw: Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education, Salesian Sports Organisation of the Republic of Poland, pp. 1-232.

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Another book by Zbigniew Dziubiński has been published, dealing with the issues of the ideological relationship of the Catholic Church with sport: sport in the service of the person and community from the perspective of Pope Francis. The author – activist, expert of the Ministry of National Education, professor at the University of Physical Education in Warsaw, president of the Salesian Sports Organisation of the Republic of Poland – is known in the academic community as the Author of independent works and the editor of numerous collective monographs devoted to social and humanistic aspects of sport, Olympism, tourism and recreation. The original monographs by Zbigniew Dziubiński are focused on exploring the philosophical, social and theological horizons in Catholic teaching about sports and sports education programmes in the Church. The starting point of these monographs are essentially two educational and philosophical traditions: Salesian and personalistic¹. The current work is devoted to the description and interpretation of the place of sport in its servant relationship to the person and community in the teaching and writings of Pope Francis. The interpretative dominant here is the perspective of personalistic thought, thus, it is worth emphasizing that the monograph is part of a broad-

er trend of Polish personalism in pedagogy, sociology, theology and philosophy of physical culture, the classics of which are – next to Zbigniew Dziubiński himself – Priest Stanisław Kowalczyk and Andrzej Pawłucki².

The book consists of seven chapters bound by the framework of the Introduction and Summary. In subsequent editions of such a structure, the author focuses on the biography of Pope Francis (including his sports passions, e.g. as a football fan), educational and pastoral support of the Catholic Church for human sports activity, sociological and axiological characteristics of the phenomenon of sport, threats and pathologies, as well as the challenges faced by contemporary sport, and finally, the responsibility of the Church for sport, resulting from the unity of their goals in the service of the person and the human community. These issues are woven into the complex philosophical and sociological hermeneutics of sport itself, but in direct connection between the teachings of the Catholic Church and of Pope Francis, and sport.

The document *Giving the best of yourself: a Document on the Christian perspective on sport and the human person, from the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life*, announced by the Holy See on June 1, 2018, was made the basis for depicting the Catholic and Pope's thoughts on sport by the

¹ See, among others: Z. Dziubiński (2008). *Kościół rzymsko-katolicki a kultura fizyczna* [Eng. The Roman Catholic Church and Physical Culture]. Warsaw: Joseph Piłsudski University of Physical Education; *idem* (2014). *Sport w perspektywie salezjańskiej* [Eng. Sport from the Salesian Perspective]. Warsaw: Joseph Piłsudski University of Physical Education – SALOS RP; *idem* (2017). *Sport w perspektywie św. Jana Pawła II i św. Jana Bosko* [Eng. Sport from the Perspective of St. John Paul II and St. John Bosco]. Joseph Piłsudski University of Physical Education – SALOS RP, Warsaw 2017.

² Priest S. Kowalczyk (2002). *Elementy filozofii i teologii sportu* [Eng. Elements of Sport Philosophy and Theology]. Lublin: KUL Publishing House; *idem* (2009). *Ciało człowieka w refleksji filozoficznej* [The Human Body in Philosophical Reflection], Lublin: KUL Publishing House; *idem* (2012), *Personalizm – podstawy, idee, konsekwencje* [Eng. Personalism – Basics, Ideas, Consequences], Lublin: KUL Publishing House; A. Pawłucki (1996). *Pedagogika wartości ciała* [Eng. Pedagogics of the Body's Values]. Gdańsk: Academic Publishing House of the University of Physical Education; *idem* (2013). *Nauki o kulturze fizycznej* [Eng. Physical Culture Sciences]. Wrocław: Academic Publishing House of University of Physical Education in Wrocław; *idem* (2019). *Sport, asceza i miłość* [Eng. Sport, Asceticism and Love]. Kraków: Impuls.

Author of the text³. Although Pope Francis was not the direct author of this document, Dziubiński showed his enormous inspirational role in its creation, as well as repeated references to him in papal teaching. The title of the document itself was taken over by the main coordinator of its final shape, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, from Pope Francis's speech to young athletes on June 7, 2014⁴. The phrase "giving your best" can be safely treated as a perfect complement to the directive *Citius, altius, fortius*, which was written by Dominican preacher Henri Didon (1840-1900), and which became the motto of the Olympics and IOC. Sport, incomparable to any other human experience, is an area of constant struggle between man and himself. Sport reveals a human passion for crossing bodily, mental and spiritual boundaries. For Pope Francis, the formula "giving your best" means that sport should be a space for meeting (communication, dialogue, collective effort to compete), formation (shaping and improving the human person), mission (transmitting the highest values of sport in the world by using its global reach) and sanctification (by striving to realise the fullness of life, sport sanctifies life, because fullness is holiness)⁵.

It is impossible to refer to all the threads taken up by the Author in his rich and complex work. Considering the main idea contained in the title of the monograph, i.e. the idea of sport as a servant to man and the community, I will selectively focus on philosophical, more precisely anthropological and axiological, issues. The author emphasizes that the basis of the papal and Catholic understanding of sport and its relationship to man and community is personalism. What is personalism? It is a current of Christian philosophy focused on the idea and ontological primacy of the person (in Latin: *persona*), which has been developing since the mid-20th century. Outstanding personalists were, among others, Emmanuel Mounier, Jacques Maritain, Karol Wojtyła, Józef Tischner. Personalism develops the basic themes of the philosophy of man as a unique being in nature, present in the thought of Aristotle and the scholastic philosopher Thomas Aquinas. Mantreated as a person is not a thing, it cannot be instrumentalised, for it is an end (*telos*) in itself. This is based on dignity and respect for the individual as a person. A person is a being composed of matter (body) and form (soul), and is a whole in which both components are

supported in the process of *entelechia*, i.e. maturation and improvement. Therefore, it is a mistake to degrade the value of the body in relation to the soul, or to completely discredit it in terms of ontology and axiology as a being marked with evil. Such an attitude is Gnosticism, under the influence of which Augustine of Hippo remained for a long time, finally overcome by him and by subsequent writers of the Church⁶. The soul needs the body, its strength, power and sensuality to know the world and develop its own potential. Dziubiński emphasizes that Pope Francis pointed to a fundamental irregularity in historical research on Catholic views regarding sport and human body. Most of this research is based on a false assumption about the Church's negative attitude towards the body⁷. The theological value of the body as destined to be sanctified through the resurrection and as the medium of the incarnation of Christ is the basic lesson of contemporary Catholic personalism, which he describes as *homo compositum*. The great predecessor of Francis and his personalistic thinking about man was the philosopher Karol Wojtyła - John Paul II. In the encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, John Paul II noted that the vocation of man to the fullness of life not only opens this life to transcendence, but also shows "the greatness and great value of human life, also in its temporal phase". All the manifestations of life, without exception, are a "penultimate" reality, therefore, "a holy reality entrusted to us so that we may guard it with a sense of responsibility and perfect it through love and the gift of ourselves offered to God and to our brothers and sisters"⁸. In this stance, the deep existential and theological sense of life is highlighted. Another personalistic philosopher from Cracow, Józef Tischner, once summarised this sense in a succinct and accurate way: "to save mortality for eternity"⁹. This "saving mortality for eternity" is included, *inter alia*, in the "theology of the body" of John Paul II, and was reflected in his passion for sport and tourism. In his considerations, Zbigniew Dziubiński combines the thoughts of both popes and shows how they used the theology of the body and person for the religious legitimacy of sport. In the horizon of the Christian religion, Christ is the most perfect – as John Paul II put it – "God's Athlete", "the most powerful man" who revealed the importance and true sacred, religious dimension of human resources, toil, perseverance, responsibility, renunciation, asceticism-exercise, bravery, overcoming handicaps¹⁰.

³ <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/06/01/180601b.html> (accessed: 14 Sept. 2020).

⁴ Z. Dziubiński, *Sport w służbie osoby i wspólnoty...* [Eng. Sport in the Service of the Person and the Community], p. 11.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 12-13.

⁶ See, among others: G. Quispel (1988). *Gnoza*, transl. B. Kita. Warsaw: Pax; K. Rudolph (2003). *Gnoza*, transl. G. Sowiński. Kraków: Nomos.

⁷ Z. Dziubiński, *ibidem*, p. 97.

⁸ John Paul II, *Encyklika Evangelium vitae* [Eng. *Evangelium vitae* Encyclical]. In: *Encykliki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II* [Eng. Encyclicals of Holy Father John Paul II] (2003). Kraków: Znak, p. 842.

⁹ As cited in J. Galarowicz (2000). *Człowiek jest osobą. Podstawy antropologii filozoficznej Karola Wojtyły* [Eng. Man is a Person. Basics of Karol Wojtyła's Philosophical Anthropology]. Kęty: Antyk, p. 31.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Rachunek sumienia dla sportu* [Eng. Examination of Conscience for Sport]. In: *Jan Paweł II do młodych* [Eng. John Paul II to the Young] (2005). Kraków, p. 94-97.

These words are in perfect harmony with Pope Francis' maxim of "giving your best". However, in order for sport to fulfil this transcendent function for forming a person, it must defend itself against the dangers of dehumanisation, against deviations such as aggression, dishonesty, illegal doping, mercantilisation and fetishisation of records. Pope Francis especially emphasizes in his teachings that the economic and political instrumentalisation of sport leads to alienation and enslavement of the person¹¹.

The personalistic perspective of thinking about man as a person led both popes to in-depth reflection on the communal dimension of the person. John Paul II wrote about the "pro-existence" of a person, his commitment to the good of another human being in the community of axiological goals. The model of an authentic community for both popes is the Church. The Church is an integrated whole in which the value of an individual is preserved, while being open to one's neighbour and the good of the community. Dziubiński emphasizes the parallelism of

the Church community and the sports community. Pope Francis constantly returns to the idea of practicing community through sport. Sport is a space for meeting, equality, teamwork and competition. The sports community does not recognise differences in race, religion or ideology. It is united by a common goal, which is the joy of experiencing competition in the community of athletes, coaches, referees, sports organisations, fans and journalists.

In light of these views, it is a pity that Dziubiński does not see in his monograph, even on the margins, religions other than Catholic (for example, those Oriental or - within Christianity - Protestant), openly supporting human sports activity and generating community sports events. Dziubiński, writing about three visions of sport: somatic-biological, humanistic and theistic, consciously narrows the latter to the Catholic tradition. However, this does not diminish the importance of the book's basic message, which is the *apologia* of sport as a depository of personalistic and community values.

¹¹ Z. Dziubiński, *ibidem*, p. 45.

