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The Centre and the Purpose of Truth Searching in the Thinking of Ján Chryzostom Korec

SUMMARY

Contemplation is nourished with the things of this world and leads us to the activity. The cognition of the truth is based on the reason but the potential and instance of the reason itself is not enough. The truth is the root of the freedom. Man is free because he is able to know the truth. The deficiency of instinctive self-regulation in humans must be compensated by the moral law of freedom or by the order of law. The value potential of the true reality is of sensory character. The character of contemporary society is to a large degree marked with atomization, individualism and consumerism. Man does not find the true values by retreating within himself but through opening up. The opinion that for man it is more important to search the truth than to reach it is a demonstration of disregard of the truth. The scientific culture does not contradict to the humanistic or mystic culture.

→ **KEYWORDS** – THE TRUTH, CONSUMERISM, RELATIVISM, EGOISM,
CONTEMPLATION, FREEDOM, INCULTURATION

STRESZCZENIE

Rdzeń i cel poszukiwania prawdy u Jana Chryzostoma Koreca

Kontemplacja jest oparta na rzeczach pochodzących z tego świata i prowadzi nas do aktywności. Poznanie prawdy opiera się na rozumie, ale potencjał i przykład rozumowania nie są wystarczające. Prawda leży u podłoża wolności. Człowiek jest wolny, ponieważ jest w stanie poznać prawdę. Niedostatki instynktownej samoregulacji u ludzi muszą być kompensowane moralnym prawem wolności lub nakazami prawa. Potencjał wartości prawdziwej rzeczywistości ma charakter sensoryczny. Współczesne społeczeństwo jest w znacznym stopniu zdominowane przez atomizację, indywidualizm i konsumpcjonizm. Człowiek nie jest w stanie odkryć prawdziwych wartości poprzez skupienie się na sobie, ale poprzez otwarcie się. Pogląd, że ważniejsze jest poszukiwanie prawdy niż dotarcie do niej jest demonstracją

niezrozumienia prawdy. Nauka nie stoi w sprzeczności z humanizmem ani mistycyzmem.

→ **SŁOWA KLUCZOWE** – PRAWDA, KONSUMPCJONIM, RELATYWIZM, EGOIZM, KONTEMPLACJA, WOLNOŚĆ, INKULTURACJA

From the beginning man has asked the question what is the truth and what it is not, whether the acceptance of truth brings any benefit to him or to the whole of society. A man who refuses elementary rules, a man who does not respect agreed borders and only asserts his own interests, he separates himself from the community; and in the name of the fulfilment of personal ambitions, he entangles himself into the web of egoism and pride. A man wants to know the truth about himself and about the world.¹ We can find both naturalness and necessity in John's Gospel: "...you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free".² The indication of its importance and pointing to the attributes which make up the substance of true cognition are an indispensable part of this process.

Ján Chryzostom Cardinal Korec, the great expert in the understanding of the human soul, thinks about the origin of man and his way of life. At the same time he writes actual works concerning the various problems of religious life and the Catholic Church in Slovakia. All the crosses and injustice that he experienced in his life, he used to consign them to "Eternal" justice. He uses knowledge of natural science in order to prove indirectly the existence of God and the meaning of human life. In his work, the condemnation of evil³ in human acts, and not the condemnation of the human as such, is explicit.

The Slovak nation in ecstasy and with humility listens to his ecclesiastical sermons and civil speeches, reads his works full of rational enlightenment, hearty joyfulness and goodness, spiritual intersections to the deepest laws and regularities of Man, Society,

¹ Cf. M. Jozek, *Moral-Spiritual Context of the Truth and Contemporary Family (Christian – Philosophical Reflexion)*, in: *Pravda v zyciu moralnym i duchowym*, Kraków 2009, pp. 137-142.

² Jn 8,32.

³ For example: "Hajko interprets the Kierkegaardian concept of anxiety as the inner motion", R. Králik, T. Máhrik, *Hajko's inspiration from S. Kierkegaard*, in: *Kierkegaard's Mirror for the Present Age*, Toronto 2010, p. 329.

Literature and Culture. He is convinced that man is a metaphysical being. This being originated out of God's will, travelled the human history and is heading towards his immortality. Only this perspective provides the human with the will to overcome all earthly impacts and sufferings, to create and make up the work of God – Himself, Nature, Society and Universe. Just the meaning of those actions gives to sometimes the senseless actions of humans and humanity (murders, wars, thievery, falsity) the possibility and perspective of the liberation from the sophistry of Satan and ability to step out to the path of God's truth.⁴

Since time immemorial the truth belongs to the ambitions of humans which they want to fill up with cognition and actions in the relation to the world and themselves. It has become an objective which they follow by searching for the answers to many questions; however, at the same time, this process is accompanied by doubts and increasing contradictions which bring scepticism and lead to a relativism in human attitudes.⁵ The contemporary human is often not willing to accept responsibility and entire exertions that lead to the realization of own and independent decisions and he seeks help and solutions for even the deepest and most personal problems in superficial advice provided by any technical invention. The hedonistic concept of life is closely connected with consumer thinking. Since the hedonistic attitude reinforces such an understanding of freedom that encourages its false and illegal usage. And the contrary can be applied too; the misuse of freedom in society becomes evident as a tendency to assure the hedonistic attitudes as much as possible. The attitude of the consumer does not respect any historical, societal, inner or metaphysical truth; it does not take into consideration the whole truth about man. A kind of escape from the truth or acceptance of some half-truth about man is more evident.⁶

⁴ *Náš jubilant Ján Chryzostom Korec*, paper published on the occasion of 85th birthday, Spolok slovenských spisovateľov, Nitra 2009, p. 3.

⁵ Cf. J. Dlugoš, *Pravda ako etický problém*, (nonpublished bachelor work), Trstená 2007, p. 36.

⁶ Cf. M. Jozek, *O slobode, moci a hodnotách v procese zachovania dôstojnosti života človeka (outline of some thoughts)*, in: *Wolność i władza w życiu publicznym*, Kraków 2008, pp. 239-240; cf. D. Hajko, *Globalizácia a kultúrna identita*, Nitra 2005, pp. 13-14.

The human mind rushes us to deeper and deeper questions: why, wherefore, where from and where to? Science, natural science, talks only about visible material things and their relations. But what about truth, justice, desire, honour, what about conscience, blame, suffering, what about love and death? Life and mind pose us so many questions! If we could not answer any one of them, there would be despair. Only man would be totally failing in the universe. Man would become impossible, absurd, condemned to extinction, as if an animal would lose its instinct.⁷

The world has already sobered up from the new millennium celebrations. The 21st century follows the steps of the previous one. Globalization, world conflicts, wide differences between rich and poor, hunger, drugs, illiteracy... And many other essential problems can be identified. Illiteracy is considered an archaism. However, literacy of the soul exists as well: the ability to read and write in the human heart, the ability to communicate and lead refined pragmatic dialogue – without prejudices and emotions, the ability to empathize with another human, with his own world, helping others without fooling and manipulation: decency, selflessness, forgiveness, understanding and acceptance. The recognition of the needs of others is of great importance, thus the needs and problems of others are also my problems (Rogers). It is necessary to achieve personal growth through dialogue (Socrates), or also through the recognition of the substance I-You (Buber). To eliminate spiritual illiteracy requires much more effort than to teach somebody to read, write and count. But both sides have to want it – the learner as well as the teacher. Where and how can spiritual literacy be achieved? Firstly it is necessary to seek in oneself and around self for the dimension that we are trying to acquire – the spiritual dimension, the dimension of the Spirit,⁸ needed for revealing the truth. Not everybody is able to reveal the truth, and even after its revelation the truth does not speak intelligibly to every human but only to one who is attuned to perceive it and who is able to recognize the truth. “Eyes and ears can be bad witnesses for people if they have barbaric (non-comprehending) souls”, Heraclitus reminds us. Thus it is necessary to be prepared for the truth, not only by knowledge and learning, but most of all by creating an inner harmony, which

⁷ J.Ch. Korec, *Člověk na cestách zeme*, Martin 1997, p. 173.

⁸ Cf. Z. Pupík, L'. Bechny, *Slovo pre súčasného človeka*, Nitra 2005, p. 42.

enables us to chime in with the truth. That is why Greeks always connect cognition with the requirement of self-perfection; he who wants to know the truth firstly has to “know himself”.⁹ In the Aristotelian classical concept, the truth lies in the concordance between thought and reality. Scholastics worded Aristotle’s idea – “*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*”, i.e. the truth is an agreement between thing and thought. In Kant’s critical philosophy we can arrive at a conclusion that things themselves cannot be cognised, or that the concept of truth lies in the concordance of thought with the law of thinking. For Hegel the truth is the truth of the idea as the principle of divine. This substance of an idea guarantees agreement of the things with their concept. In Kierkegaard’s and Nietzsche’s knowledge, the most characteristic becomes the subjectivity of truth, hence there are no universal truths. The truth is nothing absolute and it acquires its validity only in relation to the perspective of the one who forms it.¹⁰ Ján Chryzostom Korec in his work *Človek na cestách zeme* (Man on the Roads of Earth) is inspired by Nietzsche or by the associations of expressions of this known philosopher. It is clear from them that man should not believe in any order! The whole character of the world is for eternity without order and form; it is chaos. No morality! Do not avoid rudeness! Someone who is great is also cruel! If you have a great goal, you stand above your acts and your judges. You stand also above justice! Further Korec emphasizes that Nietzsche justified these insane visions by the assertion that God is dead. But as if he had saw further, he called it “the great collapse”. After “the death of God” the unconscionable possibilities of life and the world emerged. According to him, something absolutely new had begun – a new freedom, not bound by any rules, Decalogue or limitations, because everything is open, the omnipresent emptiness, the sea without water and the horizon wiped off, the creation of space for Superman. Man with a new potential to govern the world around him and not to confine oneself to something which could limit him. Everything is permitted because there is no God, Karamazov states.¹¹ In the previously mentioned book, Ján Chryzostom Korec reminds

⁹ Cf. L. Adamová and col., *Základy filosofie, etiky. Základy společenských věd pro střední školy*, Praha 2004, p. 25.

¹⁰ Cf. H. Delefová and col., *Lexikon filozofie*, Bratislava 1993, pp. 262-263.

¹¹ Cf. J.Ch. Korec, *Človek na cestách zeme*, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

a reflection of an expert on Slovak and world literature stating that also today several young people are emerging who want to be a-ethical, a-national, a-artistic... Allegedly they do not respect any values, laws, barriers, anything infeasible or sacred in the literature. Korec thinks about what kind of programme this is – to be a-ethical, a-national and more? What kind of program would it be for Slovak families, youth, children, for individuals and for the whole of Slovakia? What is the result of this world without laws, values, without God? The victims of terror and violence of every kind (gas chambers, gulags, Jáchymov, Leopoldov...). These were the reasons why the author started to write. In the beginning, he wrote maybe only for himself. And he went deeper and deeper. About the substantial things of life and humans on which everything else depends.¹²

In the question of real recognizing the truth in connection with the origin of earthly existence J.Ch. Korec was also inspired by the natural scientist Baer, who with suitable comparison pointed out the importance and substance of the real cognition of spirituality. He says: Somebody hears the French horn playing a certain melody. He is sure that this melody was not being played on its own. A mosquito which had been sitting in the musical instrument just before the playing, would probably have said: No melody, only a fierce windstorm that has thrown me out! A spider which had been sitting at a distance would probably have said: Neither melody nor windstorm, only vibration sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker. Which one of them would have been closer to the truth: the one who judged the things only on a physical basis, or the one who understood the meaning of the physical event, who understood the melody? The true cognition of spirituality necessarily requires a sense of such cognition. One who does not have it, cannot pass judgments on it. He should accept the border where his research stops, where his loyal companions – the senses, instruments, measures and scales leave him. If he said that there is nothing that cannot be measured and weighed, he would be like a spider which perceived the vibrations of French horn but which did not know anything about Schubert's melody...¹³ By his effort and ability to answer the essential and perhaps basic questions of human existence, man

¹² Cf. *ibidem*.

¹³ Cf. J.Ch. Korec, *Náhoda či zámer*, Bratislava 1992, pp. 97-98.

contributes to the declaration of his position in the hierarchy of earthly creation.

The social naturalness of man is relatively significantly formed by a communicatively-pluralistic aspect. In a certain meaning it becomes a condition of the existence of social sense, but it does not become its substance. In the dialogue we can find satisfaction of spirit and enrichment of others with a tendency to intellectual and moral development.

The reality of life and the world is much more complex than it is possible to express by science, concepts or numbers. The personality of others, a child or mother is a mystery for us not accessible from outside. What is the face of human? Through it we look into the depth, that we cannot examine, we do not have access to it. What it is that permeates through the human face to our life, and it is able to move our inside, to light up our eyes, open up the invisible mystery of another man? What makes the faces of noble people to be beautiful, if everything comes from nothingness and to nothingness it is to return? Here artists surmise the mystery of man, the richness of his heart. This mystery can be opened up to us only by man as living person – so that he reveals it to us, tells it and discloses it.¹⁴

Life consists also of different phenomena and facts than physical calculations and measurements. Life relates also to faithfulness, courage, honour, selflessness, love, smiling, art, music, suffering and faith in a permanent future. Then not only ears, eyes and a sense of touch belong to the life. The French biologist Rostand, himself agnostic, wrote that he still doubts that in the molecules manipulated by a chemist in the laboratory is something that can be used to create life and human thinking, and he admits that what he is not able to imagine in the light of the little that he knows could become acceptable in the light of everything that he does not know. Science does not have the last word on human life. The natural sciences also have their limits.¹⁵ We should look for things that are essential; those that are most human and spiritual, and according to them organize our life. This would include the economy, culture, the nation and in the world as well. With regard to this we should develop the talents for enriching life. Any work or service will never be forgotten – any glass of

¹⁴ J.Ch. Korec, *Kresťanstvo nás robí ľuďmi*, Bratislava 2005, p. 15.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 14.

water given to the thirsty one. The silence and true word, prayer and work for world welfare – that is the sacred rule of life in the faith arising from the Gospel. The Gospel thinking led to silence and prayer and from the prayer to the deed.¹⁶

The love for concentration, silence and contemplation is perhaps as old as the human world. Children again and again want to listen to the same fairytale and be immersed in it; again and again they admire one flower, stream of water in the river or they caress a little bird with their eyes. Plato, Aristotle and even Plotinus had the sense for contemplation. Israeli prophets and the greatest Christian personalities expressed their love for it. But there were some differences. The love for contemplation presented in the top works of the Greek philosophy is based on the dualism of the material and Idea. The material things were only a shadow of the idea. Contemplation stood for the escape from this world of shadows to the world of ideas. It required a certain time and it was not possible to connect it with the work in the middle of this world of shadows. In the religious tradition, contemplation means something different. Man immerses himself into the created world, to the world created by the Word, to the world full of meaning. In contemplation we discover the meaning of things, thoughts of God inserted into the things as signs. Contemplation is nourished with the things of this world and leads us to activity. It is the conversation with God. The conversation is being constantly developed and helps us to form the world on a secure basis.¹⁷

According to J.Ch. Korec to believe in God means to think normally as well as healthily humanly. In this sense, faith is very stimulating. “Qui credit, cogitate – Who believes, thinks.” These were the words of Christian thinkers and this truth was experienced and still is experienced also by the Cardinal. Through faith he better and more deeply understands man, himself, the history, the world, the function of marriage and family, the purpose of education, social justice, and the problems of freedom. He, as with every believer, has encountered problems that he solved with more and more profound cognition, study and prayer, because to believe means to accept God in love and with love. This faith is a gift for which man can open himself.¹⁸ The one touched

¹⁶ Cf. J.Ch. Korec, *Človek na cestách zeme*, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 170.

¹⁸ Cf. J.Ch. Korec, *Kresťanstvo nás robí ľuďmi*, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

by God does not need any arguments anymore. He lives on the love that was given to him. This is something so vivid and convincing that somebody exclaimed: "Do you know where I see the most cogent proof of the truth? In not proving! Saints know it and people understood it." In modern times we do not know it. Not to be always waiting for proof does not mean that we stay blind. It is necessary to open oneself to faith. It is also necessary to think. New wide and deep worlds are being opened to man by true thinking. His life is being deepened! In the city he perceives not only houses but also human life and its history. In a museum he does not see only busts and swords but also the human struggle, human vanities and victories. A workshop does not represent only a place for wood and iron but it gives evidence about human work and advance. Travelling gives lessons for humanity and it enhances spirit and the heart; it helps in the cognition of the great rules of the human world. Stars talk about immeasurable continuance, stones about the opening of the earth. Looking at a single family is connected with looking at several generations. Sometimes the only word we hear is discovery; the workman is wiser than philosopher. And then even the most imperceptible impetus enables the starting-up towards God. To come to the faith and accept God, for that we need great purity of mind, great love for the truth and great persistence in searching.¹⁹ We have been convinced about this fact by many important personalities in history because they fell for truth and justice. Ján Chryzostom Korec deservedly belongs to this family of "lovers" of the truth and justice in the Central European area.

Today Europe is being penetrated by movements, ideologies, ambitions that assume a position to the faith as to the something strange even if they do not directly stand in opposition to Christianity. However, it is an interesting fact that when we leave the systems and circumstances that led to the absolutisation of humans and their earthly achievements, we have started to discuss the man himself, about his dignity and his inner values, about his eternal certainties and his thirst for the absolute.²⁰

In a contemporary consumer society we constantly meet people who have not answered the question about the meaning of life and existence as such. They doubt and ask whether there is

¹⁹ Cf. J.Ch. Korec, *Človek na cestách zeme*, op. cit., p. 168.

²⁰ Cf. Ján Pavol II, *Nebojme sa pravdy*, Bratislava 1999, p. 14.

some point in posing the question about God? Korec answers this by asking another question:

Is it meaningful to ask about man today, to pose the question about man? If there is some use in posing the question who is man as free, with unstealable rights equipped and responsible person – then there is purpose in the question about God. The question about God is so essential for you as you are essential for yourself. You would have not to be or stop to be to be allowed to deny the question about God! By the fact that you are, that you exist, you are the entity of the question about God because you are the entity of the truth. Man is substantially the entity of the absolute truth. Even relativism and scepticism, whether theoretically formulated or practically experienced, are metaphysical decisions made by man. They serve man for expression of an appraisal of the world and life, he expresses his truth about the world and life and his deepest and final attitude towards them.²¹

J.Ch. Korec in seeking answers regarding belonging relations cites from the book of a French Catholic philosopher Jean Guittou *My Philosophical Testament*. He calls our attention to Guittou's fictional dialogue with the pope Paul VI taking place just before his death. Guittou says to the pope that the Catholic religion is full of contradictions since it declares orientation to the free people and wants to call them to the highest levels of freedom. But at the moment when it develops the love for freedom in them, it also starts to tell them about the obedience to God. At the moment when it evokes respect for what is human, it also tells them about abandonment and about sacrifice. At the moment when it glorifies the power of reason, it asks the docility of faith. It develops an awareness of their greatness and dignity and at the same time it declares humbleness. It rehabilitates woman, human love and body and declares purity. It says to the man that he is great and bows down to his knees before God... It declares happiness and progress of man and it shows Christ on the cross. This web of contradictions is unique in the world. It is as if you would like to drive a car and at the same time you would wholly press the acceleration pedal and brake pedal. The answer of Peter's successor to these apparent contradictions was an unambiguous turning of the attention to the cognition of the truth through love and according to the example of the very founder of this religion.

However, it is necessary to continue in peace and in Christ's presence.²² J.Ch. Korec concludes the discussion about the Church and society with Sergej Chelemendik like this:

Along with all human analysis, projects and inevitable events the believer leans on the truths and mysteries of the faith and through them he understands himself, the Church and the world. So far it has not disappointed us. And it will not.²³

Realization of the mission in life through making the space for cognition, existence and acceptance of the Truth belongs to the important and necessary good(s) of an individual.²⁴ We cannot reach the real wisdom only through rational processes but we also have to seek wisdom with the whole being. Thus love will fertilise thinking; reason will fertilise the life of will and the emotion.²⁵ Ján Chryzostom Korec, who today is 89 years old, and an emeritus bishop in the oldest Central European diocese in Nitra, as a heritor of spiritual traditions of Slovak and world culture and literature, teaches the man of the 21st century of Kant's moral imperative (*Do not treat others in ways you would not like to be treated*), to Chesterton's Christian common sense (*Religion is the distinctive mark of humans*), to Dostoyevsky's Christology (*If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I shall prefer to stay with Christ and not with the truth*) etc.²⁶ The cognition of the truth is based on the reason but the potential and instance of the reason itself is not enough. The truth is closely connected with freedom and justice. The truth is the root of freedom. Only through comparison with the truth can man make decisions about himself; he can choose between good(s) that he recognizes as values and finally he can choose between good and evil. Man is free because he is able to know the truth and at the same time man becomes free to such a degree to which he lets himself to be guided in his decisions, choice and in his entire action by the truth; and to what degree

²² Cf. J.Ch. Korec, *Kresťanstvo nás robí ľudmi*, op. cit., pp. 120-123.

²³ Ibidem, pp. 120-123.

²⁴ Cf. Ján Pavol II, *Speech delivered to the anticipants of the international congress* (10th June 1986).

²⁵ Cf. J.B. Lotz, *Vědení a láska*, Vyšehrad 1999, p. 102.

²⁶ Cf. *Náš jubilat Ján Chryzostom Korec*, op. cit., p. 4.

he lets himself to be guided by the truth as far as the good is concerned. Here we come closer to “the most secret sanctuary” in man – the conscience.²⁷ When thinking about the problems of the truth it is important to emphasize that through the millennia the apparent complete labyrinth of uncertainties and fumbles has developed from the depressing and always open topic of the moral judgment, seeking the truth and the moral criterions of human actions. The way out from this labyrinth is by searching and finding the highest ethical norm and a reasonable, sober and positive return to the objective reality of existence and life. The highest ethical norm or the highest ethical law, as the highest moral rule, are based on the human naturalness, and that is why it is necessarily in accord with human common sense. All the remaining laws have their power only through their connection to this first law.²⁸

The centre of the cooperatively-determinative framework of the cognition of the truth is formed by just the close relation with the attributes of justice, or with its subjective and objective level. Justice understood as a virtue – habit, offers the right to another man with the assistance of the permanent and constant will. Aequitas or equality is the attribute of the justice by which the debt can be objectively measured and then the satisfaction can be done.²⁹ Most of all it concerns the fact when man in his relation to other people respects the principle not to harm and hence to create and apply a basic normative rule of human cooperation in solving the conflicts and increasing of the quality of mutual coexistence.³⁰ Nowadays in the questions of history and culture, man more sensitively encourages some people to doubt about the constancy of the natural law, and thus about “the objective norms of morality”, which are obligatory for all people living in the present, the future as well as in the past.³¹ Regarding the latter, J.Ch. Korec also adds that “In the prohibition of murder the difference between the

²⁷ Cf. Ján Pavol II, *Ježiš Nazaretský, Centrum sveta a času*, Bratislava 1997, p. 64.

²⁸ Cf. J. Dluhoš, *Pravda ako etický problém*, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁹ Cf. S. Košč a kol., *Výkladový slovník katolíckej sociálnej náuky*, Ružomberok 2008, p. 113.

³⁰ Cf. B. Sutor, *Politická etika*, Trnava 1999, pp. 110-116.

³¹ Cf. Ján Pavol II, *Veritatis splendor*, Trnava 1994, p. 81.

human and animal can be clearly seen. The deficiency of instinctive self-regulation in humans must be compensated by the moral law of freedom or by the order of law.”³²

In connection with the essential culturally-formative value and acceptance influences Prof. Liba emphasizes regarding J.Ch. Korec that “The embedding of J.Ch. Korec in national culture does not need to be proved. His whole personality is filled with it. He is national because he is universal, he is a patriot because he is deeply rooted in his homeland because he knows that the national does not negate the universal (Christian), conversely the universal can be realized only through the national as well as the sacral is applied through the secular. The interculturalism is characteristic of J.Ch. Korec. He sets a simple and permanent program for education and culture: “to think and teach to think and become the protector of the truth about life and protect the truth by life”.³³

J.Ch. Korec describes western culture, which in this case is also our culture, as a sensitive culture. According to the principles of this culture we can say that the potential value of the true reality is of a sensory character. For contemporary man, everything that cannot be perceived and verified by the sense becomes suspicious or even unreal. The sensitive truth is the truth of the senses. The senses became a criterion of the cognition and of the perspective on life. No longer is “the truth as the accordance of the reason with the reality and fact” revealed. The real cognition – the problems of humans and the education of an individual is almost completely forgotten. The basic feeling of the sensitive culture is the fear and the deification of man. The Christian view of love and truth, religious renewal, spiritual values instead of the sensual ones, are becoming the only hope for humans of the contemporary period.³⁴

The respect of the human dignity of each member of the society leads to the acknowledgement of basic equality between all people; most of all on the level of justice. It is not the issue of

³² J.Ch. Korec, *Sloboda ako dar – či záhuba?* (2), Bratislava 2007, p. 160.

³³ *Život a dielo Jána Chryzostoma Korca*, in: *Collection of lectures from scientific seminar dated on 27th January 1999 at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra*, Nitra 1999, p. 37.

³⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 38-39.

false egalitarianism arising from the collectivistic vision of human life which can lead to the loss of divergence and unrepeatability of individuals, and to the end of a personalistic character of the involvement in social life. The appeal for the acknowledgement of equality between people is based on the conviction that all people are equal in the terms of naturalness and in their vocation in Christ. The acknowledgement of this basic equality is the final condition of social coordination and order.³⁵

The character of contemporary society is to a large degree marked by atomization, individualism and consumerism. In fact the postmodern society only reflects and reacts to this fact for which the plurality and undecidability in the matter of the truth in the present socially-ethical life are very characteristic. The truth in the spiritual and ethical life is not only an individual and subjective problem, but it also has its own regularities. Time will tell whether our actions and value orientation are in accordance with the regularities of life and society.³⁶ We can explain moral values as universal models or ideals of behaviour (justice, responsibility, truthfulness, love) regarding specific categories of human action (giving others what is appropriate, telling the truth, carrying out entrusted tasks, loving humans) and expressing perfection which not only responds to this behaviour and realizes in the ideals, but through realizing them also improves man as a person. Thanks to this, these models will determine exclusively their own kinds of good for man which will be placed above other good(s), by which they are increasing their price.³⁷ Man does not find the true values by retreating within himself, but through opening up and by seeking them in transcendent dimensions towards himself. This is the essential condition that everybody has to fulfil to become oneself and to grow as an adult and mature person.³⁸ The human person, which is in the centre of interest of various

³⁵ Š. Vojtek, *Kardinál Ján Chryzostom Korec a Sociálna náuka Cirkvi*, in: *Svedok, vyznávač, mysliteľ – Ján Chryzostom kardinál Korec (1924-2009)*, Nitra 2009, p. 73.

³⁶ Cf. S. Gálik, *Understanding of the Truth in Mysticism*, in: *Prawda v zyciu moralnym i duchowym*, op. cit., p. 260.

³⁷ Cf. T. Šlipko, *Zarys etyki ogólnej*, Kraków 1984; M. Jozek, *Elementy zmysłu existencie a personálna kultivácia života človeka*, in: *Personálna obnova humanity na prahu 21. storočia*, Nitra 2009, pp. 417-418.

³⁸ Cf. Ján Pavol II, *Fides et ratio*, Bratislava 1998; M. Jozek, *Elementy zmysłu existencie a personálna kultivácia života človeka*, op. cit., p. 418.

sciences, systems and areas of life, is being differently understood and characterized. One of the classical definitions is by Boethius which has been accepted by many philosophers. Its focus is in the expression *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*. A person is an individual substance of a rational nature.³⁹ This characterization takes into consideration the essential elements of ontic human structure that constitutes the human person; thus body and soul, or the material and spiritual elements, in the dynamic space of existence.⁴⁰ The opinion that for man it is more important to search the truth than to reach it is a demonstration of the disregard of the truth. If man denies the existence of the objective truth, he will lose the respect which he has to have for each person without taking into consideration the character of the opinions that the person expresses. If in this sense the human person is indifferent to the truth, such a person will not try to form her/his own conscience, and sooner or later s/he will replace the fidelity to his/her own conscience with that of the declaration of any personal opinion, or with the declaration of the opinion of the majority. This heavy spiritual disease results from the pride – the root of every human evil. Subsequently, man usurps the power to make decisions, adopting the role of the highest judge, and he arbitrates what is true and what is untrue. In this way he negates the transcendence of the truth in regard to our created intelligence and consequently he refuses the duty to open up to it and accept it not as his own figment but as a gift which is received by intelligence as uncreated light. Thus it is clear that the origin of indifference to the truth lies in the depth of the human heart. The one who does not love the truth, will not find it and the one who does not want to know the truth, will not know it. Love for the truth, searched in humility, is one of the great values which can unify contemporary people of different cultures. Scientific culture does not contradict the humanistic or mystic culture. Each authentic culture is really open

³⁹ Cf. Thomas de Aquino sanctus, *Summa theologica*, Taurini 1928, q. 29 a. 1; M. Jozek, *Dynamický potenciál ľudskej osoby v komplementárnom spektre tela a duše*, in: *Fyzika a etika*, Nitra 2008, p. 168.

⁴⁰ Cf. G. Dogiel, *Antropologia filozoficzna*, Kraków 1992, p. 135; M. Jozek, *Dynamický potenciál ľudskej osoby v komplementárnom spektre tela a duše*, op. cit., p. 168.

to that which is substantial, and there is no such truth which cannot become universal.⁴¹

National rights, leading to the realization of the human mission in the future, arise from culture, but this fact should not lead to a tendency to invoke nationalistic practices, but as “the flying pope of the 20th century” states, it is an indispensable presence of the element of human experience of humanistic perspectives of man. In this connection, for the Slovak nation, he also emphasized:

In this very critical period of history, it is more than ever necessary for the Slovak nation to hold onto its spiritual and cultural roots. We have to rediscover and revitalise these roots and it is necessary to do so especially by the new generations which can continue on the way of real progress in the changed and complex context of today’s Europe. Even if there in front of us are troubles that cannot be avoided, we still must not stop working to create a common house of Europe, extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Urals, rich in its numerous cultural traditions, open to the world and solidary to the developing nations. In this context Slovakia will carry the heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the heritage of human values fertilized by the Gospel and tested by hard trials and suffering.⁴²

The Social and various cultural influences often lead to new threats to contemporary Central European society. The egoism, exaggerated individualism, narcissism, usurpation of power and many other traits are the social phenomena causing menace to the stability and unity in the diversity of nations, and the disruption of the historical potential of traditional, advanced Europe.

The respect for and the need to recognize the truth in society is not an attack on democratic principles, which should be principally based on agnosticism; it means a rejection of any objective *a priori* truth and the postulate that “the truth” is always subjective and is thus relative, and life in the community can be equitable only on the basis of the consensus of the majority. The history of totalitarian systems persuades us of the opposite and offers

⁴¹ Cf. Ján Pavol II, *Nebojme sa pravdy*, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴² Ján Pavol II, on 9th October 1998 at the opportunity of submission of accreditation documents to a new ambassador of the Slovak republic to the Holy See, J.E. Mr. Marián Servátka, in: “L’Osseratore Romano” dated on 10th October 1998, pp. 4-5.

much evidence as Košč accurately remarks in *Výkladový slovník* (Monolingual dictionary of Catholic social doctrine).⁴³ This issue is significantly emphasized by John Paul II in his encyclical letter *Centisimus annus*:

(...) if there is no transcendent truth, in obedience to which a person achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people” thus “if one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others.⁴⁴

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⁴³ Cf. S. Košč a kol., *Výkladový slovník katolíckej sociálnej náuky*, op. cit., p. 71.

⁴⁴ Ján Pavol II, *Centisimus annus*, Trnava 1992, p. 44.

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