

John Paul II' hopes for solidarity-based society

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In social philosophy, solidarity as a feature of social condition is semantically close to social love in the doctrine of the Roman Church. Solidarity was one of the fundamentals of the social life also as seen by Aristotle. When discussing the concept of friendship, he put solidarity among the main factors guaranteeing the unity of community and social consensus. He wrote that "legislators care more about friendship than about justice".

In the Aristotle's political philosophy solidarity as social friendship in the first place referred to civil community to which individual human existence was supposed to be subordinated. The principle of solidarity (solidarity as social love), in turn, is closely connected with common wealth, understood, as it is in personalistic philosophy, as good of every individual man, of a human person in relation to other human beings, members of a community. Social and political authorities are appointed to disseminate and develop social love. For them the first, primary task is to take very good care of every man-citizen entrusted to them. But every individual man in the community is also a subject of social love. As it was written by prof. Józef Majka:

"These values are experienced by individual people and shared in this sense that it is possible to carry them out only together, and everyone is jointly responsible for their co-realization /../ Such love and joint responsibility /... / is called solidarity".

A purely semantic analysis of the notion of solidarity is insufficient and the cultural reference turns out to be crucial here. The definition just quoted takes that cultural reference into account when emphasizing the experience of every individual person. This is the primary way solidarity is understood in Polish. However, in English, the concept of solidarity focuses more on the interest of a community, and the range of its special interests, so to speak, impacts the cohesion of human community as well as limits the duration of solidarity ties till the completion of these interests. Moreover, when it is interpreted in a personalistic manner, social love aims at the common wealth and the good of every person in human community.

Therefore ethical connotations rule out at once and fundamentally negative

manifestations of *false solidarity* (when an individual pretends to share the views of the group and/or only pretends to participate in a common action). They also rule out *bad solidarity* (when an individual cooperates with a group with an evil purpose).

The ideal of solidarity took place in Poland in the 80s of the 20th Century. It is known as Solidarity movement. In the 90s as a result of sociopolitical changes, that process collapsed. Therefore what happened confirms the importance of the sociopolitical factor in disseminating social love in human community. It is this factor that decides in the significant way whether the man fulfills itself more as a human person, or as the individual.

John Paul II in his public teaching, numerous documents and his three encyclicals: „*Laborem exercens*”, „*Sollicitudo rei socialis*” and „*Centesimus annus*” presented the solidarity as the most important determinant of the community of human persons. The Pope explained systematically such notions as: *solidarity virtue, family as the first community of work and solidarity, civilization of love, solidarity principle, solidarity duty, culture of solidarity, solidarity of working men, solidarity with working men.*

We might also ask, whether in the case of social or political oppression, the man or the group have the right to rebel in defense of human dignity or whether personalistic ethics makes the fight impossible? The personalistic ethics rules out the rebellion of this form when the war causes rape and killing, when it causes the evil imposed on individual people and community, as well as the destruction of natural and manufactured goods. Rebellion, however, does not need to take such a shape. In the personalistic thought, the goal is to develop such forms of rebellion (the so-called Mounier's revolutionary attitude) which would oppose the evil of the social exclusion and at the same time would not be rape. It is not an Utopian thought. The social movement of the Solidarity of the 80s was a manifestation of such a rebellion. This move fulfilled the personalistic principle of solidarity of working men and the solidarity with working men. This move grew out of the culture of solidarity which originated in Poles in the generations growing up with the religious value of personalism in mind, backed up with words of John Paul II: "Do not be afraid!".

In the 90s of the 20th Century the Polish people, subjected to the ideology of the liberal capitalism and the practice of the ruthless rule of capital, lost their solidarity face. Cultural tradition of community, generation transmission, another man (also as a descendant) – gave way to the need of self-defence of individual existence and, above all, to the need to protect oneself financially. The resultant consumer attitude is the most desired one, not only by producers wanting to increase the demand, but by everyone: by the rich – because it increases the prestige and approval of the public opinion, by the poor – because it serves to

assure necessary means for their biological existence.

The transformation of the 90s in Central and Eastern Europe made huge damage in the social tissue. However, while the Polish society had showed that social solidarity was not an Utopia, we have the right to hope for its revival.