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On what basis do young people define their religiousness? A methodological monograph with pastoral implications based on the writer's own empirical analyses of the presence of religion in the life of young people

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ON WHAT BASIS DO YOUNG PEOPLE DEFINE THEIR RELIGIOUSNESS? A METHODOLOGICAL MONOGRAPH WITH PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS BASED ON THE WRITER'S OWN EMPIRICAL ANALYSES OF THE PRESENCE OF RELIGION IN THE LIFE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

1. About conducted research and evaluation of religion

In research on religiousness we use tools created in the 1970s by Rev. Władysław Piwowarski, who defined 7 parameters of religiousness[2], which constitute the foundation of all quantitative studies concerning this subject matter. Contemporary researchers are modifying them, adding further parameters, or removing the inessential variables which supposedly describe religiousness. The study which forms the grounds for this article has a similar story.

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[2]   Piwowarski W., *Operacjonalizacja pojęcia „religijność"*, in: *Studia Socjologiczne*, 1975 no. 4(59).

The said study was conducted in 2012 for the purposes of a Slovak and Polish research on young people. The subjects were 564 graduates of different types of secondary-schools in the Warsaw archdiocese and the Łomża diocese[3]. Among questions about education, upbringing, leisure time, and risky behavior, there were also some concerning religiousness. As a supplement to the set of indexes determining religiousness, the authors introduced a 5-point scale into the study for the purpose of evaluating the presence of religion in the lives of the subjects.

In this paper these evaluations will be analyzed in relation to other questions asked in the study. In other words, we are interested in the question of whether there is a relation between the evaluation of religion and other attitudes, opinions or facts that the respondents were asked about, and which are associated with the religious aspect of one's life. Approaching the issue from a pastoral point of view, we want to check whether the evaluation of religiousness translates into the lives of young people. If, however, we detect such a correspondence, another question will be how does it help us get to know and understand the lives of young people. From the methodological side, such a verification will allow us also to determine whether the proposed 5-point scale for evaluating religion in the life of a respondent is a credible index that is worth applying when examining religiousness.

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[3]   Distribution of respondents according to basic social and demographic data: 50.4% women, 49.6% men; 73.2% in comprehensive secondary schools, 22.2% in technical secondary schools, 3.9% in vocational secondary schools; 45.4% in the Warsaw diocese and 54.6% in the Łomża diocese; 16.5% in a city with over 100 000 inhabitants (Warsaw), 16.0% in a city with 60 000 to 100 000 inhabitants (Łomża), 37.6% in a city with 20 000 to 60 000 inhabitants, 30% in a city with fewer than 20 000 inhabitants.

The respondents evaluated the presence of religion in their lives by choosing one of the options on the 5-point evaluating scale. They were instructed that score "0" meant a complete lack of importance, score "4" meant religion was very important to them. Let us see what the results for all five scores look like:

evaluation of the importance of religion in one's life

158

129

113

68   71

0   1   2   3   4
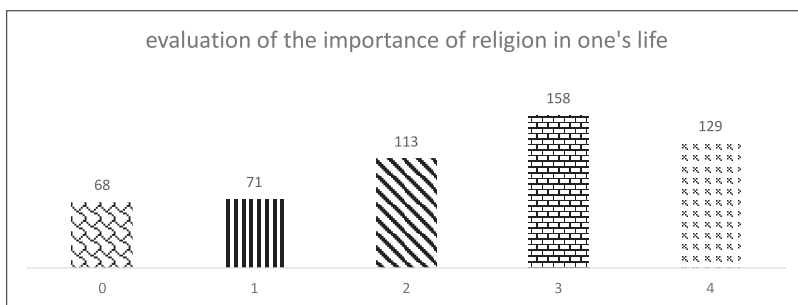
Wykres 1. Visualization of the frequency of the 5-point scale applied to evaluate the importance of religion in the lives of secondary-school graduates (for N = 539).

Already at first glance, we can see that the number of responses in individual score groups is different, but let us check statistically, whether these are significant differences.

$$\chi^2 = 55.054; p < 0.001$$

Reading a statistical sentence of the type above, we check, first of all, the level of significance expressed by the p-value. If it is smaller than 0.01 or 0.001 we have the right to reject the null hypothesis which the analysis is concerned with. The test result is statistically significant, therefore we make a valid conclusion that there are differences between the observed distributions of particular scores and that they are statistically important. The values on the left side of the equations, prece-

ded by the appropriate symbol indicating the type of the test applied, show the size of this relation. However, only at correlation tests (will they be significant for us, because of the strength and direction of the relation they show.

Since our study is supposed to have a pastoral application as well, let us check what these distributions look like in both examined dioceses:
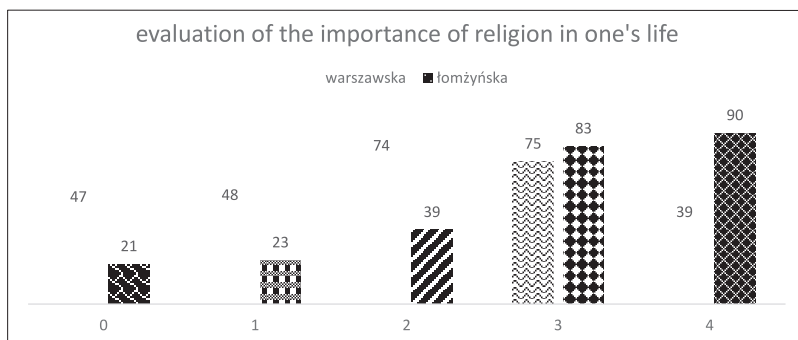
Wykres 2. Visualization of the distribution of the evaluation of religion in the lives of secondary-school graduates, this visualization as broken down by the Warsaw archdiocese and the Łomża diocese.

Analyzing the graph, we can see that individual evaluations differ in frequency in both dioceses. However, we are not able to state whether the secondary-school graduates in these dioceses significantly differently evaluate religion's presence in their lives.

$$\chi^2 = 48.923; p < 0.001$$

Chi-square statistics lets us reject the null hypothesis about the independence of the analyzed variables, so we can adopt the hypothesis about the existence of a relation between them. Thus, we have grounds for claiming that in both dioceses the examined secondary-school graduates evaluate religion on a different level. A superficial observation is enough to com-

plete the sentence with an indication that it is in the Łomża diocese (a mean of 2.77) that the score of religion in one's life is higher than in the Warsaw archdiocese (a mean of 2.04).

Knowing the general distribution of the evaluations of religion in the lives of secondary-school graduates, let us see how this declaration is reflected in comparison with the variables that interest us and that concern the attitude to harmful substances, the opinion on sexual intercourse and living together without being married, as well as the frequency of religious practices, the level of religious knowledge, the belief in dogmas, and the experience of the presence of God in one's life. The order of presenting the indexes is the same as in the tool used to examine the life of secondary-school graduates.

2. Attitude to harmful substances

During the study the respondents were asked whether they smoked cigarettes regularly. A two-category reply ("yes", "no") was suggested to them: Table 1 shows the distribution of the answers given.

Do you smoke regularly at least one cigarette per day?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	N	%
Yes	22	18	23	25	16	104	19.4
No	45	52	90	133	112	432	80.6
						536	100.0

Tabela 1. The distribution of the evaluation of the importance of religion and the declaration of smoking regularly at least one cigarette per day.

Let us check whether the groups of smoking and non-smoking secondary-school graduates show significant differences in their evaluations of the role of religion in their lives. For that purpose we will use the Mann-Whitney U significance test:

$$U = 17392.5; p < 0.001$$

According to the observed statistics, we have grounds to reject the null hypothesis regarding lack of differences between both groups. We can thus say that both the smokers and non-smokers differ in their evaluations of the role of religion in their lives. The same mean difference analyses, using the appropriate tests, were conducted for the remaining questions. In all the selected cases, they were at the level of statistical significance, i.e. for $0 < 0.001$, which allows us to always reject the null hypothesis regarding the equality of the mean evaluations of the role of religion in the studied groups, distinguished because of the answers just analyzed. Therefore, it does not seem necessary to show this equation every time. Consequently, presenting it along with the next questions has been abandoned. To make sure that this result is correct, we can conduct Pearson's r correlation analysis:

$$r = -0.28; p < 0.001$$

Interpreting this result, one should note that there is a relationship between the declaration of smoking at least one cigarette a day and the evaluation of religion in the lives of secondary-school graduates. However, what is important is that the statistical index of $r < 0.3$ in our analysis indicates a weak correlation between the variables. The coefficient of determination for this correlation at the level of 8% means that only so much per cent of the value changes in one variable is expla-

ined by changes in the other variable. Therefore, we can state that we had too few observations in the group of smokers (4 times fewer) to notice a greater relationship with the evaluation of religion. Nevertheless, from the pastoral point of view, we can conclude that the answers of our respondents, presented in the correlation table, and the statistics of correlation significance, indicate that the persons who give the highest scores for religion in their lives less often declare smoking at least one cigarette a day.

Let us look at the consumption of alcohol. The respondents were asked about the frequency of drinking alcohol. When providing their answers they were to use a 5-point scale, on which they could select one answer in the range from "I do not drink at all" to "I drink more than once a week."

The Kruskal-Wallis test shows that the various categories of alcohol drinking frequency are different in terms of the evaluation of religion. A thorough exploration of the data from Table 2 shows the difference.

Do you drink alcohol often?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
I do not drink at all	6	3	7	24	26	66	12.3
On special occasions	21	15	26	37	41	140	26.1
About once a month	14	23	39	41	42	159	29.7
About once a week	13	18	30	34	12	107	20.0
More than once a week	13	12	11	22	6	64	11.9
						536	100.0

Tabela 2. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the frequency of drinking alcohol.

The respondents claiming that they "do not drink at all" evaluate their faith on the mean level of 2.92, while the persons claiming to drink alcohol "more than once a week" evaluate the importance of religion in their lives at the mean level of 1.94. Once we see that particular categories of drinking frequency differ significantly with respect to the evaluation of religion in one's life, we can check if there is any relationship between the variables.

$$\chi^2 (16) = 45.708; p < 0.001$$

Because it is statistically significant, the chi-square test allows us to reject the null hypothesis of the independence of variables and conclude that there is dependency between the frequency of alcohol consumption and the evaluation of religion in one's life. Because the mean difference test (e.g. the Kruskal-Wallis test presented above), as previously indicated, is statistically significant in all cases and its result will not be presented further below, it is therefore necessary to confirm this difference with another test, which goes a bit further in its interpretation. The chi-square test is not only a verification of the previous test, but also indicates the existence of a dependency in the distribution of these means. This test will therefore always be presented precisely because of its importance for further analysis, which will designate the direction and strength of correlation of the tested variables.

The direction of this relationship is demonstrated by another test: the *tau-b* Kendall test:

$$\tau = -0.168; p < 0.001$$

Looking at the result of the statistical analysis, we see three things: that the result is statistically significant, and that the correlation is small and negative. The last statement can be in-

terpreted with the following sentence: with an increase in one category of responses, the categories of the second response decrease (of course, this assumes an arrangement, in which the subsequent categories are organized semantically). In our observation, we can thus say that together with the increase in the evaluation of religion in the lives of secondary-school graduates, the frequency of alcohol consumption decreases. One should bear in mind, however, that the noticed correlation does not determine which variable affects which variable. Therefore, also a similar statement, which we will use to make a pastoral summary, will be true: with an increase in the frequency of alcohol consumption, the graduates evaluation of religion in their lives decreases.

Let us look at the next phenomenon that pedagogy calls risky behavior, namely trying out drugs. Here again, the respondents had to choose from a set of responses indicating the increasing frequency of using drugs, presented in an ordered manner. The order of these responses and the distribution crossed with the religion evaluating variable are shown in Table 3.

Have you ever tried drugs?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
I have never tried drugs	31	41	73	121	100	266	68.8
I have tried drugs only once	12	13	22	18	15	80	15.0
I have been using drugs repeatedly	14	15	13	17	8	67	12.6
I take drugs whenever there is an opportunity	9	2	4	1	3	19	3.6
						532	100.0

Tabela 3. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the declaration of using drugs.

We already know that, as in all the studied cases, the statistically significant result, i.e. the result that is reasonable to be interpreted, is the result which says that particular groups of answers pointing to the changing frequency of drug use by respondents differ with regard to the evaluation of religion in their lives. As an illustration of this thesis, let me point to the mean ratings of religion in these extreme categories of drug use frequency. The people who have not tried drugs assess the presence of religion in their lives at the mean level of 2.6, while those who use drugs whenever there is an opportunity assess it at the mean level of 1.32. These results alone indicate the existing differences in the various groups that will be confirmed by the following correlation coefficients:

$$\chi^2 (12) = 49.819; \, p < 0.001$$

$$\tau = -0.21; \, p < 0.001$$

Also in this case, the chi-square test confirms that we can talk about the existing relationship between the evaluation of religion variable and the frequency of drug use variable. The *tau b* Kendall coefficient also suggests that it is a negative, but weak correlation. The coefficient of determination for this correlation, at the level of 4%, shows us that only in 21 respondents (4% out of 534) did the change of one variable imply the change of the other variable. Hence we assess our relationship as weak, but certainly statistically significant, i.e., one that we can generalize by drawing binding conclusions. For priests, the conclusion from this analysis is that with the increase in the evaluation of religion in one's life the frequency of drug use by secondary school graduates decreases.

So far three risky behaviors have been observed, i.e. smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol and taking drugs. Correlated to the evaluation of religion in the life of respondents, they al-

low for drawing the general conclusion that the higher the eva-
luation of religion in the lives of the respondents, the smaller
the frequency of consumption of harmful substances. What is
important for our pastoral conclusions is the fact that the ob-
served correlation is weak despite being statistically significant.
In other words, the evaluation of religion and risky behavior af-
fect each other significantly, but not too strongly. Supporting
this with qualitative observation, independent of quantitative
research, let us try to arrive at a purely pastoral conclusion. It is
reasonable to state that the persons who highly value faith in
their lives less frequently turn to harmful substances. This the-
sis was made on the basis of conducted studies, existing peda-
gogical and psychological theories, as well as common sense. It
is simply difficult to defend the opposite statement, namely that
the frequency of consuming harmful substances affects the eva-
luation of religion in one's life. Thus, another methodologically
important conclusion: evaluation of religion is a determining
variable, i.e. the one on which the frequency of consuming har-
mful substances will depend.

3. Attitude to sexual ethics

Let us examine another group of indexes that show the re-
spondents' attitudes towards sexual ethics. Secondary school
graduates were asked whether young people should wait with
their sex life till marriage. Cafeteria answers were proposed
where two responses indicated that you did not have to wait,
two subsequent ones claimed that you should wait and one, the
middle one, expressed no opinion on the subject. The middle
answer can be treated as intermediate between the ordered
evaluations.

Do you think that young people should wait with their sex life till marriage, or not necessary?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
It is totally unnecessary for them to wait	27	13	20	27	11	98	18.2
It is unnecessary for them to wait	29	47	65	60	28	229	42.6
I do not know	4	6	11	20	12	53	9.9
It is appropriate for them to wait is	4	3	12	34	37	90	16.8
They should absolutely wait	3	2	5	17	40	67	12.5
						537	100.0

Tabela 4. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and opinion about the necessity of delaying one's sexual life until marriage.

Comparison of the frequencies of individual responses, which according to the previous rule is not shown in this presentation, reveals that they differ with regard to the evaluation of religion in the lives of the respondents. Noticing those differences between the answers does not tell us whether they are arranged in an order. To answer this question, we use the chi-square statistics:

$$\chi^2 (16) = 134.246; p < 0.001$$

The level of significance in the statistics is less than 0.001, which allows us to conclude that there is a relationship between the ordered categories of answers. The correlation analysis will show us what this relationship looks like:

$$\tau = 0.349; p < 0.001$$

The *tau-b* Kendall test, which we can analyze since the level of significance indicates that we can reject the null hypothesis of no correlation between particular answers, shows us the direction and strength of this correlation. The index is positive and greater than 0.3, which allows the following interpretation: with an increase in the evaluation of religion in one's life, the expectation of abstinence from sexual intercourse before marriage grows. What is important, this correlation is stronger than in the previous observations regarding risky behavior. Statisticians classify such a correlation as "moderate".

In the same area of sexual ethics, the graduates were also asked about their opinion on living together before marriage. Here, a four-point scale of answers was provided ranging from strong approval to strong disapproval without the possibility of selecting an evasive "I do not know" answer.

Do you think that young people should live together before marriage?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
I strongly agree	35	34	52	30	26	177	33.1
I rather agree	23	34	49	85	47	238	44.6
I rather disagree	6	3	8	30	32	79	14.8
I strongly disagree	2	0	3	12	23	40	7.5
						534	100.0

Tabela 5. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and opinion about living together before marriage.

Analysis of the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test again indicated that the differences between particular answers strongly differentiated our respondents in terms of the evaluation of religion in their lives. If so, let us see whether we are dealing

with a structured dependency, i.e. whether the categories, ordered in such a way, change systematically.

$$\chi^2 (12) = 92.302; p < 0.001$$

It turns out that the chi-square test confirms this suspicion, and the tau-b Kendall test will show us the direction and strength of this correlation.

$$\tau = 0.309; p < 0.001$$

At the beginning we see that we can legitimately draw conclusions from the analyzed statistics, because the significance test allows us to reject the null hypothesis of lack of correlation. Meanwhile, we see that the correlation is not only important, but also positive and moderate. How do we interpret the result of this test then? Observation allows us to conclude that with the increase in the evaluation of the presence of religion in one's life, the disapproval of cohabitation before marriage grows.

An interesting approach to the analyzed area of sexual ethics is another question for the secondary school graduates, namely, whether they think that in the future they will live with someone without marriage. Here again a five-point scale of responses was provided, with the safe "I do not know" answer in the middle. As the analysis of Table 6 shows, this category precisely accumulated the largest number of responses, i.e. as many as 158, which represents almost 30% of the total.

Do you think that in the future you will live with someone without marriage?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
Very probably yes	18	7	10	11	2	48	9.0
Probably yes	7	10	9	10	4	40	7.5
I do not know	21	29	31	46	31	158	29.5
Probably not	10	20	38	50	37	155	29.0
Definitely not	9	4	25	41	55	134	24.1
						535	100.0

Tabela 6. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and opinion on living together with someone in the future without marriage.

Of course, the Kruskal-Wallis test is at a sufficient level to reject the null hypothesis, and thus assume that the individual responses are significantly different from each other. Let us check if those differences occur in a manner ordered with regard to both scales:

$$\chi^2 (16) = 83.486; p < 0.001$$

The chi-square test confirms that there is some yet unidentified relationship between the variables. If so, applying the *tau -b* Kendall test, we will analyze the direction and force of this correlation.

$$\tau = 0.276; p < 0.001$$

The significance level allows us to reject the null hypothesis of no correlation between variables, and the tau coefficient confirms that the relation is positive and not too strong. We conclude, therefore, that with the increase of the evaluation of religion in the lives of the young respondents, the anticipation that they will not live with someone in the future without being

married grows. However, the weakness of this correlation is puzzling. The explanation here may be the emergence of the middle category 'I do not know' answer that accrued the highest response rate. Looking at the distribution of the correlation as at a graph in which along with the growth of one value, other values increase as well, one should assume that the lowest values are at the beginning, and the highest at the end of our graph. In the observed situation, the largest number of values falls in the middle, which impairs the rather schematic growth. That growth, however, is strong enough to allow us to observe this positive correlation.

Paradoxically, however, the answer "I do not know" gives us a lot of information about the studied group of graduates. Comparing this question with the previous ones in the area of sexual ethics, it should be noted that with the increase in the evaluation of the presence of religion in one's life, the disapproval of behavior opposed to Christian sexual ethics grows, at least in the scope embraced by the questions. Interestingly, compared with risky behavior, sexual ethics is more strongly correlated with the evaluation of religion, and so the attitude towards sexual freedom is more dependent on the evaluation of religion in the lives of young people. From the pastoral point of view, the high rate of undecided responses to the question about anticipation regarding living with someone in the future without being married raises concerns. This may mean that young people who declare themselves to be believers do not accept having sex and living together before marriage, but they are aware that they are not able to predict how their lives will turn out, and therefore play safe by choosing the answer which does not declare any of the attitudes. It may also indicate a considerable realism in life, which, however, downgrades their idealistic attitude.

4. Declarations of religious practices

Let us now see how the frequency of prayer changes depending on the evaluation of the presence of religion in the lives of the young people in the study. The respondents were given the opportunity to choose between answers ranging from a declaration of a complete absence of prayer in their lives to praying several times a day.

Do you pray? If yes, how often?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
I do not pray at all	46	23	12	4	3	88	16.7
Not very often	4	35	43	21	7	110	20.9
About once a month	0	4	12	11	5	32	6.1
About once a week	1	3	25	40	20	89	16.9
Several times a week	0	2	8	34	19	63	12.0
Every day	5	4	11	47	57	124	23.6
Several times a day	0	0	2	0	18	20	3.8
						526	100.0

Tabela 7. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the frequency of prayer.

After such a distribution, the question arises whether the individual frequencies are characterized by a different mean evaluation of religion in the lives of the respondents. The Kruskal -Wallis test, not presented here, shows that in fact we are dealing with significant differences between particular groups of answers. Since these differences are significant, let us check whether the fact that they are appropriately organized causes a logical dependency. Indeed, a conducted chi-square test shows that the order of answers to one question changes together with the change of the responses to the second question.

$$\chi^2 (24) = 413.94;\ p < 0.001$$

Since we already know that such a relationship exists, let us check its direction and strength. For this purpose we will use, as in the previous case, the Spearman test. After a confirmation of significance, the test shows that the correlation is positive and quite strong, i.e. at the level of p> 0.6.

$$r_s = 0.65;\ p < 0.001$$

This result can be interpreted as follows: with the increase in the evaluation of the presence of religion in one's life, the frequency of prayer increases. Of course, keeping in mind that statistical analysis does not show us which variable determines the dependency, we are not able to conclude that it is the evaluation of religion that affects the frequency of prayer. We might as well say, especially in this example, that the frequency of prayer affects the evaluation of the presence of religion in the lives of the respondents. A thesis formulated in this way is equally probable and may suggest that the respondents evaluate their faith from the point of view of prayer. Such an implicit statement regarding the factor determining the observed relationship does not affect the pastoral interpretation, which indicates that the persons who evaluate religion more highly define themselves as praying more frequently. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that the most rarely given response was praying several times a day, which was selected by 3% of respondents only.

Let us examine another aspect of religious practices, i.e. the frequency of going to church, presumably to services. Here again the respondents had a large range of responses to choose from: from "never" to "more than once a week."

How often do you go to church?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
Never	28	7	2	2	1	40	7.6
Not very often	22	43	60	24	8	157	29.7
About once a month	0	9	14	20	11	54	10.2
Roughly 2-3 times a month	0	4	13	25	18	60	11.4
Once a week	7	6	22	86	71	192	36.4
More than once a week	2	2	1	1	19	25	4.7
						528	100.0

Tabela 8. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the frequency of going to church.

The difference in the mean level of the evaluation of religion in each of those responses is statistically significant(the Kruskal-Wallis test), which allows us to proceed with a search for a structured dependency:

$$\chi^2 (20) = 344.344; \, p < 0.001$$

The ordering of both scales has a significant impact on the distribution of variables, allowing us to look for the direction and strength of the relationship:

$$r_s = 0.593; \, p < 0.001$$

Spearman's test has a statistically significant correlation between both variables, which indicates a moderate positive relationship between the evaluation of religion and the frequency of the practices in question. This leads us to the conclusion that with the increase in the evaluation of religion in the life of a young person, the frequency of going to church grows. Of course, the sentence makes sense also in the other direction: with increasing frequency of going to church, to the evaluation

of the presence of religion in the life of a secondary school graduate rises.

Another question tries to discern personal reflections on the frequency of the said practices. Therefore, the respondents were asked about how often they would go to services, if it depended only on them. The distribution of answers for this question was similar to the previous question about the actual frequency of going to church.

If it depended on you, how often would you go to church services?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
Very rarely or never	51	57	37	23	3	171	32.6
About once a month	1	9	41	25	16	92	17.5
2-3 times a month	1	3	17	30	16	67	12.8
Once a week	5	1	17	71	63	157	29.9
More than once a week	1	1	1	7	28	38	7.2
						525	100.0

Tabela 9. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the convenient frequency of going to church services.

Here, too, we are dealing with frequencies that differ significantly with regard to the mean evaluation of religion. It turns out that the order of the scale is also statistically significant, and we can look for relationships between variables.

$$\chi^2 (16) = 321.177; p < 0.001$$

Spearman's correlation coefficient is statistically significant, and at the same time positive and strong. Thus, we can conclude that with the increase in the evaluation of religion in one's life, the frequency of going to church increases, if it is to be decided by the respondents themselves. Of course, we can

also say the opposite: the more often the respondents say they would go church, the higher do they evaluate the presence of religion in their lives.

$$r_s = 0.659; p < 0.001$$

During the analysis of this distribution, it is worth correlating the opinions from the said distribution with the declarations regarding the frequency of going to church. It turns out that this correlation is:

$$r_s = 0.706; p < 0.001$$

We have a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between the respondents' own opinions and declarations about going to church and to services. Looking carefully at the resulting crosstab, we can see that there is a very strong consistency between the declarations and opinions of the respondents who never or rarely go to church (69% confirmed the declarations), and among those who attend once a week (63%) and more than once a week (72%). In the case of the intermediate declaration, the opinions about going to church were more distributed (47% and 41%) in the direction of both more frequent and less frequent church attendance. From the pastoral point of view, this is the most interesting and most important group of young people who have a problem with finding the sense of participating in communal religious practices. It is also worth making an argument that these people usually feel obliged to go to church. Maybe the next question will help us to explain this issue.

As with questions regarding sexual ethics, the researchers proposed a question to the young respondents about the future of their religious practices at church.

Do you think that when you are 25 years old you will go to church?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
Certainly not	32	6	1	2	1	42	8.1
Probably not	21	45	33	6	4	109	20.9
Probably yes	2	15	70	85	38	210	40.3
Certainly yes	3	3	6	64	84	160	30.7
						521	100.0

Tabela 10. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the prospect of going to church at the age of 25.

$$\chi^2 (12) = 459.664; \, p < 0.001$$

Because the means difference regarding the evaluation of religion in individual declarations was statistically significant, and a hypothesis was adopted about a relationship between the questions, let us see, what this relationship looks like.

The statistically significant and strong positive correlation suggests the following thesis: with the increase in the evaluation of religion in the lives of high school graduates, the positive attitude about going to church at the age of 25 increases. An analysis of the correlations between these declarations and the previous questions about going to church services was also strong, which indicates a high consistency of the young respondents connected to religious practices.

Descending deeper into religious practices, a question was asked about the frequency of taking Holy Communion, giving the respondents a choice of 7 answers from "never" to "last week."

When was the last time that you took the Holy Communion?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
Never or not since I was a child	8	3	1	0	0	11	2.4
More than a year ago	24	15	15	5	2	61	12.0
A year ago	3	13	9	11	6	42	8.2
A few months ago	12	24	55	63	28	182	35.7
Last month	3	6	21	43	43	116	22.7
Last week	3	4	10	33	47	97	19.0
						510	100.0

Tabela 11. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the frequency of receiving Holy Communion.

Analysis of the table shows us that frequent receiving of Holy Communion is not too common among young people. Less than one in five respondents (19%) had received it in the previous week, and every third respondent (36%) had received Holy Communion a few months earlier. It could be speculated that since the survey was conducted in June, "a few months earlier" meant Lent or Easter.

$$\chi^2\,(20) = 213.052; \, p < 0.001$$

The Kruskal-Wallis test confirms that we should reject the null hypothesis of lack of differences between the mean evaluations of religion in individual declarations, while the chi-square test, confirms that we should reject the null hypothesis of no relation between those variables. If so, let us see what this relationship looks like:

$$r_s = 0.515; \, p < 0.001$$

The Spearman rank correlation coefficient, statistically significant, shows a moderate positive correlation between the

variables, which allows us to draw the following conclusion: with the increase in the evaluation of religion in one's life, the period from the last reception of Holy Communion shortens. Let us see if a different conclusion will be legitimate: the more recent the last reception of Holy Communion, the higher the evaluation of religion in one's life. This conclusion leaves some logical doubts, therefore we will focus more on the first statement.

The last index of religious practices concerns going to confession. The frequency scale used for answers to this question ranged from "less than once a year or never" to "about once a month."

How often do you go to confession?	Evaluation of religion					Total	
	0	1	2	3	4	N	%
Less than once a year or never	41	35	24	9	5	114	22.3
1-2 times a year	7	29	56	64	24	180	35.2
Many times during the year	2	2	24	56	55	139	27.2
About once a month	4	1	8	26	39	78	15.3
						511	100.0

Tabela 12. Distribution of the evaluation of religion and the frequency of going to confession.

As you might expect, the distribution of responses to this question is analogous to the previous one. Similarly, the conducted tests confirm the hypothesis of significant differences between the mean evaluations of religion in particular declarations, and about the relationships between the two variables.

$$\chi^2 (12) = 242.368; p < 0.001$$

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$$r_s = 0.581; p < 0.001$$

Identically as with the previous correlation, the Spearman's coefficient indicates that the relation is positive and moderate. Thus, we can conclude that the more highly secondary school graduates evaluate religion in their lives, the more often do they go to confession. Concerns about the frequency of availing oneself of this sacrament are raised again, as 1/3 of the respondents do so 1-2 times a year.

Summing up all the issues related to religious practices, it should be noted that a positive evaluation of religion in one's life translates strongly into the frequency of religious practice. Certainly, there is greater consequentiality here than in the moral attitudes, where this correlation was present, but much smaller. This inclines us to a statement that faith is more associated with practices than moral attitudes. Let the remark that young people who declare themselves to be religious tend to receive Holy Communion and go to confession, but most of them do it only a few times a year, remain the second pastoral conclusion.

5. Religious knowledge

Questions about religious knowledge regarded the duration of Lent, the names of the four evangelists, the number of the apostles, the name of the person that baptized Jesus, as well as the place of birth and crucifixion of Jesus. Each answer was scored as correct or not. In this way, for 6 correct answers, the respondent could get 6 points. Exploration of these frequencies made it possible to draw a number of conclusions. If we put the distribution of the responses on a chart, there would be 7 bars (from 0 – no correct answer to 6 – all answers correct),

which would have some shape. The shape would be defined by the data acquired in the process of exploration. It turns out that the mean of the correct answers is 4.63, while the most frequently appearing number of correct answers was (median) 5. Negative distribution skewness, also known as left-skewed distribution (-0.883), indicates that the high scores appear with greater frequency than the low scores, which means that the respondents provided correct answers more often. Kurtosis (-0.164) is negative and thus indicates platykurtic distribution, which signals the dispersion of the sums of correct responses and not their concentration around the mean. Analyzing which questions were the most difficult for the respondents, it turns out that they had the greatest difficulty with providing the names of the four evangelists (43% provided wrong or no answers), the place of Jesus's crucifixion (37%) and the birthplace of Jesus (35%).

The correlation of the sums of religious knowledge and the evaluation of religion in one's life shows that we can legitimately reject the null hypothesis of no correlation between the variables, indicating what its strength and direction are.

$$r_s = 0.188; p < 0.001$$

The Spearman's correlation coefficient shows that this correlation is positive and weak. Thus, we can conclude that to a small extent, with the growth of the evaluation of religion in life, the sum total of religious knowledge grows. For priests, such a result is important because it shows that even though there is some advantage in religious knowledge among believers, it is not big enough to exclude the knowledge from the group with low evaluations of religion.

6. The belief in dogmas

The questions concerning faith contained a number of statements relating to dogmas. The respondents had to declare whether they agreed with them or not with the help of a 4-point scale ranging from "I strongly disagree" (worth -2) to "I strongly agree" (+ 2). There was no "0" on the scale since the answer "I do not know" was not available. In this case, the responses were not summed up, but averaged in the range of -2 to +2. Exploration revealed that the mean response was at +0.77, which indicates a general answer rather close to agreeing with the proposed statements. The "I rather agree" answer was the one selected most often. Negative distribution skewness, otherwise known as left-skewed distribution (-0.965), indicates that high means occurred much more often than low means. However, kurtosis (-0.139) is negative and indicates a platykurtic distribution, i.e. scores dispersed around the mean. Below we present three statements which raised the greatest doubt among the respondents, and therefore the mean response on the (-2) – (+2) scale was the lowest: "Jesus fed the five thousand people" (+0.51), "Every human being experiences the effects of original sin "(+0.57), "God will help me when I ask with confidence" (+0.67). The least doubts were associated with the following statements: "Jesus performed miracles" (+1.00), "God is Almighty" (+0.96), "God watches over the world" and "The 10 Commandments were given to us by God" (+0.88).

When we correlate these data with the evaluation of religion in the lives of young people, Pearson's r coefficient looks like this:

$$r = 0.615; p < 0.001$$

The result is statistically significant because p <0.001, and thus we can reject the null hypothesis of no correlation between the variables and can accept the following statement, based on the positive and strong correlation coefficient: with the increase in the evaluation of the presence of religion in one's life, the belief in the dogmas that the religion gives rises. Moreover, we should not have problems with adopting an opposite statement: with an increasing acceptance of religious truths, the evaluation of religion in the lives of the respondents grows.

7. Religious experience

A similar methodology was adopted for questions about experiencing the presence of God and His Grace in one's life. A number of questions asked concerned the various spheres of religious experience. The mean of the summed up responses was 0.44, i.e. it only slightly exceeded the theoretical level of indecision. Negative skewness of the distribution, otherwise known as left-skewed distribution (-0.594), indicates that high scores are more common than low scores. However, kurtosis (-0.996) is a negative value and indicates a platykurtic distribution, i.e. scores dispersed around the mean. Analyzing the various declarations on the scale of (-2) - (+2), their order in terms of confirmation of religious experience in the lives of the respondents is as follows: "There were dangerous situations when I felt the protection of the Guardian Angel" (+0.23), "Without faith my life would make no sense" (+0.26), "Thanks to faith I feel the presence of God" and "God helped me in a particular situation" (+0.47), "Faith in God helps me to trust in difficult situations" (+ 0.58), "Faith in God gives me a sense of security in everyday life" (+0.60).

$$r = 0.681; p < 0.001$$

Also this variable is positively and strongly correlated with the evaluation of religion in the lives of the respondents. As a pastoral conclusion, we can thus say that with the increase in the evaluation of religion in the lives of young people, positive experience of God's presence in their lives grows. We should also consider an opposite statement indicating that with the increase in religious experience, the evaluation of religion in one's life grows. It should be noted that in terms of strength this is the second (in addition to the declaration of going to church services at the age of 25) correlation with the evaluation of religion observed in the study.

8. Summary and pastoral conclusions

A comprehensive analysis of the evaluation of religion in the lives of young people allows us to observe how this declaration translates into other parameters of religious life. Thanks to the tests for correlation with individual variables we can conclude how strong the relation between them is. In other words, approaching the issue from the pastoral perspective, we can check to what extend a statistical person, highly evaluating religion in his or her life, fulfils the obligations resulting from the religion. Such observations allow us to assess the reality of the consequences of religious declarations in the lives of young people.

The use of harmful substances, such as cigarettes, alcohol or drugs correlates with the evaluation of religion to a small extent. For priests that means that even if a person evaluates religion in his or her life highly, he or she does not always give up these substances. We anticipate that for religious reasons

the person will use them less frequently, but we cannot show a big correlation between both variables.

A rather more decisive attitude, although statistics calls it moderate, is observed in young people with regard to sexual ethics, in the study expressed by the question about the attitude towards sexual intercourse and cohabitation before marriage as well as the prospects of living together without being married in the future. Observing the various correlations in the field, priests should note that young people approach sexual ethics a little bit more consistently. This means that the respondents who value religion higher are less likely to agree on situations which are wrong from the point of view of Christian ethics, such as sexual intercourse or living together before marriage. However, one should bear in mind two important things. It is still not a very big dependency, and this means that among the respondents who highly evaluate religion we will also find people who to some degree condone this practice. In addition, the third question in this block relating to the views on the respondents' future practice of living together with someone without being married shows that young people are more realistic than idealistic. Despite the current attitudes consistent with Christian ethics, they are not sure how their own lives will work out in the future, nor are they able to declare explicitly which way they will choose. Both empirical observations may be interpreted in the same way. The universality of the ethically questionable situations, such as having sex and living together without marriage, gives the young people a sense that the obligations imposed by the Church are unreal. Even if they wanted to keep these commitments, they are aware that it will be difficult, and the lack of adequate, well-established motivation may quickly turn them from these declarations. Going even further with the conclusion, it may also be

the case that the young, avoiding being inconsequential, prefer to declare attitudes indicating sexual freedom. Thus, we would be dealing with a situation where a young person shapes his or her attitude under the influence of the experience of society and not his or her own beliefs.

Another parameter, religious practices, is characterized by a high level of correlation with the evaluation of religion. From the pastoral perspective, we will say that people who value religion in their lives, practice it more often. Of course, also the opposite can be true, namely that the frequency of religious practices influences the evaluation of religion in one's life. Both sentences make sense, and thus should be a clear pastoral indication not to stop offering religious practices to young people. What is worth underlining in this context is the significantly high correlation of religious practices with the evaluation of religion. It is at a level that allows us to confirm the theory that in our society believers are confined to ritual behaviors. In other words, faith is perceived primarily from the perspective of going to church, participating in the Holy Mass, receiving Holy Communion or going to confession. This sentence linked to two conclusions recorded at the beginning of this paragraph leads to two statements. Believer are perceived as people who often practice religious rituals, and the religious persons themselves assess their religiousness from the perspective of participating in religious practices. It is worth noting that another question asked shows a very high consistency of attitudes and actions among those who often and never go to church. In both groups, the behavior is consistent with the person's own reflections on the frequency of practicing. The situation is different among those who declare irregular church attendance. It is clearly visible that they are very hesitant in their declarations regarding how often they would

like to participate in these practices. Such an attitude may suggest a lack of understanding of religious practices or of a sense of obligation to observe them.

A slightly different method was used to analyze religious knowledge, belief in dogmas, and religious experience. Summed up and averaged results showed a very different degree of correlations with the evaluation of the presence of religion in the lives of the respondents. All these correlations were statistically significant and positive. However, their strength leads to very interesting pastoral conclusions. From the pastoral perspective, it should be stated that religious knowledge does not coincide with religiousness. A very poor correlation between the two variables could easily lead to the wrong conclusion that people who declare themselves to be believers have religious knowledge. It does not depend too heavily on the evaluation of religion in one's life.

The situation of the correlation between the evaluation of religion and faith in its dogmas is completely different. Here one can see a significant consequence of attitudes and one can confidently say that a statistical believer accepts dogmas. We have suggested above that a reverse tendency might be true: a person accepting the dogmas considers himself or herself to be more religious. This allows us to add another index, according to which a person assesses his or her faith. In addition to religious practices, the acceptance of dogmas appears to be the second element determining a high degree of religiousness. The next analyzed factor also belongs to the group of variables that define the evaluation of religion in the lives of young people.

Religious experience is also strongly correlated with the evaluation of religion in one's life. Those who declare that they experience more of God's presence in their lives, evaluate

their religiousness higher. This is understandable and constitutes the third index used by young people to determine the level of their faith. To sum up, I was able to extract the most important factors that influence the evaluation of the presence of religion in the lives of young people, namely:

– religious practices,
– religious experience,
– belief in dogmas.

These factors have the strongest impact on a person's assessment of himself or herself as a believer or non-believer. Similarly, we can propose parameters with the smallest impact on the religiousness of young people, namely:

– consumption of harmful substances, particularly alcohol,
– religious knowledge.

These two factors have practically no affect on a person's assessment of himself or herself as a believer or non-believer.

In conclusion, it seems that the subjective evaluation of the presence of religion in the life of the respondents which was used in the study is an at least partially accurate index for the study of religiousness. Not only does it confirm the indexes of religiousness that are basic for faith, but also rejects those that have no real impact on religiousness. It is therefore worth looking for new methods of analyzing the phenomenon of religiousness which will take into account not only the institutional aspect of faith, but also its more individual dimension designated by subjective evaluation.

Keywords: religion parametres, correlation, statistic analize, evaluation of religion, religiousness of young people.