

Adam Cebula

[Published in 1993]

Studia Philosophiae Christianae 51/2, 5-6

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.

Published in 1993, John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* is still – despite the passage of time – a very explicit and well-grounded proposal on how to resolve the fundamental dilemmas underlying moral philosophy. Reaffirming the classic concept of truth transcending human culture, re-inserting it into the schemes of moral evaluation, as well as binding together the fundamental notions of truth and freedom through the postulate of the truth-based assessment of normative judgments – all these contentions seem to go against the dominant trends in contemporary metaethics. The specific character of Christian moral theorizing, articulated vividly twenty two years ago in the official papal document, gets ultimately determined by the claim concerning the universal validity of certain prohibitions (negative norms) applicable always and everywhere, regardless of the historical and cultural context of particular human acts.

Can the main conceptual tenets of the encyclical – twenty two years after its publication – still remain a source of inspiration for original research studies in the field of moral philosophy, regarded as distinct from moral theology? Does the recent development of modern science, marked by spectacular achievements in disciplines such as genetics or biotechnology, make it necessary to reformulate the chief premises of Christian ethics? Can the revolutionary social changes, occurring in modern democratic societies, affect our understanding of the basic categories underlying traditional ethical discourse? Do the unprecedented global phenomena, such as the threat of international terrorism, severe political tensions within the international community, a large-scale confrontation of different religious and cultural traditions, provide sufficient justification for a modification of the absolute requirements specific to Christian ethics? What – in the context of the above issues – is the status of the contemporary versions of natural law theory?

These and similar questions, all of them related to the philosophical assumptions of the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, became the subject of an academic debate which took place in Warsaw on 16–17 December 2013. The following is the first part of the collection of papers prepared for publication by the participants of the conference “Ethics of Moral Absolutes. Twenty Years after *Veritatis Splendor*” organized by the Faculty of Christian Philosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University and the Centre for Thought of John Paul II. We sincerely hope that the gravity of issues as well as the relevance and freshness of arguments debated during the event will provide sufficient evidence for the continuous vitality of Christian moral philosophy.

On behalf of the conference organizers

Adam Cebula

Faculty of Christian Philosophy

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University