

Experience and theology. Study of change and development *scientiae fidei* of Joseph Ratzinger on the basis of his *Opera omnia*.

Summary

Dissertation structure

The studies in this dissertation were interested to analyse the impact of Joseph Ratzinger's personal experience on his theological thought. The research proved possible thanks to the publication of J. Ratzinger's *Opera omnia* in Polish. They essentially covered four areas of the theological creativity of the author in question, i.e. the issues of truth, God, Jesus Christ and the Church. The studies are contained in five chapters of this dissertation: I. Quaestio veritatis, II. Quaestio Dei, III. Quaestio Christi; IV. Quaestio Ecclesiae I - Concilium, V. Quaestio Ecclesiae II - Communio. The structure of each chapter consists in three elements that set out the detailed order of research, namely: the first part is the historical-existential context, which is a summary and description of Joseph Ratzinger's life experience. In the second, most extensive part of each chapter, entitled "Developmental line", a detailed study of the theologian's writings within a given *quaestio* has been carried out, taking into account the impact of previously considered experiences. In the third part, entitled "Continuity and breakthrough", conclusions were formulated containing characteristics of transformation and development of theological thought in relation to the area studied.

Content of the dissertation

In the first chapter I tried to examine the issue of truth in Joseph Ratzinger's theological writings. The historical and existential context in which his sensitivity to *quaestio veritatis* was formed was the experience of the family home, Nazism, as well as the experience of the events of the cultural and moral revolution of the mid-1960s; Ratzinger was then a young professor of theology in Tübingen. Among these experiences, Ratzinger's „meetings” with masters of theology, especially with St Bonaventure and Romano Guardini, played a role in the perception of the truth. Ratzinger's meetings with masters of theology, especially with St Bonaventure and Romano Guardini in mind, played a major role in the perception of the truth.

Research into the development of theological thought in *quaestio veritatis* covers the most characteristic issues that have been present in the writings of the Bavarian theologian for over sixty years. These are: the relationship between truth and wisdom resulting from faith in a Personal God; the clarification/definition/specification of the nature of truth; the presentation of the truth contained in

God's Revelation, which provides a firm foundation for faith and human life; the primacy of logos (truth) over ethos (action); the organic connection between truth and freedom; the presence of truth in the university as a place for seeking and communicating it; and finally, the presentation of Christianity as the true religion (which includes faith, reason and life), which is the bridge to the next chapter of the dissertation entitled *quaestio Dei*.

The final conclusions of the first chapter include the most characteristic aspects of Joseph Ratzinger's thought, which combine the path of experience with theological writing: that truth is real and recognisable to man; that it is a condition for true freedom (existential, religious, academic) and wisdom, ultimately indicating that this Truth is Jesus Christ (Jn 14:6), who reveals a personal God.

The events connected with the historical and existential context that significantly influenced the shape of the thought contained in the second chapter of the dissertation "*quaestio Dei*" are, first the experience of paternal love, which stemmed from the experience of God as Father. The research also includes the experiences connected with the idols of the totalitarian systems of Nazism and communism. The spiritual and intellectual encounters with the masters of theology: St Augustine, St Benedict of Nursia and Romano Guardini together with his theology of adoration, the manifestation of which is the obedience of human being to God, were also of great importance.

In the part covering research into the transformation and development of *quaestio Dei* issues, the first paragraph of the report entitled "Who God is not - the disabsolutisation and rejection of God", is devoted to the various forms of godlessness that Joseph Ratzinger diagnoses and describes. In the following three sub-sections the Bavarian's writing on God as Creator, Love and Father is examined and interpreted. The fifth paragraph contains the most characteristic issue of Ratzinger's theology of the primacy of God and the resulting witness to live as if God existed - the research contained in the sixth paragraph. The last, seventh paragraph, "Seeing the face of God - towards *quaestio Christi*", constitutes a bridge to the next chapter of dissertation.

The conclusions in the third part of the second chapter show above all the living God, present in the history of the world and of every human being, a God who, as Creator and loving Father full of goodness, wishes to enter into a loving relationship with man. The consequence of the rejection of God and his love is that the measure of humanity is lost in almost every aspect of life. The third point of this paragraph deals with the subject of the Triune, Eternal God who reveals himself most fully in his Son, the Incarnate Logos - Jesus Christ.

The third and central central chapter of the dissertation focuses on Christology, which, in the view of Ratzinger's theology, takes the form of Christocentrism. The historical and existential context outlined in this chapters first paragraph is situated between the intellectual currents of the abolition of Christology and the experiences of encounters with masters of theology. Relativism and the abolition of Christology according to the opinion of the Bavarian theologian find their expression in the historical reductionism of von Harnack and Bultmann, the relativistic ideas of John Hick and the liberating efforts of Latin American theology. Among the teachers of orthodox Christology, however, St Paul, together with Christocentrism contained in his writings, and Romano Guardini, who placed

particular emphasis on revealing the true face of God in Jesus Christ, were mentioned. In the last paragraph entitled "Experience of 2013+", the existential element of faith and fidelity to Christ is highlighted, realised in Pope Benedict XVI's enduring prayer for the Church under the cross of Christ.

The second part of this third chapter opens with research into the central Christological truth in Ratzinger's thought - Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The next issue under consideration is the Christology of the meaning of the eternal Logos, which became man. The research contained in the next three paragraphs is dictated by the content of the Christological elements of the Catholic faith, i.e. the Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension. The experienced and reflective mystery of Jesus Christ finds expression in the liturgy shaping human existence - to this issue is dedicated the next, sixth part of the study. The final research step is an analysis of the transformations and development of ecclesial Christology, which Ratzinger in an original way relates to the last Christological and eschatological article of faith, which talks about the Lord coming again.

The conclusions of the third part of this 3-rd chapter show the characteristic features of Bavarian Christology as well as its consistent development. Ratzinger's Christology is first and foremost an integral Christology. Ontological unity of two natures in Christ is deeply connected with salvation and the existence of the Church. An important feature of Ratzinger's Christology is dialogical personalism. Based on this model, the source of the history of divine-human relations is the dialogue that takes place eternally in the Triune God, who has revealed himself to humanity most fully in the Second Person of the Trinity, the incarnate Logos - Jesus Christ, who is and saves in his Church.

The fourth and fifth chapters are studies of ecclesiology, in its two characteristic approaches to understanding the Church: The Church as a Council (*Quaestio Ecclesiae I. Concilium*) and the Church as a community (*Quaestio Ecclesiae II. Communio*).

The historical and existential part of the fourth chapter consists in the experience of the Church of the first half of the 20th century, which prepared a young Bavarian theologian to participate in the Second Vatican Council. During and shortly after the Council, Joseph Ratzinger, co-founder of the Concilium movement, having experienced an important turn related to the concept of ecclesiology, together with a group of theologians took the path of interpreting the achievements of the Council based on the Bible and the Tradition of the Church.

The research into the development of lines of Ratzinger's ecclesiology in the fourth chapter of dissertation covers three issues. The first one is pneumatological ecclesiology, which includes the Church and the world as a place of action of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. The second issue includes research on the attitude and identity of the Catholic Church as a participant in the ecumenical movement and in dialogue with other religions. The third issue explored includes questions and concerns about the future shape of the Church, as well as attempts to answer and guide the Bavarian theologian on this issue.

The conclusions contained in the third part of this fourth chapter show the ecclesiological thought of Ratzinger interpreting the achievements of Vatican II above all in the spirit of the true,

orthodox faith of the Church present in the life of a believer. The reception of the Council in this way protects the faith from being swamped by the current of the world, which ultimately leads to unbelief and rejection of God. The reflection of the German theologian is aimed at understanding the Church as a communion whose exemplary source is the relationship of love within the Most Holy Trinity and the theatricality in the Person of Jesus Christ, while in the Church and in the world it is realized through the saving presence of the Holy Spirit.

The fifth and final chapter, which is a continuation of the research in *quaestio Ecclesiae*, in the first part contains an analysis of subsequent experiences, i.e. encounters with the thought of the masters of ecclesiology: St Augustine, Romano Guardini and the co-founders of *communio* Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar. His two extremely important experiences of service in the Church were also described: as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and his papacy.

In the light of the experience of the Bavarian theologian referred to in this chapter, as well as the previous experience of the Bavarian theologian, research has been carried out on the development and transformation of another three important aspects of Joseph Ratzinger's ecclesiology, i.e. *communio* ecclesiology, primacy and collegiality, and the doctrine of salvation within and outside the Church.

"The Church is the People of God through the Body of Christ" - this quotation placed as the motto on the cover of the eighth volume of Joseph Ratzinger's *Opera omnia* sums up the last chapter of this dissertation. One cannot believe separately and alone, because the communion of people flows from the Trinitarian life of God. The Church - according to Ratzinger's ecclesiology - serves everyone, although not everyone belongs to the Church. The game here concerns the highest stakes - the salvation of each and every person.

The *quaestio Ecclesiae* in the theology of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI is integrated with and based on *quaestio veritatis*. To believe in God means to believe in the truth and to base one's entire existence on it; to believe in Christ means to believe in the accessibility of the truth and in the community of the Church, which comes from and leads to the truth, being its servant and depositary - all of Joseph Ratzinger's life experience and the resulting literature has served this purpose.