



3/2004 (6)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The concept of *ethos*, taking into account the frequency of its usage, for instance in the debates of thinkers, politicians and media people, appears settled in our culture, language and consciousness. On the other hand, everyday day that we experience repeatedly seems to challenge this postulated omnipresence and significance of *ethos*. What does it prove?

Even the ancient Greeks were talking about *ethos*, referring it to the place where they lived, to the environment in which a plant was growing, to the animal's hideaway.

Quoting a Greek philosopher Heraclites, Reverend professor Józef Tischner states that *ethos* means „environment”, „homestead”, „building a dwelling place for man”. In order for man to „bear good fruit”, first he has to find his real *ethos*, i.e. he has to look for the appropriate place among people. This place may be various, just like the people are, but everybody has to find it. Therefore, *ethos* is the issue of one's own existence. If man discovers the people he lives with, the issues he experiences, the people his *ethos* is connected with, then it may turn out that he has found the best advice on the sense of life. But if he doesn't find it, he may become a stranger to himself.

Finding the appropriate place happens through searching for the things which have a value, i.e. the dignified and the evidence of his dignity. Therefore, searching for *ethos* means searching for the truth about man, his dignity and his value. Yet the question arises: according to what values does man build his *ethos*? The answer is not easy. For it may seem that there are as many values as human *ethoses*, i.e. people in the world. However, it does not necessarily have to look like this, since there is some kind of similarity between people. There may be some hidden harmony of human desires, dreams, human dignity.

How are we supposed to find the appropriate place for ourselves, our *ethos*? What should we be driven by, what values

should we live and breathe? What should we do when this world of values turns out illusory and leads us astray? These are not only philosophical, or pedagogical questions. They are, above all, existential questions concerning the appropriate place for man in the world of values, where he is the greatest.

We asked various specialists to answer these questions in order to make our issue discussed from many points of view, which perhaps will allow the reader for a thorough and objective analysis.

To begin with, a prominent Italian theologian and moralist Sergio Bastianel wishes to lead man out of the world of spiritual loss, ethical relativizations, tangled existence, comparing this state to the historical Jewish bondage in Egypt. The proposal he puts forward is not so much the return to the principles and established world of values as a decisive inclination to the reflection and adopting a position of critical consciousness and an equally critical concern for our internal life, giving special consideration to continuous formation of conscience.

To a certain extent, Jan Galarowicz revolves around the same area of evaluation of contemporary humanity, emphasising that man has lost the fundamental „ethical paradox”, which shall be understood as the lack of mutual experiences of humanity. On the basis of the symbolic, gospel example of the „dying seed”, he attempts to draw a paradigm of „ethical majority”, which shall be characterized by getting rid of hard-heartedness and heading for nobleness and the good at heart.

Let us now transfer the issue of *ethos* on the grounds of education and various educational systems, which also educate through the world of values.

The eminent Polish pedagogue Bogusław Śliwerski thoroughly evaluates contemporary „educational market” claiming that teacher-educator and a multitude of pedagogical theories, where it appears difficult to choose the most appropriate, meet head-on. For a peculiar „hypermarket and labyrinth” of pedagogical theories has come into being. Thus, an unavoidable question arises: how is this teacher supposed to choose in order not to lose his own identity? With a multitude of possible choices, the author suggests an in-depth look into one’s own pedagogical conscience, an

analysis of one's own rationality, reflection on the knowledge needed. The conclusion drawn: to acquaint a pupil with the rich world of values, a pedagogue needs to master this world first.

Anna Błasiak – a member of our editorial staff – goes into the specific world of values represented by Polish youth. The author describes an axiological phenomenon in young person's world on the basis of theoretical inquiries and a study conducted referring to the values adopted and realized by young people. The questions about the values of the young generation, which were posed by the author, are relevant and essential, since they exhibit both social, in the future viewpoint, and individual character, shaping the quality of human life. A similar tenor is maintained in the article by Mike Fearn from the University of Wales, Bangor. The author shows how practical theology can, to a large extent, make a contribution to the values education. Following an introduction to the values education framework within England and Wales, attention is focused on a case study which illustrates the sexual values of young people. This illustration shows usefulness of practical theology for informing values education.

Nevertheless, in the general axiological world, you cannot disregard the manifestations of pathology, or the world of anti-values. Our editorial colleague, Mariusz Sztuka, a rehabilitation theoretician and practitioner, treats this issue in the light of the changes taking place in the sphere of fundamental appropriateness of rehabilitation and social pathologies. The author thinks that in the past decades a general crisis of values and the difficulty in its identification has been observed. This state of affairs demands of a rehabilitation pedagogue specific undertakings, which will be not infrequently connected with moving around in the sphere of ambivalences concerning decision-making. The same issues are presented by Bob Michels, a retired professor from Santa Clara University, California (USA), showing the effectiveness and failures of certain educational systems in the United States. Simultaneously, he provides the analysis of unconventional, antisocial youth, prone to crime and he suggests some guidelines of alternative education.

Krystyna Wilkoszewska, an outstanding Polish aesthetician, acquaints the reader with the world of art, which is especially

connected with axiological experience. However, the author restrains the reader from a rash admiration, since, as she remarks, art nowadays experiences another period of notional transformation. Therefore, a necessity arises to refrain from aesthetic judgements in favour of formulating new, adequate questions and depicting new values carried by contemporary art.

A continual interpersonal dialogue constitutes a great skill and value when mastered by man. Stanisław Obirek SJ, discussing Walter Ong's (an American Jesuit) thought, draws attention to his innovative conceptions devoted to language and interpersonal communication, which may be applied in moving around the axiological world.

Finally, Kazimierz Puchowski, describing Jesuit colleges for nobility in Western Europe, notices that despite popular opinion in Polish historiography, Jesuits, and not Piarists were the first to modify secondary schools and establish *collegia nobilium*. Jesuits very quickly understood that running such institutions for aristocrats' sons (in France also for the sons of wealthy burgesses) offers an opportunity to take over a certain strategic function, that is control over education of those who would assume power in the centralizing state.

Did we manage to show *ethos* appropriate for man? Certainly not entirely, because we are aware of the complexity of this issue. But if we managed to touch the strings which will bring about an interesting score, the satisfaction will be shared.

One more thing: along with this issue, we open the „Gallery of the Horizons of Education”, where artists from Cracow and other art centres will present themselves. In this way, we wanted to meet the reader halfway even more, also through the ample world of values carried by art.

Wishing pleasurable reading and discovering your own diversity and *ethos* of life

Wit Pasierbek SJ