

Slodička, Andrej

Ecumenical dialogue and its perspectives in Slovakia

Prace Naukowe AJD. Pedagogika 17, 11-26

2008

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.

Andrej SLODIČKA

Ecumenical dialogue and its perspectives in Slovakia

Pope Benedict XVI in his general audience, attended by German speaking pilgrims, that took place on 24 I 2007, appealed to people to thank for the decades of ecumenical dialogue, but at the same time pope showed that ahead of us still remains long journey (nem. *Zugleich liegt noch ein weiter Weg vor uns*)¹. In common proclamation with Athenian archbishop Christolodoulos, pope Benedict XVI expressed his desire to travel together along the arduous route of a dialogue in truth with a view to re-establish the full communion of faith². The dogmatic dialogue itself is really difficult, as it is shown for example by a discussion with the Orthodox regarding the primacy.

Ahead of us stands tough work especially in the field of the theological dialogue between various Churches. As it was reminded by cardinal Walter Kasper, the discussion with Orthodox remains on the issue of primacy. Many people speak of stagnation in dialogue between Christians and Protestants. The great discussion is taking place in Germany. Cardinal Walter Kasper in his recent speech for radio Vatican on 22 I 2007 mentioned that such declarations and proclamations regarding stagnation in dialogue are exaggerated. Cardinal rather positively evaluated the ecumenical dialogue between the churches. Many Protestants on the other hand criticize the ecumenical dialogue of The Catholic Church. Difficult task consists also in an education of the priests, the seminarians and of the believers. On one hand there were meetings of pope Benedict XVI with Bartholomew I, and with Greek archbishop Christolodoulos, on the

¹ See: Benedikt XVI, *Generalaudienz, Mittwoch, 24. Januar 2007*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi... (26.1.2007).

² Compare: *Gemeinsame Erklärung von Papst Benedikt XVI. und seiner Seligkeit Christodoulos, Erzbischof von Athen und ganz Griechenland*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/h... (29.1.2007).

other hand we do ask how the ecumenical dialogue looks like in our towns and villages; it often stagnates.

1. Unity in variety

The ecumenical vision in theology is: unity in diversity. According to the decree of the Second Vatican council *Ecclesiarum Orientalium* The Catholics ought to acknowledge the real Christian values which spring from the common heritage. The Eastern Churches distinguish themselves by their venerable antiquity, there remains conspicuous the tradition that has been handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers and that forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal Church. (Lev XIII: *Orientalium dignitas*) The eastern churches are the living witnesses of this tradition. Variety of the Church does not harm its unity, but rather variety makes this unity more transparent³.

Divine servant John Paul II in his encyclical *Ut unum sint* claims that The Communion is made fruitful by the exchange of gifts between the Churches insofar as they complement each other⁴. This situation is valid also in Slovakia. When we, the priest of the Apostolic exarchate of Kosice, took part at the theological course in Rome, it was said to us, that Greek Catholics do differ from Orthodox only in the matter of a living unity with Roman pope (thus they acknowledge the primacy). Thus the proclamation, that the Eastern theology is not an addition but rather a part of the catholic theology, ought to be clear to everyone. Second Vatican council clearly states: Nor should we forget that anything wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our separated brethren can be a help to our own edification. Whatever is truly Christian is never contrary to what genuinely belongs to the faith; indeed, it can always bring a deeper realization of the mystery of Christ and the Church⁵. Protestants have always accentuated a meaning of the Holy Scripture. Martine Luther's accentuation of faith and hope might be enrichment for us. (his definition of faith: to wholly entrust oneself into the arms of crucified Christ)

The Catholic strongly accentuated the same thing in the second Vatican council. In order that the theology would be actual, it is necessary that the Christian of East and West would give the answers to the temporal issues of a man; as it was often emphasized by John Paul II. When we are able to edify ourselves by the other religion (according the current pope Benedict XVI; as cardinal he claimed

³ Druhy vatikanský koncil, *Ecclesiarum Orientalium*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 1.

⁴ Compare: Jan Pavol II, *Ut unum sint*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1996, čl. 57.

⁵ Druhy vatikanský koncil: *Unitatis redintegratio*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 4.

that we can learn something new from the mysticism of Asia (negative theology)⁶ then even more from the other Christians. According the Second Vatican council, For many centuries the Church of the East and that of the West each followed their separate ways though linked in a brotherly union of faith and sacramental life. From the beginning the Churches of the East have had a treasury from which the Western Church has drawn extensively-in liturgical practice, spiritual tradition, and law. However, the heritage handed down by the apostles was received with differences of form and manner⁷. The very rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of the Eastern Churches should be known, venerated, preserved and cherished by all. They must recognize that this is of supreme importance for the faithful preservation of the fullness of Christian tradition, and for bringing about reconciliation between Eastern and Western Christians⁸.

In the study of revelation East and West have followed different methods, and have developed differently their understanding and confession of God's truth. It is hardly surprising, then, if from time to time one tradition has come nearer to a full appreciation of some aspects of a mystery of revelation than the other, or has expressed it to better advantage. In such cases, these various theological expressions are to be considered often as mutually complementary rather than conflicting. Where the authentic theological traditions of the Eastern Church are concerned, we must recognize the admirable way in which they have their roots in Holy Scripture, and how they are nurtured and given expression in the life of the liturgy. Thus they pave the way to a full vision of Christian truth. The Eastern children of the Catholic Church preserve this heritage (this heritage is common to Greek Catholic as well as to Orthodox). The theological heritage of the East belongs to full catholicity and apostolicity of the Church⁹. We are thinking here especially about the Eastern Theology.

The present pope Benedict XVI in his speech to Alexandrian patriarch accented the idea, that the patriarchal Community in Alexandria has a rich spiritual, liturgical and theological tradition, whose treasures are part of the patrimony of the Church (enrichment; Catholic does not mean Latin)¹⁰.

The ecumenical directory shows the legitimate diversity in theology which derives from the different methods and language theologians use in penetrating

⁶ Compare: J. Ratzinger, *Křesťanství na přelomu tisícletí*. Praha : Portál, 1997, s. 183.

⁷ Druhy vatikánský konci: *Unitatis redintegratio*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 14.

⁸ Tamže, čl. 15

⁹ Tamže, čl. 17

¹⁰ Compare: Benedikt XVI.: *Ansprache an seine Seligkei Antonios Naguib, Patriarch von Alexandrien der Kopten 15 Dezember 2006*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2007/december/documents/hf_ (26.1.2007).

the divine mysteries. There exists a distinction between the deposit of faith itself or the truths which are contained in our venerable doctrine, and the way in which these truths are formulated. The teachers should teach their students fidelity to the authentic Christian tradition in the issues of theology, spirituality and ecclesial order; but at the same time the students ought to compare their own patrimony with the patrimony of the others Christian traditions in the East and West, regardless antique or modern dogmatic formularies¹¹.

The concrete example of unity in diversity is perichoresis – in East it is not *circuminsessio*, but rather *circumincessio*. The East, in its teaching regarding penetration of The persons in Trinity, accents a dynamical character. The Catholic Church sees unity in diversity manifested in the theological teaching regarding Trinity in the East and West, what finds its expression in liturgy. The Orthodoxy demands abolition of Filioque even in West. The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the article 248 reminds us the Eastern tradition about Trinity, which expresses the Father's character as first origin of the Spirit, and at the same time reminds us the Western tradition, which expresses first the consubstantial communion between the Father and the Son. Thus, according The Catechism, it is validly added term Filioque¹². Those two traditions might coexist and they have already coexisted in the Catholic Church.

The reformation movement in 16th century purified the Catholic dogmatic teaching. Though The Protestants accent primacy of grace, The Catholics try to find the common ground with them for example in the field of the dogmatic teaching, where The Catholic do demonstrate this attempt by stressing the primacy of grace in the Marianic dogmas. The Immaculate Conception is not a work of Marry, but rather of divine grace. We have in mind the eastern theology. In Protestants we primary think about the Scriptures. The accentuation of faith in receiving of the Sacraments, what was done especially by the Protestants, could abolish a prejudice which supposes the Holy Mysteries to be the magical events.

In a closing speech of the present pontiff Benedict XVI in occasion of the week of prayer for unity that took place in the basilica of. St. Paul on 25.1.2007 we find the idea that the authentic dialogue ought to include a possibility of "brotherly critic". The Brotherly critic purifies. The way of expression of the catholic faith cannot be a hindrance¹³.

¹¹ Compare: Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov, *Direktórium na vykonávanie princípov a noriem o ekumenizme*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1994, čl. 74.

¹² See: *Katechismus Katolíckej cirkvi*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1998, čl. 248.

¹³ See: *Papst-Apell am Ende der internationalen Gebets*. In. http://www.katholische-kirche.de/2315_19435.htm (26.1.2006).

The Ecumenical directory states that there exist the elements of the Christian patrimony of truth and holiness which are common to all Churches and ecclesial Communities, even though these are sometimes presented according to varying theological expressions. There are the riches of liturgy, spirituality and doctrine proper to each communion, but which can help Christians towards a deeper knowledge of the nature of the Church. Though there are some points of disagreement on matters of faith and morals, which can nonetheless encourage a deeper exploration of the Word of God and lead to distinguishing real from apparent contradictions¹⁴.

The other document of the Papal council for proclamation of Unity among the Christians shows the signs which bound together all Christians. Those signs are the mutual and common devotion to the living divine Word, common profession of faith in the Trinitarian God and in the salvific work of The Son of God-Christ who became man. This is expressed in the various formulations of Credo. The Baptism is the essential link among the Christians. The unity between the Christians is realized in the middle of rich diversity which is the natural dimension of the catholicity of the Church¹⁵. Pope Benedict XVI in the church of St. George in Istanbul said that The Catholic Church is willing to do everything possible to overcome the obstacles¹⁶.

2. The prognosis of the ecumenical perspectives in Slovakia in the dogmatic field

The doctrinal (we do distinguish ethical and dogmatic) questions would be solved not only in Slovakia, but rather the central theologians of the Christian Churches would solve those questions. The decree of the papal council for promoting unity among Christians depicts the key issues for continuation of dialogue: relation between Holy Scripture (especially an authority in the matters of faith) and Tradition (inseparable from exegesis of the Divine Word), Eucharist, Holy Orders as the Sacrament, Magisterial office of the Church (pope, bishops),

¹⁴ Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov, *Direktórium na vykonávanie princípov a noriem o ekumenizme*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1994, čl. 76, 77.

¹⁵ See: Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov: *Ekumenický rozmer formovania pastoračných pracovníkov*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1998, čl. 17.

¹⁶ See: Benedikt XVI.: *Ansprache; Patriarchalkirche St. Georg im Phanar, Istanbul, 30. November 2006*. In: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/h... (29.1.2007).

Virgin Mary, understanding of the Church, primacy of the Roman pontiff¹⁷. Pope Benedict XVI in his speech in the Orthodox cathedral stated that the issue of the office of St. Peter and his successors has invoked many different thoughts and ideas which we hope to overcome through the theological dialogue. Benedict XVI repeated the invitation of the servant of God John Paul II addressed to the Orthodox, to enter into a fraternal dialogue aimed at identifying ways in which the Petrine ministry might be exercised today, while respecting its nature and essence¹⁸.

According to the opinions of many experts, the issues of Filioque would be solved. Even the Protestants in Slovakia hold an indifferent ground in that matter. They state that both formulations have their place in Bible. The Protestants in Finland state the same. With the Catholic they do pray Filioque, and with the Orthodox they don't. My opinion is that in this field will remain unity in diversity. Even in the ancient Church there were Judeo-Christians and Pagan-Christians; there existed various schools (Alexandrian, Antiochian, Roman, Syrian, Armenian)

The Protestants and the Orthodox refuse *Transubstantiation*. M. Luther thought about *consubstantiation* (substances remain). The Protestants agree with *transfinalisation* whose author was a Catholic scholar Schillebeeckx (transignification). The Protestants in Slovakia have higher demands and rights than for example the Greek Catholics. The Protestants suppose some dogmas regarding Virgin Mary as unacceptable, and devotion to Mary is undesirable. Some Protestants speak about future Federation of the Churches, where each church should keep its theological nuances. The Protestants don't accept extreme mariology while agreeing with the office of pope with a condition that pope's jurisdiction ought to be the same as in the first millennium.

The Federation¹⁹ (presented mostly by the Protestants) means that there would exist Roman-Catholic, Lutheran-Catholic, Anglican-Catholic and Greek-Catholic Church. Roman Catholic would hold its papal ineffability, transubstantiation, papal jurisdiction with a right to appoint bishops for its Church, and teaching regarding Purgatory. The Orthodox would not be forced to accept papal

¹⁷ See: Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov: *Ekumenický rozmer formovania pastoračných pracovníkov*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1998, čl. 26.

¹⁸ See: Benedikt XVI.: *Ansprache; Patriarchalkirche St. Georg im Phanar, Istanbul, 30. November 2006*. In: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/h... (29.1.2007).

¹⁹ Mentioned also by the Pontifical council, See: Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov: *Ekumenický rozmer formovania pastoračných pracovníkov*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1998, čl. 26.

ineffability nor Immaculate conception. The Lutherans would not be forced to pray to the saints, and the Lord's supper would be recognized through consubstantiation. All would be under one and ecumenical pope. There would be a mutual recognition of the matrimonies, priestly orders and of the apostolic succession. The ecumenical council would be called and assembled. The dogmatic field would be managed according a hierarchy of the truths. There would be unity in all essential areas and matters, and in the other areas would prevail love, as it was confirmed by St. Augustine (*Unitatis reintegratio* (UR 4 mentions something similar). UR also points at unity in all essential and necessary matter. All in the Church must preserve unity in essentials. But let all, according to the gifts they have received, enjoy a proper freedom, in their various forms of spiritual life and discipline, in their different liturgical rites, and even in their theological elaborations of revealed truth. This practice is approved even by some Protestants.

Nicene- Constantinople Symbol would be valid for all Churches. Some Protestants in Slovakia claim that the Catholic after the second Vatican council accepted the Protestant view of the Church as the God's people, as well as the teaching regarding holy orders (universal priesthood in the Scriptures.) The Protestants claim that The Catholics accepted protestant view of justification in 1999 in Ausburg. According Protestants the Evangelic denomination could accept a teaching regarding an apostolic succession. The doctrine which is not found in Nicene- Constantinople Symbol wouldn't be considered as unsustainable with catholic faith, but rather it would be seen as the theological difference which would be discussed. The Evangelical denomination is not for uniformity in Ethics. Decree about ecumenism speaks also about a hierarchy (gradation) of the catholic truths since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith²⁰. The same principle is mention in the Ecumenical directory²¹.

According the Evangelical denomination in Slovakia there would be no uniformity in Ethics, there would be no consensus regarding that matter. Some do quote Aristotle and not Bible. The Catholics and Orthodox stress the principle of An Absolute ethics. The Evangelical denomination claims that life is too complicated to be ordered only by Holy Scripture, here the Protestantism paradoxically accents and prefers human reason than Holy Scriptures. They say that we ought not to forget what life and love to neighbor demand from us. There would come to existence a theological ecumenical dialogue in Slovakia, but this still remains only a wish to be realized; it is a deficit among Slovak Christians.

²⁰ Druhý vatikánsky koncil: *Unitatis reintegratio*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 11.

²¹ See: Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov: *Direktórium na vykonávanie princípov a noriem o ekumenizme*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1994, čl. 75.

3. Practical ecumenism in Slovakia

In accordance with the common statement of Benedict XVI and Christodoulos we should show mutual love and spirit of reconciliation²². The similar ideas were uttered also in Istanbul in the church of St. George²³. The Evangelical denomination in Slovakia claims that ecumenism was seriously injured by the statement of Vatican, expressed in document *Dominus Iesus*, where Vatican recognizes the Protestant churches only in the level of religious societies. The protestants are deeply hurt by this declaration of Vatican. The others are not interested at all in dogmatic justification and clarification of the reason why they are not recognized as the Churches. According those thinkers everything is justifiable. The second Vatican council mentions Separated Churches and religious societies in the West²⁴.

Some Protestants even demand the third Vatican council. According few Evangelicals, Slovak Catholicism has very conservative and aggressive character towards the Protestants. They claim that Catholicism in Sweden differ from Slovak one and is not aggressive at all. Some Evangelicals point out that in the areas where Catholicism has strong positions it ceases to be ecumenical especially among high hierarchy. The most serious issue are mixed matrimones. According Evangelicals *Motu proprio* regarding mixed marriages has strongly antiecumenical character. A concrete example of this character is shown in mixed cemeteries (catholic and protestant). Evangelicals understand this as an expression of disagreement with unity of the Church as well as a disagreement with mutual recognition and tolerance among Christians.

UR3 uses the name "Christian" also for the separated brothers; there are our brothers and sisters in Lord (this we ought to accent in praxis). UR 4 invites every Catholic believer to actively take part in the ecumenical activities. It is therefore necessary to abolish all deeds which don't correspondent with a status of the separated brothers. All Catholics are cordially invited to make the first steps towards our separated brothers. Situation among Christian is getting better due to a conversion of heart; there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. (UR7) The cordial expressions of love are still actual

²² See: *Gemeinsame Erklärung von Papst Benedikt XVI. und seiner Seligkeit Christodoulos, Erzbischof von Athen und ganz Griechenland*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/h... (29.1.2007).

²³ See: Benedikt XVI: *Ansprache; Patriarchalkirche St. Georg im Phanar, Istanbul, 30. November 2006*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/december/documents/h... (29.1.2007).

²⁴ Druhý vatikánsky koncil: *Unitatis redintegratio*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 19.

and still needed. It is necessary to pray for grace of sincerely self-denial, humility, servitude and brotherly love. Especially as Christ's priests we are invited to serve and not to be attended by the servants. (Mt 20,28) A change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement (UR 8) The first duty in ecumenical service is prayer, as it was said by Benedict XVI in his general audience on 24.1.2007 along with recommendation of second Vatican council; this is valid also for Slovakia. We have in mind also the common prayer with other Christians²⁵. The priests should have mastered a theology that has been carefully worked out in this way and not polemically (UR 10), especially with regard to those aspects which concern the relations of separated brethren with the Catholic Church. The Holy Council urges all, but especially those who intend to devote themselves to the restoration of full communion hoped for between the Churches of the East and the Catholic Church, to give due consideration to this special feature of the origin and growth of the Eastern Churches, and to the character of the relations which obtained between them and the Roman See before separation²⁶.

The concrete tasks are given in Ecumenical directory²⁷. According to Code of canon law (CCEO) ecumenism is to be one of the necessary considerations of each and every theological discipline, at faculties; the faithful should receive true information about the other Churches and religious societies²⁸.

4. The Concrete deeds in ecumenism in Slovakia

In the light of experience gained in the years following the Council, this theological and pastoral orientation has been incorporated into the two Codes of Canon Law It has been explicitly treated from the pastoral standpoint in the Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism²⁹. For although the Catholic Church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace, yet its members fail to live by them with all the fervor that they should. The Catholics ought to strive for the Christian perfection.(UR 4) Even Evangelicals are striving for unity with pope, but at the

²⁵ See: Benedetto XVI: *Udienza generale, mercoledì, 24 gennaio 2007*. In: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi... (26.1.2007).

²⁶ Druhý vatikánsky koncil: *Unitatis redintegratio*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 14.

²⁷ See: Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov: *Direktórium na vykonávanie princípov a noriem o ekumenizme*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1994, čl. 74.

²⁸ See: *Codex canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*. Lublin : Gaudium, 2002, Can. 350, 625. 902–908.

²⁹ See: Ján Pavol II: *Ut unum sint*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1996, čl. 58.

same time they want to hold the articles of faith which they supposed to be correct and biblical. The Evangelicals criticize double folded Catholicism which is tolerant in the protestant countries but intolerant in catholic ones. The second Vatican council has brought positive impulses (Protestants think the same). Ecumenism can't be ordered; the priest and believers ought to think in ecumenical dimensions. In our territory it is necessary to improve an ecumenical formation of priest, along with a formation of love between the rites in the Catholic Church (to show that matrimony is the Sacrament in the Catholic Church). Patience, ecumenical education, development in the world (Islam), change of generations, all those issues might bring some change. Many Protestants think that the Catholic Church withdraws from the positions of the Second Vatican council. It is therefore necessary to accent that we are all Christians. After the council, in Slovakia there was ecumenical life (opinion of the Protestants), but in recent times the process of ecumenism has slowed down. It is essential to build a dialogue. A lack of dialogue was a cause of Great schism. In symposiums organized by the Evangelic Faculty in Bratislava many Catholic and Orthodox Christians take active part. Cooperation also begins between Greek Catholic Faculty and Orthodox faculty.

An example of the ecumenical dialogue in Slovakia is the general assembly of the ecumenical council of the Churches in Slovak Republic (ERC) which took place on 28. March 2007. The members of ERC are: Evangelical Church in Slovakia, Reformed Christian church in Slovakia, Orthodox church and others. Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic church belongs to the category of observers. The churches have decided to intensify their collaboration in the social sphere³⁰.

In some areas there exists human collaboration among Christians. In Slovakia the believers also strive for ecumenical dialogue. Ordinaries of OS and OZ SR, together with Headquarters of the Ecumenical pastoral ministry (EPS) in OS and OZ SR, prepared common ecumenical liturgy; it was part of the Week of prayers for unity among Christians. The liturgy took place on 23rd. January in the chapel of St. George, which is situated in the building of Ministry of Defense in Bratislava, and was celebrated in presence of bishop – vicar of OS and OZ SR Mons. František Rábek. In presence of the employees of the Ministry of defense and of the General council, all attendants prayed for unity among Christians in the spirit of the current call for openness to each other. The clerics made speeches to the attendants of liturgy, using the words Of Jesus Christ' whose words have power to open what is closed. By His Words and tender touch He

³⁰ See: http://www.ecav.sk/?p=spravodajstvo/SPRekumena/valne_zhromazdenie_erc_v_sr (28. 5. 2007).

opens what is closed. He destroys all hindrances between Him and men. By love He conquers hatred. Through forgiveness He makes revenge useless. By His words of support and courage he cast away fear and doubt. By His presence He transforms torturing loneliness into joyful community of saved for eternity. Ef-fatha! – Open yourself! This useful divine word should resonate in all relations between Christians of the various traditions, because there are a lot of obstacles which hinder brother-sister relation. Spiritual work of the Vicariate and of the General council in OS and OZ SR by their long term ministry for people is a witness of the possible realization of ecumenism in praxis. After the liturgy the attendants met for small Christian agape³¹.

UR 6 speaks about renewal of the Church, what is actual issue also for us. The reform concerns not only the customs, but tries to reform also the Church discipline and a method of Ecclesial teaching, which we have to distinguished from a deposit (treasure) of faith (this was point out also by Benedict XVI. On 25.1.2007). This renewal has ecumenical content.

A Pinnacle of the Week of prayers for unity among Christians was the ecumenical meeting in Prešov. In the Evangelical church of St. Trinity in Prešov on 21st January 2007 was celebrated liturgy of Word in the spirit of the current Week of Prayer's theme which taken from Gospel according Luke: "All he does is good. He gives hearing to deaf and words to mute." After the readings from Old Testament followed homily in which the chief of KBS (conference of Bishops in Slovakia) Mons. František Tondra said that only careful reading of Bible could teach us to recognize the signs of time, as well as the personal calling for each of us.

"There, in the inmost depth of us, must begin real ecumenism. Ecumenism grows from the inner unity with divine grace, along with an attempt to listen Divine word, because Word is the same for all" said Bishop Tondra. He reminded us the fundamental Christian values which unite all Christian churches: dignity of human person, marriage, family, an attempt for social justice, Christian attitude to sick, disabled and old. "These are the challenges and the signs of time by which God indirectly speaks to us. We have to have sharp ear to listen these calls. It is not enough to state the issue, but we need to act. This is the right speech of Christian. "In the end of his speech bishop Mons. Tondra appealed to common prayer for a clean heart that we could see the needs of time as well as the difficult material and spiritual demands in the world. "Lord, Remove our deafness and give us your Words to which the world could understand. May we

³¹ *Ekumenická bohoslužba na Ministerstve obrany SR*. In <http://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20070124018> (28. 5. 2007).

be the light of the nations and a testimony of your presence and care for each of us, people on this Earth”.

General bishop of the Evangelical church in Slovakia Miloš Klátik also made speech to the assembly in which he concentrated on the authors of the current Theme- on the Christina from South Africa. “Tortured limb in the body of Church are brothers and sisters from Republic of South Africa. They are in difficult situation, they suffer and beg us to prayer with them.”

In the end of the ecumenical liturgy president of Slovak Republic Ivan Gašparovič personally thanked for a cordial invitation according whom especially the end of 20th century as well as the current times are marked by big effort for unification, forgiveness and mutual collaboration. “Mutual relations have advanced in such way that today the representants of the various Churches and of the civil life together pray in the church for unity among Christians, and thus give evidence that they honor each other, respect each other, forgave each other, and that they want to participate in well being of the society as well as in development of the Christian moral values.”

Apostolic nuncios in Slovakia Mons. Henryk Jozef Nowacki was also present in that liturgy. As he stated after the end of liturgy, this liturgy connected itself with prayers of the whole Catholic Church. “Our Lord Jesus Christ left us in his testament the message, that we may be one with Him. This was His prayer, this was His calling to Father. We want to pray especially for unity which comes from the human hearts. And Human hearts can be transformed only by the radiant prayer, burning prayer, calling to Father that we may be one³².”

UR 6 connects renewal of unity with theological and historical research. We must get to know the outlook of our separated brethren. To achieve this purpose, study is of necessity required, and this must be pursued with a sense of realism and good will (UR 9). Catholics need to acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines of our separated brethren, their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background. Sacred theology and other branches of knowledge, especially of an historical nature, must be taught with due regard for the ecumenical point of view, so that they may correspond more exactly with the facts³³. UR is against Irenicism but at the same time points at the adequate methods of presentation of the Catholic teaching. The Catholic faith must be explained more profoundly and precisely, in such a way and in such terms that our separated brethren would be able to understand

³² *Z ekumenickej bohoslužby v Prešove*. In. <http://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20070122016> (28.5.2007).

³³ Druhý vatikánsky koncil: *Unitatis redintegratio*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 10.

it. In this context is made the presentation of knowledge at Greek Catholic faculty in Presov.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church mentions the tools which lead to unity of Christians: perpetual renewal, change of heart, common prayers (common prayer could take place more often in Slovakia), mutual brotherly acknowledgment (it could be in higher quality; sometimes there exist this problem between Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics) ecumenical formation, dialogue between Christians, what is also very neglecting, collaboration between Christians³⁴.

The ecumenical relations between Evangelicals and Catholics are very good in Finland. This is shown by present pontiff Benedict XVI. In Finland Christians pray, work and give testimony about Divine Word together with the Protestant. Pope has accented the teaching regarding justification. The current topic in Sweden and Finland is: "Justification in life of the Church." Similar dialogue would be welcomed in Slovakia, because it is giving evidence of love and mutual collaboration³⁵. Greek Catholics have a special duty of fostering the unity of all Christians, in particular of Eastern Christians; in Slovakia it means with Orthodox Church (EO)³⁶. An example of this could be a collaboration of the Eastern patriarchs in the Middle East.

The Czech Christians have the ecumenical translation of Bible; the similar situation will be also in Slovakia. The Old Testament has been already translated. By the decision of Conference of Bishops in Slovakia ecumenism was implemented at the Theological faculty in Bratislava as well as at its theological institutions; this was done in 1995/96. In Czech Republic the Christians reciprocally acknowledged validity of the sacrament of Baptism; Germany is an example how to prepare simple order for celebration of mixed marriages³⁷. Even in Slovakia was acknowledged validity of the Baptism of the Evangelical church. The similar acknowledgements would also come into existence with the Other churches.

The ecumenical directory from year 1993 shows the concrete deeds. The special task is entrusted to the Ecclesial faculties and to the catholic university in Ruzomberok. This university ought to study patrimony and traditions of the others Eastern and Western Christians. Very rarely one can find active ecumenical

³⁴ See: *Katechizmus Katolickej cirkvi*. Trnava: Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1998, čl. 218.

³⁵ See: Benedikt XVI.: *Ansprache an eine ökumenische Delegation aus Finnland 19 Januar 2007*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2007/january/documents/hf_26.1.2007.

³⁶ See: Benedikt XVI.: *Ansprache an seine Seligkei Antonios Naguib, Patriarch von Alexandrien der Kopten 15 Dezember 2006*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2007/december/documents/hf_26.1.2007.

³⁷ See: Dráb P.: *Ekumenizmus na Slovensku*. Prešov: 1998, s. 171.

institute³⁸. The answers for the particular questions are found in the decrees of the Pontifical council for promotion of unity among Christians.

According CCEO The Eastern Catholic Churches have a special duty of fostering unity among all Eastern Churches, first of all through prayers, by the example of life (lat. *vitae exemplo*), by the religious fidelity to the ancient traditions of the Eastern Churches, (lat. *religiosa erga antiquas traditiones Ecclesiarum orientalium fidelitate*) by mutual and better knowledge of each other (lat. *mutua et meliore cognitione*), and by collaboration (lat. *collaboratione*) and brotherly respect in practice and spirit. There should be in each individual Church sui iuris a commission of experts on ecumenical matters³⁹.

5. Perspectives of the ecumenical dialogue

The most controversial theme of the ecumenical dialogue is the papal primacy. The orthodox Christians are bound by Bible and by the seven ecumenical councils. The last year was organized meeting between Catholics and Orthodox in Belgrade in Serbia. The object of dialogue was a primacy of pope and ecclesiology. Cardinal Walter Kasper said that the Orthodox Church in Serbia proved itself to be very hospitable. Ecclesiology is the permanent object of a dialogue between those churches.

The mixed commission for a theological dialogue between Orthodox and Catholic Church was created on 28. November 1979. The first meeting took place on 29.5.1980 in Rhodos and Patmos (Mystery of Church and Eucharist in the light of the Holy Trinity). The second meeting was in Munich (30.6–6.7 1982; faith, sacrament and unity of the Church), the third was in Crete (30.5.–8.6. 1984) and fourth in Bari (29.5.–7.6.1987), the fifth one in Finnish Valame (19.–27.6.1987; “Sacrament of holy orders in the sacramental structure of the Church and especial importance of the apostolic succession for sanctification and unity of People of God; Ecclesiological and canonic consequences of the sacramental structure of the Church. Conciliarity and authority in the Church.” and the sixth one in Freising (6.–15.5.1990; Uniatism)⁴⁰. In year 2006 the theologians in Bel-

³⁸ See: Pápežská rada pre napomáhanie jednoty kresťanov: *Direktórium na vykonávanie princípov a noriem o ekumenizme*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1994, čl. 88–91.

³⁹ See: *Codex canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*. Lubli : Gaudium, 2002, Can. 902–908.

⁴⁰ See: Dráb, P.: *Ekumenizmus na Slovensku*. Prešov: 1998, s. 52–55.

grade analyzed this theme: Conciliarity and authority in the Church.⁴¹ These are the topics which are discussed.

During the pontificate of current pope is evident higher openness of the Orthodox Christians, especially of Russian Orthodox, towards the Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI received the words of appreciation from Russian patriarch Alexij. Some observers see the cause of this amiability in the fact that Alexij is Estonian German and benedict XVI has also German origin. On the other hand some say that there exist some coolness in the ecumenical dialogue between Catholic and Protestants, though Cardinal Walter Kasper strongly opposes to that claim. Present Pope Benedict XVI also praises the achievements of this dialogue. There are some Evangelicals who proclaim pontificate of John Paul II as a better one than the pontificate of present pope. The Evangelicals see in Slovakia hidden triumphalism; this is evident for example in change of translation "I believe in one Catholic Church"; in Slovak area it is understood that it depicts one Roman Catholic Church.

Rite touches not only the liturgy, spirituality or discipline⁴², but it also concerns theology. The eastern part of the Church has its own style of expression of the dogmatic truths⁴³. We may speak about the Greek Catholic theology in the context of the decree of the Second Vatican council *Unitatis redintegratio*, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*. Simply said – all eastern (eastern theology) what does not contradict to the dogmas of the Catholic church. The recitation of Filioque depends on a decision of eparchial bishop. As the Easterners we would proclaim the positive Holiness of Virgin Mary, what was done also by the second Vatican council. A dogmatic cause of the great schism: primacy (current pope as cardinal gives for paradigm 1st millennium, when the Church lived in community) and Filioque (present Marianic dogmac)

The catholic Church supposes spiritual patrimony of the Eastern Churches for the patrimony of the whole Christ's Church⁴⁴.

Benedict XVI positively evaluates year 2006 from the ecumenical point of view. This year began with the official visit of the World's alliance of the reformed churches. Holy Father also received delegation of the World's alliance of the Baptists as well as the delegation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

⁴¹ See: *Gemeinsame Erklärung von Papst Benedikt XVI. und Patriarch Bartholomaios I.* In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/november/documents/h... (29.1.2007).

⁴² *Ritus est patrimonium liturgicum, theologicum, spirituale et disciplinare...* Porov.: *Codex canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*. Lublin : Gaudium, 2002, Can. 28 § 1.

⁴³ See.: Dráb, P.: *Ekumenizmus na Slovensku*. Prešov : 1998, s. 105.

⁴⁴ Druhý vatikánsky koncil: *Ecclesiarum Orientalium*. Trnava : Spolok sv. Vojtecha, 1993, čl. 5.

USA. Along with those meeting pope met with the deputies of the Georgian Orthodox church. One of the important meetings was a meeting with metropolite Kyrill from patriarchate of Moscow, along with the meeting with the orthodox priests and deacons, with the secretaries of the Christian World Communions, with bishop of Canterbury and head of the Anglican community, with his holiness Bartholomew I. The civil year was accomplished by the visit of bishop of Athen and of the whole Greece, his beatitude Christodoulos⁴⁵.

STRESZCZENIE

Dialog ekumeniczny i jego perspektywy w Słowacji

W artykule autor zwrócił uwagę na deklarowaną przez patriarchów poszczególnych kościołów chrześcijańskich konieczność podjęcia pracy nad wzajemnym dialogiem. Jednocześnie wskazał na głosy mówiące o stagnacji i ochłodzeniu relacji pomiędzy katolikami i protestantami i obecność żywej dyskusji z Kościołem Ortodoksyjnym nad prymatem papieża. Autor podjął także próbę ukazania praktycznego wymiaru dialogu pomiędzy kościołami w Słowacji, który obrazować może np. generalne zgromadzenie zarządu ekumenicznego Kościołów Republiki Słowackiej (28 marca 2007), ale również działania wiernych, jak przygotowanie liturgii ekumenicznej jako element Tygodnia Modlitw o Zjednoczenie Chrześcijan. Z drugiej strony przytoczone zostały poglądy ewangelików słowackich, którzy zarzucają słowackiemu katolicyzmowi konserwatywny i agresywny stosunek do protestantów oraz wzrastający triumfalizm, wyrażający się w zmianie tłumaczenia: „Wierzę w jeden Katolicki Kościół...” na rozumienie go jako Kościoła rzymskokatolickiego.

⁴⁵ See: Benedetto XVI: *Udienza generale, mercoledì, 24 gennaio 2007*. In. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi... (26.1.2007).