

Silvia Gálíková

"Kobieta w Kościele i w społeczeństwie" ("Woman in the Church and Society"), Ed. Andrzej Pastwa, Katowice 2014 : [recenzja]

Ecumeny and Law 3, 345-349

2015

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

Kobieta w Kościele i w społeczeństwie
(Woman in the Church and Society)

Ed. Andrzej Pastwa. Księgarnia św. Jacka,
Wydział Teologiczny UŚ. Katowice 2014, 166 pp.

In his introduction entitled “Kobieta i mężczyzna: człowieczeństwo w swej pełni” (The Man and the Woman: The *Humanum* in Its Entirety), Andrzej Pastwa gives the common theoretical background of the texts presented in the reviewed volume *Kobieta w Kościele i w społeczeństwie* (Woman in the Church and Society). The author emphasizes the natural difference between women and men, which makes their status divergent yet, at the same time, complementary in social and individual family life. The current era of globalization, present in societies worldwide, necessitates, according to Pastwa, a new anthropological model, the one that will cater to the need for mutual tolerance amongst people based on fundamental rights of every person.

The eleven studies of the volume deal with various aspects of the relationship between women, men, society, Church, and law, etc. Interdisciplinary nature of the problems analysed therein is further reflected by original approaches of individual contributors who represent a variety of academic disciplines, such as: philosophy, sociology, psychology, legal studies, and theology. The presented texts consider the main theme — the role of women — mainly from the perspective of: (1) individual life and experience of a woman (Stanisława Mielimąka, Urszula Nowicka), (2) the role of women and family life (Monika Menke, Elżbieta Szczot), and (3) professional status and protection of women’s rights (Helena Hrehová, Linda Ghisoni). In the study “Trud stawania się kobietą” (The Challenges of Becoming a Woman) Stanisława Mielimąka describes contemporary

model that differentiates sex and gender, and expresses doubts about its validity. The author points out various challenges in the life of a woman that she has to cope with. The role of integration and disintegration, along with the prevalence of personality disturbances in women, belong to phenomena of high risk in women's lives. The author believes that reflecting upon these issues can help to regain integrity and health in the development of the woman's personality.

Unique and especially virtuous capacity of the woman is presented by Urszula Nowicka in her text "Czy istnieje samotność w Kościele? Kilka refleksji o tożsamości kobiety konsekrowanej i niezamężnej" (Is There Solitude in the Church? Some Reflections on the Identity of Consecrated and Unmarried Women). The study considers the phenomenon of solitude related to the status of an unmarried or a consecrated woman. Nowicka stresses the need to differentiate this state in woman's life from loneliness — a state of being alone in a negative sense. By rethinking the status of consecrated and unmarried woman, the author indicates towards a better understanding of the good which can stem from it.

In the article "Kanoniczne przygotowanie do małżeństwa: refleksja nad przygotowaniem kobiety do pełnienia zadań małżeńskich i rodzicielskich" (Canonical Preparation for Marriage: Reflections on Preparing Women to Assume Marital and Parental Functions), Monika Menke deals with an important stage in the woman's life — preparation for marriage. The author embeds all aspects of this preparation procedure in the context of the purpose of marriage as presented in the *Pastoral Constitution of Vatican II "Gaudium et spes"* — the good of the spouses (*bonum conjuguum*) and the birth and upbringing of children (*bonum prolis*). As emphasized in the text, preparing for marriage is a life-long process, starting already in childhood, initiated by family upbringing, and continued over the years of school education. The study is based on John Paul II's teaching on women, particularly women in the Church and canon law, marriage and parental functions of women elaborated in his *Apostolic Letter "Mulieris dignitatem."*

Issues and solutions for maternity protection in the European Union regulations are, in turn, analysed in the following study "Ochrona macierzyństwa kobiet aktywnych zawodowo w Unii Europejskiej" (Protection of Working Women's Maternity in the European Union) by Elżbieta Szczot. The author discusses the directives implementing the principle of equal treatment and prohibition of discrimination, equal pay, the prohibition of night-shift work and hazardous and dangerous conditions, as well as the protection of motherhood. The text reveals a number of problematic issues of employing pregnant women and the needs concerning their work conditions. Reconciliation of women's family life with work respon-

sibilities in the context of the Catholic Church's teaching, is considered a great challenge in contemporary society. When analysing the role of the woman, Elżbieta Szczot consciously uses a metaphor of the woman as "the heart of the family," and surely, as in the case of the human body — a family without the heart cannot survive.

In her study "Il compito delle donne nella promozione dei diritti dell'uomo" (The Task of Women in the Promotion of Human Rights) Helena Hrehová reflects on the task and share of women in the progress of human rights. Since women have been suffering injustice for centuries, according to the author, they constantly sought to solve this ethical problem referring to the biblical, anthropological — philosophical and historical — legal context. Even in contemporary societies, inequality is in this field of human rights still evident, not so much *de iure*, but more in practice. Analogically, as a result of recognition of the third gender *neuter*, defending of the right of the woman-mother, who is now marginalized and reduced to "the responsible [person] number two," becomes relevant again. Equality and rights are for all, inequality is embarrassing. The author also reminds us about the need to answer such fundamental questions as: Who are we as human beings? Why do we associate natural human rights with the existential status of each person? For Hrehová, the human craving for power and domination, the lack of responsibility and modesty derives from a crucial misunderstanding of God's intentions. The author points to Jesus' attitude towards women, the fact that in all of His teachings and behaviour one can find nothing that reflects the discrimination against women prevalent in his day. On the contrary, his words and works always express the respect and honour due to women — the "daughters of Jerusalem." As witnesses of various manifestations of discrimination in our everyday lives, we are able to fight for our rights and especially for the rights of women and children. One can only agree with Hrehová claiming that we do not need new theories or documents — what we do need primarily is to live a genuine life based on mutual respect and tolerance.

Marie Kolářová in her article "La condizione della donna nel Codice di diritto canonico" (Conditions of Women in Church as Viewed by Canon Law) defines the reasons why women were not granted the same rights as men. She highlights selected ecclesiastical documents that relate to the status of women in the Church. The dividing line is, according to the author, the line between clergymen and laymen, and not the line between men and women. Similarly as in the text by Hrehová, the author points out the difference between the law and current practice and suggests possibilities for the real emancipation of women. In the study "Cooperazione della donna all'esercizio della potestà di giurisdizione nei tribunali

ecclesiastici” (The Cooperation of Women in the Exercise of the Power of Jurisdiction in Ecclesiastical Tribunals) Linda Ghisoni takes us through the history and evolution, starting from Roman law and culminating in the Code of Canon Law of 1983, which finally led to the inclusion of women in the ecclesiastical tribunals. The author enumerates the roles that a woman can play in Church tribunals and emphasizes distinctive characteristics of the presence of women in them. Ghisoni argues towards prospects *de iure condendo* for an extension of the tasks assignable to women in ecclesiastical tribunals.

Małgorzata Tomkiewicz contributes to the discussed subject matter in the text “*Mater semper certa est? Macierzyństwo zastępcze w świetle regulacji prawa europejskiego i w prawie polskim*” (Surrogacy in the Light of the European Law Regulations and in Polish Law). The author ponders upon the possibility of using a third party both in the process of insemination (donation of genetic material) as well as for pregnancy which led to the distinction and division of maternal roles with respect to the same child between different women. New types of motherhood that have appeared in contemporary society — genetic, biological, social and legal motherhood, have raised questions concerning sensitive ethical and legal issues. The fundamental problem lies, according to the author, in a question whether surrogacy is a phenomenon that is socially desirable and whether it is legally permissible. The main concerns also relate to the child’s affiliate relations born as a result of the use of artificial reproductive technology. It is not clear what is the legal nature of the agreement binding the donor of genetic material and a *surrogate* mother with people who *order a child*. Surrogacy, claims Tomkiewicz, can proliferate as a result of commercialization, and therefore what seems to be of immense importance, is the return to traditional Christian values of a human being as a person.

Another two studies from the discussed volume are concerned with theoretical perspectives on the subject matter of women’s rights in contemporary society. In the article “Nowy feminizm jako odpowiedź na nowożytny kryzys wspólnotowości” (New Feminism as a Response to the Modern Crisis of Community) Aneta Gawkowska presents major arguments of New Feminists who base their theories on John Paul II’s theological anthropology of sexuality and theology of the woman. New Feminism is considered as a kind of personalistic humanism which centres its attention on the human person realizing his or her nature within relations of personal self-giving. Assumptions of male and female equality, difference, and being complementary to each other with the specific female sensitivity towards the human and relational issues, form the basis for the New Feminism’s theoretical argumentation and practical postulates.

New Feminists offer a perspective of reconciliation of men and women within many areas often perceived to be antagonistic, such as social roles and spheres of life associated with men and women, body and spirit, nature and culture, sex and gender, the individual and the social. In order to overcome the modern crisis in the lives of people, Gawkowska calls for constituting a new kind of social philosophy, which does not try to substitute the one-sided concept of freedom with any equally one-sided view of the social bond to others, but it attempts the reconciliation of values which seem to be complementary.

The study by Elżbieta Adamiak, “Nauczanie Jana Pawła II o kobietach w kontekście teologii feministycznej” (John Paul II’s Teaching about Women in the Context of Feminist Theology), retrieves crucial historical moments of feminist thinking. For the author, feminist theology begins with the interest in the women’s issue at the end of the 19th century. The article is concerned mainly with the analysis of the crucial parts of the apostolic letter on the dignity and vocation of women *Mulieris dignitatem*. Adamiak also pays attention to specific anthropological issues and theological conclusions concerned with the language used when referring to God.

In the study “Niepokalana — kobiecość na nowo pisana” (Immaculate — Femininity Written Anew), Alicja Kostka claims that the Essentials content of the title of Mary as Immaculate refers to all women as an internal code of the new femininity offered by God as a manifestation of his faith in the creation. Immaculate is a promise of fulfilled femininity in the order of redemption — the gift of integrity, fullness of relationships, the mission of woman in relation to man and her primary reference to God. The author’s message is to translate the gift of Immaculate into the Church in order to promote a fuller presence of the women.

Authors of the presented volume commonly realize that the problem of the status of women in the society and the Church is far from being easy to tackle. In spite of that reader can feel optimism springing from the faith in reviving the truth about the marriage of a woman and a man, interpreted in the context of the Theology of Creation. The leitmotiv shared by the authors of this volume as expressed through the ideas of John Paul II from his *Apostolic Letter “Mulieris dignitatem”* has been spread by Pope Benedict XVI in “promoting a culture that recognizes the dignity that belongs to women, in law and in concrete reality.”