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Title: [Polityka w perspektywie etycznej i religijnej ; Gospodarka w perspektywie etycznej i religijnej - recenzja] (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego. Warszawa, 2016)

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Citation style: Wuwer Arkadiusz. (2017). [Polityka w perspektywie etycznej i religijnej ; Gospodarka w perspektywie etycznej i religijnej - recenzja] (Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, Warszawa, 2016). "Philosophy and Canon Law" (Vol. 3 (2017), s. 277-280).



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Aniela Dylus,
Polityka w perspektywie etycznej i religijnej,
Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu
Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 501 pp.
Warszawa, 2016

Aniela Dylus,
Gospodarka w perspektywie etycznej i religijnej
Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu
Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego, 445 pp.
Warszawa, 2016

On the occasion of Professor Aniela Dylus's birthday and anniversary of academic work, it is worth recalling her two latest books that depict a synthesis of years of research into ethical and religious aspects of the Polish systemic transformation, challenges of economical and social ethics, presence of the Church in the public sphere and integration of Poland with the European Union. Earlier works of Professor Dylus (e.g., *Marginal Morality as the Issue for the Catholic Social Teaching* [1992], *Changeability and Continuity. Polish Systemic Transformation in the Ethical Horizon* [1997], *Globalisation. Ethical Reflections* [2005]), due to a competent and balanced scientific reflection made her recognized not only in the circle of the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw (formerly Academy of Catholic Theology) with which he has strong links.

The works I am to analyze do not concern—which was characteristic for earlier books of the Author—the issue and challenges related to leaving the communist system by Poland, creation of a new political and economic order and integration with structures of the united West. It is a well thought out and arranged collection of reflections on a developing society in terms of economy and social order. It illustrates a dynamic development of technology and computing that makes citizens face new ethical dilemmas and verify the existing structures and institutions. A society that for Professor Aniela Dylus is a point of departure and inspiration for universal considerations is a society that is constantly between “the old” and “the new”—the one that has not got to grips with challenges and problems of the transitional period yet (e.g., fighting unemployment and corruption, search for a social order and realization of the common good, optimal model of economic order) but is already experiencing problems pertinent for developed and modern societies (e.g., the issue of transparency of information and the right to privacy, application of the principle of subsidiarity, social responsibility of business, dumping and anti-dumping, etc.).

In the introduction to the book devoted to politics the Author emphasizes that her considerations concern ways of practicing politics as a prudent concern for the common good which means politics that is both realistic and true to its ideals. Major themes of the reasoning: ethical moderation in politics, moral importance of conscience and institution, a role of authorities, importance of the language of politics, etc., touch upon the gist of moral condition of the modern society and constitute an integral suggestion of realistic—humanistic and Christian—political and economic ethics. Such ethics that would direct the mercenary and short-sighted world of politics and economy towards the old and new ways for social life to meet minimum criteria of rules and social values, as described by the Catholic social teaching.

A similar approach can be found in the book devoted to economy. Professor Aniela Dylus assumes that the ethical and religious perspective in reflection on economy is highly justifiable, for “an old liberal dogma concerning a natural goodness of the market and its rules, a deadly enemy of which is external morality that disrupts the market logics, has not been conquered yet” (from the Introduction).

Reading leads to the conclusion that major temptations that Professor Dylus warns her readers against, is political moralizing or, as the Author puts it, “immoral intransigence” (“hyper-moralizing”), as well as political and economic cynicism. She is of the opinion that such approaches are too often, too easy, and too quick to accuse politics of wickedness. They prevent political compromise and efficiency and too often treat political declarations more seriously than efficient actions, and attribute economy solely with greed and other aberrations.

Undoubtedly, in the center of the Author’s considerations is the human being that is brave enough to face the truth, respect the reason and integrity of cus-

toms. It is a man of conscience who bestows politics and economy with personalistic and humanistic features. It is the virtues, understood in the Aristotelean and Christian way, of prudence and temperance that make politics and economy possible and reasonable. It is those virtues that give chances to preserve conditions that are favorable for maintaining human dignity in the conditions of deepening pluralism of societies. It is those virtues that open politics to freedom of citizens and economy to their activities. They allow for compromise. It is those virtues that extend the perspective of the political responsibility, from "here and now" and thinking in terms of "let us survive till the next elections" to taking responsibility for the future and the next generations, the *sine qua non* condition of sustainable development. According to Professor Dylus, following these virtues in the political world of free economy in which the seemingly ruling features are speed, opinion polls, results, media noisiness, and egocentrism, is not moral abdication but the manifestation of courage and bravery, realism and faithfulness to the values.

Professor Dylus's reflection becomes a message that leads to a conclusion that politics and economic management are social cultural processes. Therefore, individual and collective decisions of entities may and should not be taken only in the perspective on the economic rationale, but they should touch upon ethical dimension and be religiously justified. Examples of referring to possession, financial crisis, various economic difficulties and aberrations, social responsibility of business, globalization, integral ecology, economical importance of religion, the spirit of capitalism, and the meaning of celebrating show that the ethical and religious perspective in perceiving economy is highly justifiable.

The category of conscience (understood theonomically rather than autonomously) and virtues (understood theologically rather than philosophically) as a unique guard and compass within her concept of political and economic ethics, is introduced to the analysis in a very unique way. First of all, the perspective of political responsibility towards conscience is presented by Aniela Dylus very broadly and universally. Dylus refers to a universal dignity of each person. Second, in analyses of various dilemmas and moral quandaries the Author introduces her arguments carefully, providing a detailed evidence-based, ideological, and historical analysis. Third, while building argumentative strategy for the presence of morality and conscience in politics, Professor Dylus is well aware that for improvement of quality of politics and economic activities, personal moral choices of individual politicians, voters, entrepreneurs, and workers and their observers, as well as commentators are as equally important as the quality of political language and ethical quality of institutions that constitute daily public life.

It is precisely defence of dignity of a man immersed in a world of politics and economy, personal choices and established structures, as well as building, modelling, and promoting a specific shape of various institutions that facilitate

or hinder decent everyday life, that in the perspective suggested by the Author constitutes perhaps the most important moral task of politicians and entrepreneurs.

A Christian perspective that claims and believes that *gratia supponit naturam* remains in this respect an inexhaustible and strongly emphasized source of inspiration.

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