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Editorial

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the beginning of his existence, man has incessantly been grappling with the experience and knowledge of the subject: what is good and what is wrong. This most contrasting reality touches the deepest spheres of human being: his morality – justified or false choices, his relations with others – creating reality of happiness or hatred and finally, structures of social life. Because, what is good gives man a sense of happiness, confidence, joy and hopeful aiming at fulfilling his own humanity, thus life to the full. Whereas bad things seem to contradict it definitely. Evil limits man, makes him sad, encloses him within the boundaries of powerlessness and in consequence destroys his positive struggle leading him to the future of death. And what is interesting: good and evil, which seem to have an external nature to man, thanks to his actions they assume personal forms.

We ask ourselves an unceasing question: where do good and evil come from? And despite the fact that a lot has been said on the subject, there is no definite answer; it will come out. We are faced with a mystery, which decides about the quality of human life. Man is incessantly in the circle of good and evil. And one can risk putting forward a thesis that happiness of the whole life will be decided on by appropriate perception and choice of good, rejecting evil. Good and evil appear together so closely that it is enough to leave the external surface of evil scattered about, in order to find enormous reserves of good underneath, as Martin Luther used to say.

In this issue we wanted to take up the subject of man's attitudes towards good and evil; his behaviour, difficult choices, but also hopes in discovering the mysteries of reality. For every man experiences that the issue of good and evil refers to him directly and is not a merely ethical, moral, philosophical or legal problem, but it is first of all an existential problem.

I will briefly introduce a few thoughts, which emerge from our Authors' deliberations.

To begin with, Tadeusz Gadacz tries to depict the phenomenon of good and evil on the basis of the philosophical thought of Józef Tischner, who distinguishes their three signs: the axiological, the agatological and the structural. For good and evil are set in the world of human values. Man remains in an incessant drama of choice between what is good and what is wrong. Both good and evil reveal subjective character, since they happen out of human will, which is deep in the middle of the dispute between good and evil. If evil assumes the power of destruction, it happens because human will granted consent to that. However, the most important thing is that man can free himself from the power of evil thanks to grace, which is a gift and hope.

In the next article, Tomasz Grzywacz touches upon the issue of personal and moral self-realization thanks to the authentic experience of another man. One cannot talk about experiencing authentic values, and thus experiencing good, if one does not experience a real encounter with another person. This rational, anthropological dialogue accent is indispensable in becoming man completely.

The development of genetics in the past decades has opened great challenges to humanity, because on one hand we are reaching the possibility of „programming” man’s biological life through interference in his genes, and on the other hand, human being is not only the body, but also the whole spiritual sphere. In connection with that, Józef Wróbel poses a fundamental question: can man, understood as a spiritual-bodily unity, be approached only objectively, through his genes? Answering, he emphasizes that such trials are directed against personal dignity, since man cannot be reduced to the level of a manipulated object. Such an answer requires a loyal environmental, pedagogical and cultural support.

Genetics has a lot in common with psychiatry. Jacek Bomba thinks that in psychiatry it is not decided on what is good and what is wrong, as man’s moral act, but the causes of mental disorders determining his actions are analyzed. A threat to contemporary psychiatry, which makes use of genetic information and epigenetic character of development, is the possibility of defining it through these factors, which in consequence can limit the meaning of man’s personal influence on his personal development and condition of mental health.

A lot is being said about good and evil in literature, whereby they become closer to man, since they often emerge from specific, human experiences. Aleksander Posacki SJ contemplates the nature of evil on the basis of Dostojevsky's creativity – one of the most outstanding writers and at the same time experts on this issue. According to him, evil has a spiritual nature and consists in self-adoration of man, who chooses false freedom rejecting God. Nevertheless, Dostojevsky was a genius as far as „bringing out” good out of evil is concerned, and that happens through suffering, the experience of the tragedy of loss, which leads to redemption.

An exceptional example of „embodied evil” is the life of Rudolf Höss – the commanding officer of Auschwitz. But also of the victory of good and love. A German priest Manfred Deselaers, who has been living in Auschwitz for many years and dealing with the history of the place, introduces the figure and life of one of the greatest perpetrator of genocide in history. The author tries to find the reasons for such behaviour of Höss, but the most important thing is that this criminal, thanks to what he had been through and the way he was treated in Polish prisons, discovered his humanity anew as well as the way of God's reconciliation with people.

The issue of good and evil is not examined only from ethical or moral points of view. A particular place where these two realities clash is legislation, which is supposed to judge man's good and bad deeds fairly. Fryderyk Zoll undertakes the subject of educating future lawyers in a spirit of justice understood properly. For it turns out that young trainee lawyers do not always know how to „empathize” with the situation of the one whose deed, according to law, they are supposed to judge. The author describes a continuing process of introducing the so-called „clinical legal education” in Polish faculties of law, which consists in law students' traineeship among the poor who have problems with law. It all takes place under teachers' supervision. The aim of this programme is not only to show common „imperfections” of legal systems, but first of all to bring a lawyer closer to his „client” as well as make him more sensitive to social issues.

Barbara Stańdo-Kawecka presents a legal and social side of juvenile delinquency. The author analyzes legislation concerning

juveniles in the United States, Canada, Western Europe and Poland, as well as its consequences as far as the size of delinquency and juvenile rehabilitation are concerned. She finally concludes that severe punishments for juveniles are not efficiently „deterrent” measures. Meanwhile, employing early strategies as well as elements of „healing” justice may bring better effects upon juvenile delinquency.

Everyday man meets with various forms of media communication, which become a field for serious simplifications, relativization and ostensible values. Marek Lis draws attention to their positive character, but he also notices dangers in commercial exploitation of the audience. Next to information, correlation, continuation, entertainment and mobilization, the commercial function is becoming more and more significant, with the media being mere tools of advertising, preparing the audience for the role of consumers.

The thematic whole of this issue is closed with an interview with Jerzy Stuhr about good and evil in his creativity in the cinema. What is most endearing is enormous sensitivity and empathy, as well as directness and simplicity. The remaining of the asset from this interesting conversation can be found by the Reader himself.

Dear Readers,

We have a vivid memory of the last days of John Paul II, which remain in our hearts. Good, love and the truth about man became most beautifully apparent then, but also grief, powerlessness and ostensible failure, which are so characteristic of death. Many people asked themselves a question: why is this Personified Good fading away? But is it really so? Where is the truth?

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and today Pope Benedict XVI to a certain extent answered this difficulty in the article: *Faith – Truth – Tolerance*, which appeared in „The Horizons of Education”. We feel honoured that the current Pope belongs to the Authors of our periodical.

The words written at that time add point to our discussion:

„Indeed one cannot separate the subject of truth from the subject of good. Plato was right when he identified the greatest

Divinity with the idea of good. And the other way round, if we cannot learn the truth about God, the truth about what is good and what is wrong remains inaccessible. There is no good or evil then, only calculation of results: ethics is replaced with calculation. Speaking even more clearly: These three questions about truth, about good and about God are only one question and if there is no answer to them, then in the most significant issues in our life we remain in the darkness and stumble groping. Then, human existence is truly „tragic” – and then we understand what should redemption mean. The biblical concept of God recognizes God as good, as being good (cf. Mk 10, 18). This concept reaches its highest peak in St. John’s statement: God is love (1Jn 4, 8). The truth and love are identical. If this statement is comprehended with the whole depth of its meaning, it is the greatest guarantee of tolerance; i.e. such attitude towards the truth, in which the only weapon of the truth is the truth itself, and through this it is love”¹.

Wit Pasierbek SJ

¹ Card. Joseph Ratzinger, *Faith – Truth – Tolerance*, „The Horizons of Education” 1/2002 (2), p. 50 (original version in German and Polish translation pp. 15-50).