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Preaching the word of God in a secularised community

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Abstract: Effectiveness of preaching the word of God depends largely on the preacher, his competence, zeal and knowledge. The effectiveness in question is affected by the preacher's testimony of faith, knowledge of the preached message and problems experienced by his listeners as well as ability to use words. The paper discusses the issue of a ministry of the preacher of the word of God in a secularised community. Consecutive parts of the reflection is devoted to reception of the preacher in a secularised community, spirituality, faith and testimony of the preacher of the word of God. Also, attitudes required of the preacher of the word of God as a leader of God's people and people's friend in a secularised community will be discussed. The last part concerns tasks of the preacher of the word of God and the impact of secularisation on formation of preachers of the word of God.

Key words: Preacher. The word of God. Secularised community.

Effectiveness of preaching the word of God depends largely on the preacher, his competence, zeal and knowledge. The effectiveness in question is affected by the preacher's testimony of faith, knowledge of the preached message and problems experienced by his listeners as well as ability to use words. The contemporary theory of preaching emphasises a Divine and human nature of preaching and calls to mind the fact that effectiveness of a sermon is determined not only by operation of God's grace. What is highly important is the human factor, that is, inter alia, features of the preacher of the word of God. the preacher, as an active mediator between God and people, is equipped by a set of skills that condition a process of preaching communication⁴⁶. One of the most important tasks of priests is to represent the dimension of the sacred in a deeply secularised society. This may be a starting point and a prerequisite for an encounter with Jesus Christ. In the future both priests and lay persons will have to take measures to efficiently reach those „outside“ and facilitate a non-committal contact with the Church⁴⁷.

This paper discusses the issue of a ministry of the preacher of the word of God in a secularised community. Next parts of the reflection is devoted to reception of the preacher in a secularised community, spirituality, faith and testimony of the preacher of the word of God. Also, attitudes required of the preacher of the word of God

⁴⁶ W. Broński, *Kompetencja kaznodziejska w kontekście współczesności*, in: *W służbie Bogu i ludziom. Księga pamiątkowa poświęcona ks. prof. dr. hab. W. Głowie*, edited by H. Słotwińska, Lublin 2005, p. 77.

⁴⁷ G. Greshake, *Być kapłanem dzisiaj*, Kraków 2010, pp 374-375.

as a leader of God's people and people's friend in a secularised community will be discussed. The last part concerns tasks of the preacher of the word of God and the impact of secularisation on formation of preachers of the word of God.

1 Image of preachers in a secularised community.

Proclaiming the word of God is a part of priests' activities that are often criticised by a secularised community. Whoever wants to criticise priests „aims at this issue hoping to score and will always be a bit right“⁴⁸. Harsh criticism of preachers of the word of God became a sign of a sort of political correctness. Generally terms such as „preaching“, „the preacher“ and preaching the word of God evoke rather anachronistic and quite often negative associations⁴⁹. Among secularised listeners of the word of God there are not only those who do not ask essential questions concerning life and faith and are not interested in dialogue with a believer. In this environment it is possible to find people looking for answers to important life matters and interested in starting dialogue with believers. A task of every believer, especially a priest, is a natural turn to people searching for truth who do not have the gift of faith, without any exceptions. Such a priest knows well that in everyone there is yearning for the Other⁵⁰.

Life and ministry of a priest in the Catholic Church are often a subject of research and reflection of various circles. „The Catholic Church herself constantly makes priesthood a subject of theoretical and practical reflection, her teaching and specialised studies, from the teaching of the Apostles to the apostolic exhortation of John Paul II entitled *Pastores dabo vobis* and current publications of research results of specific theologians“⁵¹. A priest is a subject of interest of not only circles expressing appreciation and love, but also of those manifesting indifference, disdain and hate toward him. For the future of the Church it is important to constantly search for answers to the following questions: who is a contemporary priest, what are his tasks, also in a secularised community, what is a priest's identity in a secularised community?

A priest, recognising his own identity in God, feels the need to be close to God, to talk with Him, to surrender to His protection and constantly shape himself in His image and likeness⁵². Mission to the world, experience of contact with a secularised community can not cause any changes in a priest's identity. In the secularised world filled with materialism, egoism and individualism a priest's identity become a sign of contradiction⁵³.

⁴⁸ G. Siwek, *Głosiciel słowa Bożego*, in: *Sztuka bycia księdzem*, edited by J. Augustyn, Kraków 2010, p. 73.

⁴⁹ G. Siwek, *Osobowość kaznodziei. Rozważania nieobojętne*, Kraków 2014, pp 174-175.

⁵⁰ A. Cencini, *Kapłan i dzisiejszy świat. Od postchrześcijaństwa do prechrześcijaństwa*, Kraków 2010, p. 159.

⁵¹ W. Słomka, *Duchowość kapłańska*, Lublin 1996, p. 9.

⁵² A. Cencini, *Ksiądz zawsze człowiekiem modlitwy? Pastores* (2009) 3, pp 75-76.

⁵³ Benedykt XVI, *Orędzie na 47 Światowy Dzień Modlitw o Powołania*, L'Osservatore Romano (pol.) 31(2010), No. 3-4, pp 8-9.

Implementation of a priestly vocation, a vocation to sainthood, requires an authentic gift of oneself, a sacrifice. This calls many times for giving up personal plans and reception of the cross of Christ in the form of misunderstanding and often rejection, overcoming one's egoism and all forms of individualism⁵⁴. This is the attitude especially required from a priest in a secularised community.

The preacher of the word of God, by the power of his ordination, becomes a servant of the word of God and his brothers. Subjected to God, he becomes available to listeners, mainly through testifying to the Good News by his own life. A priest – the preacher of the word of God is called to serve people in the work of salvation. The most important signs of a priest's identification with the mission of preaching the word of God are as follows: „desire to lead people to communion of love with God, zeal in preaching the Gospel and readiness to suffer for the word of God“⁵⁵.

2 Spirituality of the preacher

The fifth chapter of apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* pope Francis entitled „Spirit-filled evangelizers“. In twenty five consecutive points (*Evangelii Gaudium* 259-283) he shows spirituality of preachers of the word of God⁵⁶. Such persons should be people of prayer, for „without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the Word, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out“ (*Evangelii Gaudium* 262).

Spirituality of preachers of the word of God is characterised by openness to the working of the Holy Spirit (*Evangelii Gaudium* 259). Only then the Holy Spirit will operate in the preacher of the Gospel and „place on his lips the words which he could not find himself“ (*Evangelii Gaudium* 151). Preachers of the word of God are required to be in communion with the word of God, to linger over its pages and read it not only with the mind but also with the heart (*Evangelii Gaudium* 264). The preacher's mind and heart need to be pervaded by meditation that allows to taste the redemptive role of the word of God in life (*Evangelii Gaudium* 264).

A contemporary preacher of the word of God should love people. It is through the preacher that God gets closer to His people. It is God himself who, through the preacher, desires to get closer to His people. „He takes us from the midst of his people and he sends us to his people; without this sense of belonging we cannot understand our deepest identity“. (*Evangelii Gaudium* 268). A manifestation of the love of people is also the prayer for listeners, for recipients of the preached word, for the evangelised. When evangelizers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open; freed of self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others

⁵⁴ J. Kiciński, *Ascetyczny wymiar duchowości kapłańskiej*, „Perspectiva. Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne“ 9/1(2010), p. 38.

⁵⁵ S. Dyk, *Kaznodziejstwo – misja, która wypływa z kapłańskiej tożsamości*, „Studia Pastoralne“ 6(2010), p. 80.

⁵⁶ L. Szewczyk, *Głoszenie słowa Bożego w środowisku zsekularyzowanym według Evangelii Gaudium*, in: *Kazateľská činnosť ako integrálna súčasť novej evanjelizácie II*, edited by L. Petrik, Prešov 2014, pp 34-53.

(*Evangelii Gaudium* 282)⁵⁷. Pope Benedict XVI in *Verbum Domini* observes: „For this reason preachers need to be in close and constant contact with the sacred text; they should prepare for the homily by meditation and prayer, so as to preach with conviction and passion (...). He is undoubtedly barren who preaches outwardly the word of God without hearing it inwardly“ (*Verbum Domini* 59). Nowadays the preacher’s spirituality seems to be underestimated. Meanwhile, one of the sources of the contemporary crisis of preaching is neglecting spiritual formation of preachers. The pre-counciliar homiletics emphasised the need of faith, love of God and neighbour, piusness, chastity, humility, sanctity of the preacher’s life and his apostolic zeal. Today the emphasis is on the following dimensions of the preacher’s spirituality: bearing witness to Christ, being a servant of the Word and others. Currently the preacher of the word of God is required to receive thorough spiritual formation based on persistence in the Word, tightening the bonds with Jesus Christ and openness to the working of the Holy Spirit⁵⁸. A contemporary preacher should be a spiritually competent man of prayer. Prayer and a personal relationship with Christ makes his life adjusted to life of Jesus⁵⁹. Undoubtedly this shift of emphasis in the preacher’s attitude and spirituality was provoked by a growing secularised community.

3 Faith of the preacher of the word of God

Effectiveness of preaching the word of God depends first and most of all of Christ himself, who acts in His Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. „Ministry of the word in the Church, to be the work of God, must be the word of God, i.e. to remain as close as it is possible to the revealed word of God written down in the Scriptures“⁶⁰. Proclamation of the word of God is a collaborative work of God and man. It is a dialogue of God with man a basis of which is faith of the preacher, that is decisive for effectiveness of his preaching. Witness of faith of the preacher to a large extent is decisive for reception of the message of salvation. This will take place when the preacher himself receives the Good News of salvation with faith and confirms it by his life⁶¹.

Effective preaching the word of God is possible when a priest himself lives the word of God. Therefore the first task of the preacher is a constant concern for growth of his faith. The first „work to be done by a priest is to be a believer and to become a believer over and over again. For faith does not simply exist just by itself – one has to live it. It leads us to the conversation with God that involves both listening and speaking. Faith and prayer are mutually inseparable“⁶².

⁵⁷ G. Siwek, *Duchowość głosicieli Ewangelii*, „Roczniki Teologiczne” 61/12(2014) pp 92-97.

⁵⁸ A. Kalbarczyk, *W komunii ze słowem. Duchowość kaznodziei*, in: *Iustitiam in caritate. Opuscula Georgio Troska septuagenario dedicata*, edited by D. Bryl, F. Lenort, Poznań 2012, pp 205-211.

⁵⁹ W. Turowski, *Jaki powinien być kaznodzieja XXI wieku?*, „Studia Teologiczne – Białystok – Drohiczyn – Łomża” 26(2008), pp 357-360.

⁶⁰ L. Kuc, *Krótki traktat o teologii komunikacji*, *Leszno koło Błonia* 1997, p. 198.

⁶¹ H. Simon, *Odpowiedzialność kaznodziei za głoszone słowo Boże*, „Homo Dei” 47(1978), No. 3, p. 178.

⁶² J. Ratzinger, *Nowa pieśń dla Pana*, Kraków 1999, p. 77.

A priest's faith bears specific fruits for his pastoral ministry. Fruits of a priest's faith are as follows: fuller perception of his tasks and life mission, recognising neighbours and looking at them through „God's eyes“, creative attitude, sense of responsibility, especially for those to whom a priest is sent, anticipation of effects of his actions, self-reliance combined with civil courage, ability to cooperate with others, and, which is extremely important in a secularised community: ability to initiate dialogue with others, including those critical about religion and the Church. Proclaiming the word of God in a secularised community requires of preachers robust theological sense, doctrinal integrity, intellectual honesty, faithful presentation the deposit of the faith and a full awareness of participation in the prophetic function of Christ⁶³.

4 The witness of life of the preacher

According to pope Paul VI „the signs of the times“ „either tacitly or aloud – but always forcefully – ask us: Do you really believe what you are proclaiming? Do you live what you believe? Do you really preach what you live? The witness of life has become more than ever an essential condition for real effectiveness in preaching. Precisely because of this we are, to a certain extent, responsible for the progress of the Gospel that we proclaim“ (Evangelii Nuntiandi 75). the preacher may be an authentic witness to faith and the preached word of God thanks to the Holy Spirit. the contemporary world needs a reliable witness of persons able to open the hearts and the minds of people to the desire of God. The apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* the witness given by lives is recognised as an important means of evangelisation. A special task in this respect belongs to priests who „in accordance with their specific mission, are the first to be called to live a life completely at the service of the word, to proclaim the Gospel, to celebrate the sacraments and to form the faithful in the authentic knowledge of Scripture“ (*Verbum Domini* 94).

Proclamation of the Gospel is closely related to bearing witness⁶⁴. Authentic Christian witness lead to Jesus and may become a theme of faith. The major objective of bearing witness is to show Jesus and His work of salvation. Consequently it is supposed to lead to a personal relationship between Jesus and a person accepting the witness. A witness of the Risen Jesus conveys not only the supernatural values, but most of all his personal relationship with Christ. Witness of life of a priest should be a invitation to faith for those who meet him and to whom he is sent. If the preached word is to have the power to convince listeners, the preacher has to regard the preached message as his own and live by it. Witness of the preacher manifests itself in internal involvement and commitment. Emotional involvement of the preacher can evoke similar emotions among listeners⁶⁵.

⁶³ D. Kwiatkowski, *Prezbiter szafarzem sakramentów i głosicielem słowa Bożego w wybranych posoborowych dokumentach kościoła*, „Liturgia Sacra” 20/2(2014), p. 359.

⁶⁴ G. Siwek, *Kaznodzieja jako świadek*, in: *Sługa Słowa*, edited by W. Przychyna, Kraków 1997, p. 84.

⁶⁵ J. Niestępski, *Homilista i homilia w świetle współczesnej teorii przepowiadania słowa Bożego*, „Studia Teologiczne – Białystok – Drohiczyn – Łomża” 23(2005), p. 226.

the preacher should not only be someone who preaches, but someone who becomes a model living by the word of God. Identification of a priest with his ministry and the preached message is particularly important in the secularised world⁶⁶. A condition of being a witness of Jesus is the need to get to know him. „A witness must first of all besomeone, before he *does* something. He must be a friend of Jesus Christ and share not just second-hand convictions. He must be a real witness“⁶⁷.

Only an internally strong preacher can be a reliable witness of Jesus Christ in the secularised world. What counts is a living relationship with God and the entrusted faithful. Deep relationship with the entrusted faithful manifests itself in dialogue and initiation of shared activities both in general ministry and individual and direct encounters⁶⁸. Proclaiming the message of God, without a personal conviction and authentic witness is meaningless and may become a sort of acting art, „or even worse, Pharisees pretending, cynical jugglery of words“⁶⁹. Someone talking about God should be perceived as the one who decides to preach following his own internal impulse. A contemporary preacher gets a clear message: „You may become an authority through the witness of your life“. This is an important incentive for the preacher in a secularised community to become more and more authentic and involved, to exhibit real, not pretended, concern for the entrusted faithful⁷⁰.

Therefore all the anthropological factors of effectiveness of the word of God can be reduced to the two major ones: competent knowledge and sanctity of the preacher. „Well prepared preacher of the word of God should at the same time be an authentic witness of Christ“⁷¹.

5 Guide of the people of God and a friend of man

the preacher of the word of God, called and sent by the Church, should be a faithful servant of God and His word and a servant of man in need of salvation. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines the ordained minister as Christ himself who is present to his Church as Head of his Body, Shepherd of his flock, Teacher of Truth (*Catechism of Catholic Church* 1548). A priest acts, as a legitimate leader, who is not the hired man, but the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep (John 10.11). A priest, as a leader of the faithful entrusted to him, by preaching the word of God prepare them for a continuous discovering God's presence in their lives. Therefore leadership for the faithful is of kerigmatic character, for it regards proclamation of the message of salvation⁷². Leadership of the community of the faithful is possible,

⁶⁶ R. Pindel, *Kapłan. Pasjonat i specjalista od kontaktu z Bogiem*, Kraków 2010, p. 77.

⁶⁷ J. Ratzinger, *Głosiciele słowa Bożego i służby waszej radości. Teologia i duchowość sakramentu święceń*, Lublin 2012, p. 470.

⁶⁸ W. Przygoda, *Rola świadectwa w życiu i posłudze duszpasterzy w świetle nauczania Benedykta XVI, Verbum Vitae* 27 (2015) pp 269-270.

⁶⁹ P. Ogórek, *W poszukiwaniu istoty stałej formacji kapłańskiej*, „Studia Gdańskie” 23(2008), p. 306.

⁷⁰ A. Rybicki, *Sekularyzm przyczyną nowej religijności. Implikacje homiletyczne*, „Przegląd Homiletyczny” 16 (2012), p. 160.

⁷¹ J. Twardy, *Skuteczność głoszenia słowa Bożego*, „Anamnesis” 10,2(2004), p. 105.

⁷² A. Sielepin, *Kapłan przewodnikiem ludu Bożego*, „Studia Pastoralne” 6(2010), pp 60-63.

when a priest rejects his own self-interest, focuses on spiritual needs of the entrusted faithful and exercises deep spiritual fatherhood⁷³.

Proclaiming the word of God is preaching the Good News about Jesus Christ, Lord and Saviour and ,speaking in broader terms, about God's revelation in the context of existential problems of man. Preaching the word of God is rooted in the Bible and observation of the world contemporary man creates and lives in⁷⁴. It should be faithful to God and man. Faithfulness to Christ must always be faithfulness to man and only renewed Christian life may contribute its own characteristics to the relationship with the contemporary world⁷⁵.

the preacher of the word of God in a secularised community should exhibit a peculiar, full of love, relation of friendship with man. Pastoral care, if it wishes to be embedded in realities of the contemporary life, has to be addressed to contemporary man, his needs and religious and moral expectations. It has to take into account not only historical roots, but also basic conditions of human life and be based on knowledge of these conditions. Pastoral care should look for adequate methods and forms to reach contemporary men.

Modern times require „the ministry of the word full of passion, comprehensive and well motivated, of clear theological, spiritual, liturgical and moral content, taking into account specific needs of persons we wish to reach“⁷⁶. The word of ecclesial preaching is addressed to specific listeners. the preacher should be a faithful servant of God and man in need of salvation. Contact of the preacher with the faithful is effective when it is authentic and active⁷⁷.

the preacher in a secularised world should be characterised by existential openness and ability to refer to realities of the world of his listeners. the preacher should learn about human problems and interpret them in the light of the word of God. A task of the preacher is to promote the experience of „domestication of the Gospel among dwelling places“. Therefore he should be opened to real problems of people, skilfully accept and distinguish specific questions of individual persons⁷⁸. the preacher's ignorance, that is culpable lack of required knowledge about man, leads inevitably to failure and does not allow for application of ways of preaching adequate for a level and needs of contemporary listeners.

If the preacher wants to be a friend of man and establish with him proper communication he should be able to „listen“ carefully. To begin with it should be an ability of „informative listening“ (getting to know listeners), followed by „critical listening“ (precise determination of the way the message preached will be related to the

⁷³ G. Wach, *Prawdziwy obraz kapłana*, „Polonia Christiana”, (2010) No. 16, p. 53.

⁷⁴ L. Szewczyk, *Odnova przepowiadania słowa Bożego w (archi)diecezji katowickiej po Soborze Watykańskim II. Studium homiletyczne*, Katowice 2009, p. 34

⁷⁵ M. Piacenza, *Księga w epoce nowoczesności*, Kraków 2013, pp 192-193.

⁷⁶ Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa. *Kapłan głosiciel słowa, szafarz sakramentów i przewodnik wspólnoty w drodze do trzeciego tysiąclecia chrześcijaństwa* (1999 r.) No. 2,2.

⁷⁷ W. Broński, *Komunikowanie się prezbitera z wiernymi w duszpasterstwie parafialnym*, „Perspectiva. Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne” 8/2(2009), s. 23.

⁷⁸ K. Półtorak., *Nowa parafia w zmieniającym się świecie*, in: *W trosce o teologię pastoralną i duszpasterstwo*, edited by W. Śmiegiel, M. Fijałkowski, Lublin 2013, pp 325-327.

current situation of listeners) and „empathic listening“ (noticing listeners' reactions and responding to them). the preacher of the word of God should be aware of quality of his 'listening“ and should not be merely a selective „listener“. This is the case when he listens selectively only to what is important to him and what he is interested in. He is not focused on reception of all signals, especially those coming from sceptical listeners⁷⁹.

6 Tasks of the preacher of the word of God in a secularised community

The aim of life of every priest is to proclaim the Gospel to the world and a priest should most of all be a minister of the word of God and is sent forth to proclaim the Good News to all (Pastores dabo vobis 15, 26). For it is proclamation of the word of God that gives birth to faith (Romans 10. 14-17). Constant social and cultural changes of the contemporary world, including the secularisation process, set new tasks for preachers of the word of God. It is necessary to bring the original zeal and apostolic eagerness to preaching the word of God (Novo Millennio Ineunte 40). A contemporary Christian preacher of the word of God – according to Carlo Maria Martini – should have four fundamental attitudes: certainty, balance, zeal and heart⁸⁰.

An attitude of the preacher of the word of God should contribute to „assent of the heart by its nearness, love and witness“ (Evangelii Gaudium 42). Preaching in a secularised community the preacher should constantly „grow in his own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so he always does what good he can, even if in the process, his shoes get soiled by the mud of the street“. (Evangelii Gaudium 45). the preacher of the word of God should be characterised by the following attitudes: „approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental“ (Evangelii Gaudium 165).

Preaching the word of God in a secularised community should start with evoking the yearning for God. It is done through reaching out to the deepest layers of human spirit and naming human questions, anxieties and hungers. Also in a secularised environment „there is waiting for Christ, in which one can find the meaning of one's life and fulfilment of the deepest desires“⁸¹. Awakening faith is about asking clever questions that should be evoked in a listener, not about giving ready-made answers. „Faith composed of ready-made answers to non-existent questions would be useless. In this sense and in this context the preacher of the Gospel is above all the one who asks questions, raises people's expectations, causes anxiety and a sense of radical dissatisfaction...“⁸². The task of the preacher, especially in a secularised community among the so-called Sunday Catholics, is to evoke a desire for Christ, hunger for God.

Benedict XVI urges contemporary preachers of the word of God: „This is precisely what we may offer to everyone: to identify oneself with the Church more and

⁷⁹ C. Biscontin, *Kwalifikacje kaznodziei*, „Przegląd Homiletyczny” 8(2004), p. 12.

⁸⁰ C. M. Martini, *Kapłan wobec słowa Bożego*, Kraków 1996, p. 30.

⁸¹ S. Dyk, *Ewangelizacyjny charakter przepowiadania słowa Bożego*, „Przegląd Homiletyczny” 5-6(2001/2002), p. 30.

⁸² A. Cencini, *Kapłan i dzisiejszy...*, pp 138-139.

more, and most of all to renew this basic act of trust in the faith of the Church, to join a pilgrimage of faith and to receive in this way the light of faith⁸³. Contemporary preaching the word of God is exposed to conforming to the spirit of our time and flattering listeners. In order to achieve this aim sometimes the most radical requirements of the Gospel are omitted. In any community, also a secularised one, the preacher should remain faithful to the Gospel and its interpretation within the tradition of the Church⁸⁴. Otherwise the preacher does not proclaim Christ, does not preach in the name of the Church, but proclaims himself.

From a contemporary preacher of the word of God one should expect knowledge of the teaching of the Church related to the mysteries of faith and the rules of Christian life. A competent preacher of the word of God is nowadays required to know the Scriptures and the official documents of the Church, especially „the norm of the teaching of the faith“ which, according to John Paul II, is the Catechism of the Catholic Church.⁸⁵

A contemporary, brave preaching of the word of God, apart from proclaiming the kerygma, should point at phenomena that may lead to weakening or losing faith or even atheism. In the contemporary times what is indispensable is courage and maturity of faith that manifest themselves in the attitude of gentleness, which may prove to be far more effective method of evangelisation through readiness to defend and justify the possessed hope (1 P 3,15-16). In a secularised environment it is necessary to have courage that allows for defending the integral teaching of the Church without fundamentalism. The preacher can not preach a diluted version of Christianity or to follow fashionable theories. A courageous preaching of the word of God sometimes requires confrontation with the world hostile to faith. However, authentic defence of faith is all about evangelisation attitude, that is reaching out with the Good News about Jesus Christ and fulfilling the command of Christ: „I Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit“ (Matthew 28. 19)⁸⁶. Preaching in a secularised community the preacher should not fear that he will not cope with a difficult task of proclaiming the word in a community that is distant from God. The contemporary minister, the preacher, should be aware, that most probably the times of „catching with huge nests“ are over and now we have the time of „catching with a fishing rod“⁸⁷. Therefore in the contemporary preaching one should also take into account those who are not interested in the word and do not listen to the preacher. The preacher should, however, hope that „the grains“ of the Gospel are ready to sprout regardless his intense efforts. This, however, requires both individual preachers and the entire

⁸³ Benedykt XVI, *Z wielką miłością do Chrystusa i Kościoła*, „L'Osservatore Romano” (pol.) 26(2005), No. 7-8, p. 15.

⁸⁴ G. Siwek, *Osobowość kaznodziei...*, pp 97-98.

⁸⁵ W. Lechowicz, *Przepowiadający słowo Boże: namaszczoney i posłany w Duchu Świętym*, „Currenda” 1(1998), pp 82-86.

⁸⁶ D. Kowalczyk, *Bronić wiary?*, „Pastores” (2013), No. 3, pp 127-133.

⁸⁷ J. Plech, *Jak ewangelizować parafię?*, „Pastores” (2006), No. 4, p. 45.

Church to exchange the pastoral ministry of the already converted for the pastoral ministry of conversion⁸⁸.

7 Impact of secularisation of the formation of the preacher of the word of God

Formation of the future preacher of the word of God, apart from a systematic acquisition of preaching skills, requires adequately shaped attitude of love that should initiate appropriate pastoral actions, including preaching activities aimed at both the faithful and people from outside the community of the faithful. For the formation is vital also „in view of those to whom the mission is addressed“ (PDV 43)⁸⁹. What is also important for relevant preaching formation is the ability to answer the needs of the contemporary world, to build successful relations with others based on maturely understood tolerance and respect of the rights of others. Lack of these abilities may obstruct dialogue with others and strengthen the attitude of isolation towards others.

Quality of formation of the future preachers of the word of God has a direct impact on the level and effectiveness of preaching. Acquisition of thorough philosophical and theological knowledge, knowledge of psychology and rhetoric and proper spiritual development is the basis of formation of preachers – prophets⁹⁰.

Contemporary priests should have a comprehensive and based on the truth knowledge. The knowledge in question is a result of a systematic training of the mind. Knowledge of the doctrine of the Church resulting from studying the Scriptures as a whole as well as studying theology is important. It is essential for the contemporary preacher of the word of God not to confine himself to things that seem to be useful in his pastoral practice, but to open his mind to general truths and general rules⁹¹. Solid doctrinal formation permits the preacher to settle concepts and opinions the contemporary minister may come across with, to assess their value and significance and consequently lead the faithful on the way of clearly formulated truth⁹². A permanent formation of the preachers of the word of God should contribute to an open dialogue with people of good will and to a cooperation with lay persons. The preachers of the word of God can not „lock themselves in strongholds of their parish houses, vicarages, secluded studies, circles of close friends, a beloved library and a record collection“⁹³.

⁸⁸ P. M. Zulehner, *Heirat – Geburt – Tod. Eine Pastoral zu den Lebenswenden*, Wien-Freiburg-Basel 1987, p. 27.

⁸⁹ T. Pawlak, *Formacja ludzka kandydatów do kapłaństwa według „Zasad formacji kapłańskiej w Polsce” z 1999 roku i uchwał II Polskiego Synodu Plenarnego*, „Kościół i prawo” 3,1 (2014), p. 14.

⁹⁰ J. Nowak, *Kaznodzieja – semper fidelis?*, „Przegląd Pastoralno-Homiletyczny” 4 (2000), pp 59-78.

⁹¹ Benedykt XVI, *Przemówienie do wspólnoty akademickiej Papieskiego Instytutu Biblijnego*, „L’Ossevatore Romano” (pol.), 31(2010), No. 2, p. 24.

⁹² I. Smentek, *Wymagania wobec kapłanów w niełatwym kontekście współczesności. Na podstawie wypowiedzi Benedykta XVI związanych z Rokiem Kapłańskim*, „Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne” 23,1(2010), pp 149-150.

⁹³ S. Wielgus, *Kapłan wobec ofensywy ideologii neomarksizmu i postmodernizmu we współczesnym świecie*, „Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne” 16(2003), p. 24.

Formation of the preacher allows to respond to spiritual needs of the faithful, since „despite widespread secularization, there is a widespread demand for spirituality“ (Novo Millennio Ineunte 33). In the contemporary preaching the word of God, also in a secularised community, it is important that „we resume our normal path, but knowing that stressing holiness remains more than ever an urgent pastoral task“. (NMI 30). This calls for covering issues of spiritual life and theology of spirituality in a permanent formation of preachers. „Most of all it is worthwhile to focus on the issue of holiness, if preaching is meant to evoke living faith (see: Romans 10. 17)“⁹⁴.

„What is essential, however, is that the preacher makes the Word of God central to his own spiritual life, that he knows his people well, that he be reflective on the events of the times, that he continually seeks to develop the skills that help him preach effectively and above all, that in his spiritual poverty, he invites in faith the Holy Spirit as the principal agent that makes the hearts of the faithful amenable to the divine mysteries. (Homiletic Directory 3).

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⁹⁴ M. Chmielewski, *Teologia duchowości w procesie kształcenia kaznodziejów*, in: *Integralne kształcenie kaznodziei*, edited by W. Brński, Lublin 2006, 240 – 241.

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