

# The importance of religious values in family upbringing

## Authors' Contribution:

- ☑ **A** Study Design
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## Abstract

The situation of the Polish family on the threshold of the third millennium prompted me to have scientific reflection. The socio-economic transformation in Poland has adversely affected the existential and moral condition of the family. This is particularly evident in terms of the hierarchy of family goals, where the main good is not the durability of the family but the material standard of living.

Increased efforts to secure life needs and lack of time for oneself have led to the weakening family relationships, superficial contacts and decline of the ability to be together.

A dangerously liberal attitude towards norms and traditional values can be observed. It manifests itself in the growing number of divorces, discussions on abortion and contraception, advocating life in cohabitation and life for pleasure.

The weakened moral condition of the family significantly affects its educational function.

A young man, lonely in the family, left to the technical devices and mass media, is exposed to a number of threats whose sources are undoubtedly in the family and the modern world.

The most dangerous threat he/she faces is a feeling of existential emptiness, lack of sense and a decrease in the value of life.

The subject of this scientific essay concerns the importance of religious values in the educational process of modern parents and is related to the innovative agonological concept of complementary impact on all dimensions of health and the ability to survive.

**Key words:** educational process • effective educator • innovative agonology

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**Neo-gladiator** – a person who trains mix martial arts (MMA) and similar forms of hand-to-hand fighting that do not meet the definition of sport according to the Olympic Charter [19].

## INTRODUCTION

The Christian religion has accompanied human life for over two thousand years. Christianity is a religion revealed by God. This means that God reveals Himself as a Person full of love who goes out to meet human, inviting him to participate in His life.

The central value that faith gives us is salvation. In the light of Revelation, human can read their existence holistically; that He was created, committed sin, redeemed, and destined for eternal life.

The Christian perspective on human life broadens and deepens the way of seeing reality with a perspective of meaning that transcends human possibilities. The truths that human reason is able to understand are complemented by the truths contained in Revelation. At the same time, this perspective does not abstract from earthly conditions and from human nature.

The subject of this scientific essay concerns the importance of religious values in the educational process of modern parents and is related to the innovative agonological concept of complementary impact on all dimensions of health and the ability to survive [1-8].

### Complexity of the upbringing process without prejudice to universal religious values

Faith permeates every aspect of human life, and should therefore be taken into account in the process of upbringing. The problem of upbringing extends from the biological sphere to the sphere of theology. Since Christ brings a new order and a new hierarchy of values to the world, it is impossible to ignore it in upbringing [9]. In the light of faith, human and their upbringing have a reference to God, in Him they find the ultimate authority. Faith constitutes, therefore the very foundation of education is the key that opens all pedagogical actions [10].

The upbringing of a human being is a complex, difficult, and very responsible process. It is not always successful despite the efforts and commitment of parents. The source of weakness in upbringing in the family is often a distorted vision of educational reality, reduced to purely human upbringing issues. Parents often fail to realize that the whole reality of human upbringing is permeated with divine pedagogy. Divine

pedagogy is a fundamental and essential reality, and the entire world of human educational affairs is immersed in it. The Christian faith makes it possible to see education differently than the world sees, it allows us to see beyond the early limits. It allows us to see the work of educating man as a continuation of God's creative work, as a participation in God's paternal and maternal pedagogy [11].

All the truths concerning the Christian understanding of education flow from God's Revelation. The mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption is the source and the centre, where the whole process of education begins, which is at the same time education in the fullness of humanity [11].

Every education first asks whom it is to educate, and assumes a certain concept of a human being. The accepted image of the human being entails consequences: it determines the goal, essence, and course of the educational process. The Christian faith provides us with a realistic and comprehensive truth about human beings. The Christian image of human presupposes the truth about creation, original sin, redemption, and sanctification [12].

The idea of being created in the image of God reflects the great dignity and vocation of every human being. The dignity of human beings, based on God himself, gives rise to the right of every human to education. This dignity also entails the obligation to undertake educational activity.

The dominant characteristics of God, who educates his people, are goodness and graciousness as well as patience and faithfulness. It was expressed by God in the Decalogue, which had and still has fundamental educational value. The truth about sin justifies the necessity of taking into account in education the fact that human nature is weak and fallen. It warns against excessive pedagogical optimism and basing education on harmful views for humans such as naturalism or contemporary new education. The truth about sin speaks of the necessity for asceticism and sanction in education. On the other hand, this truth guards us against pedagogical pessimism by teaching us about the innate human tendency towards good. Therefore, education should take into account this human ambiguity, that human sinfulness and weakness are just as real as the ability to do good, even superhuman

good. This human ambiguity means that humans require realistic and complete educational help, and is therefore the basis for all educational efforts [13, p. 45].

The truth about Redemption states that Jesus Christ, through the Incarnation into human nature, accomplished by means of the Sacrifice of the Cross, the Redemption of humankind from original sin and reconciled human with God. Jesus Christ opens up to human the perspective of eternity, extends the purpose of His life beyond the temporal, which is of great importance for education. From a strictly earthly point of view, the pain, the effort, the falls, the constant backsliding that appear in human life would be hopeless and tragic. Only by having knowledge about eschatology can we learn to endure failure. Incorporating eschatological truths about ultimate things in education creates strong motives for shaping Christian life and moral behaviour [13, p. 44].

The truth about sanctification indicates that the Risen Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit, who as His Soul sanctifies through grace, which is necessary for salvation and given through the seven Holy Sacraments, corresponding to the developmental needs of human. The understanding of the enormous influence of supernatural grace on the entire educational process is crucial. Grace transforms and perfects human nature, elevating human to a higher level, into the realm of the supernatural [13, p. 48].

The truth about supernatural grace should permeate the entire educational reality. Human, in order to live to the full, to resist all internal and external dangers, needs some higher power. He/ She receives this help from God in the form of grace through the Holy Sacraments. The sacraments are not only channels of grace but offer the possibility of personal union with Christ. Sacraments have the power to transform the whole human, not only their spiritual sphere, but also intellect, will and senses. This is true of all the sacraments, but the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of the Eucharist are particularly important for education [13, p. 48].

Education based on the above truths about human is a continuation of God's education, expressed in human's cooperation with God's grace. The personal model that we receive in

Jesus Christ also plays a huge role in education. He is an universal and holistic model that applies to all human behaviour and values. It is above all a model of moral perfection. Parents, in the process of upbringing, should guide their child towards this model, but they should also become and perfect themselves in the image of Christ. The most effective method of education is to witness their faith and set an example with one's own life. An effective educator is an educator who bears witness to the truth with his or her own lifestyle, who is clear and transparent to the pupil and who is authentic.

Pope Paul VI said: "Man of our time listens more readily to witnesses than to teachers, and if he listens to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" [14, p. 159]. John Paul II writes as follows: "The whole task that parents discover in the child from the very beginning and throughout the years of his development comes down simply to the requirement of endowing this little – gradually developing human being – with mature humanity [...] This bestowal of humanity is a two-way process. The parents bestow their mature humanity on the new-born, and the new-born in turn bestows on them all the newness and freshness of the humanity they bring with them into the world. This does not cease to be true of children who are handicapped, physically and mentally underdeveloped" [11].

### **The child as a gift from God and as a person**

The starting point of upbringing is the answer to the question: who is the child and what results from that?

Parents' awareness of who they are raising, their understanding the needs and patterns of physical and mental development of a child is the reflection of their educational consciousness and sense of responsibility for the child's destiny. The child is a mystery to parents, which invites them to adopt an attitude of respect and admiration that becomes the foundation for all relationships and actions towards the child [15].

The child is not only the parents' greatest treasure and hope, but also God's beloved child. When parents face their child, they must remember that they are in the presence of a mystery that is not only a human mystery, but also a divine mystery.

The key to understanding the child is that the child is a gift of God and is human from the beginning. It is also important to remember that the development of this gift does not happen without pain and suffering. In order to understand much in others, one must also suffer much and be creative in doing so [16].

Upbringing in the family should direct the personal development of the child towards the basic values that are the determinants of a valuable life, which are: freedom, responsibility, truth and love.

## CONCLUSIONS

This very general reflection on raising a child from the perspective of Christianity in the contemporary world of violence and aggression [17, 18] is only an original attempt to draw attention to the fact that ignoring universal ethical values offered by each of the universalist religions in the public

space is one of the most effective ways to real self-destruction. Among the many superficial attractions offered by the electronic media, attention is attracted by the trade in fights in the new formula of bloody gladiator fights, which are camouflaged under the name "martial arts" with the seemingly neutral addition of "mixed" [19, 20]. The same media is silent about the health and educational possibilities of martial arts used in a competent manner with an emphasis on strengthening all dimensions of health and survival. It would be naive to claim that the multiplication of the latest scientific reports on these phenomena [e.g. 21-31] will arouse media interest from this perspective. It should not come as a surprise, however, that in scientific journals dedicated mainly to health and utilitarian values of martial arts there is a place for publications on religious education. After all, these are only obvious possibilities of combining seemingly distant methods and means into one complementary system of physical and moral education, which would serve the deepest human development from the micro to the macro scale.

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