

## **How much justice are we able to do in our political society?**

*Social ethical and theological reflections on the virtue of justice and its implementation for a development of our post-communist countries also in the period of COVID-19 pandemic*

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**Abstract.** *Justice is one of the most important moral and cardinal virtues. Last but not least, the activity of justice concerns the common good of the whole society (legal law), its parts (social justice and institutional ethics) or the good of the family of nations (international law). It is a legal justice that goes from individual to whole. Violation of justice requires not only its re-establishment but also compensation. Even in relation to a theological infused virtue, especially to the virtue of love, justice plays a particularly role. Together with American professor of the biblical theology Benedict Thomas Viviano we can say that for evangelist St. Matthew precisely the predication of justice of the Kingdom of God is the most important thing that Jesus brought against the Old Testament. In our contribution we would like to point out the possibility of applying justice for genuine development of wounded and divided society, especially our frustrated post-communist societies of the so-called East block especially in this time of national egoisms of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mainly relationship between justice and forgiveness, let us say reconciliation, must not remain neglected.*

**Keywords:** *Philosophical virtue of justice, common good, theological virtue of love, post-communist states development, bold line behind the sins of the past, forgiveness and reconciliation in the civil society.*

### **A retrospective look at the totalitarian period in the communist Soviet bloc thirty years ago.**

The revolutions in the former countries of the communist bloc were a unique opportunity for nations living in totalitarian systems to use their hard-won freedom for the just development of society. It was justice that was one of the driving forces behind the growing number of people in the streets who were previously ruled by fear. One of the groups that clearly welcomed the possibility of changing the totalitarian regime were Christians, who felt a lack of religious freedom and justice every day. One of the slogans of the secret Christian (underground) communities in the demonstrations at the time was: "for the spiritual revival of the nation." Despite today's conspiracy theories about quasi-revolutions, the time was an authentic period in which, of course, not everyone had the same starting line. Nevertheless, the apparatchiks were afraid of retaliation against the deeds committed in holding the Communists.

However, after more than thirty years of freedom, people's unfulfilled desires are increasingly being heard, including the lack of justice, such as the serious failure of today's political system. It is precisely this shortcoming that is felt by the citizens of our so-called Eastern European countries of the European Union. Many of the tragic facts of today clearly demonstrate the imperfection of a democratic system, which must become a real possibility in order to better

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fulfil one's personality and dignity. For this reason, people today are very often looking for a saviour, even a political leader with his party, who would meet the expectations of justice. This is not always a realistic idea of how a company works. Democracy in these countries is still too young and has a very oligarchic shape, especially in terms of the aspirations and values of the people who recognize it.

On the other hand, we must realistically acknowledge the significant increase in imbalances between the various strata of society. Poverty among pensioners is deepening, as well as among other disadvantaged groups without a significant effort to systematically solve the problem (e.g., the problem with different pensions only according to the specific dating of the law). The significant growth of wealth and its demonstrative effects are reflected in a kind of more successful layer, which is often associated with a particular political party. Another problem is the lack of solidarity between the rich and the needs and needs of society and, ultimately, the inability of the mass media to help society progress and the associated growth of conspiratorial websites with manipulative understandings of truth and justice, which are increasingly decisive for emerging citizens' views.

### **Looking for a definition of the phenomenon of justice**

In an effort to find answers for the above listed phenomena of times, first of all let's take a closer look at the so often mentioned justice. This concept has been attributed to several meanings: sometimes it is defined as a characteristic of human act, else as a spiritual and moral virtue, and then subsequently as a political status of society. However, not infrequently this concept is only an empty case for justifying one's actions, thus becoming a dangerous instrument of ideology.<sup>1</sup>

According to a different division justice concerns the field of:

- common good (*bonum commune*) of society
  - the entire society (it concerns *legal justice* flowing from an individual to the whole society)
  - part of society (*social justice* as an area, which is dealt by institutional ethics)
  - the good of the family of nations (*international justice*).
- the good of an individual, acknowledged by society (*distributive justice*).
- the good of an individual towards another individual (*commutative justice*), especially in questions of human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Kerber, Claus Westermann, Bernhard Spörlein, „Gerechtigkeit“, in Franz Böckle, Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, Karl Rahner, Bernhard Welte (eds.), *Christlicher Glaube in moderner Gesellschaft*, vol.17, Freiburg im Br., Herder, 1981, p. 8.

Špiner states that a certain level of universally-based justice is a precondition for existence of society, and thus also for particular individuals. He traditionally derives the concept of justice here from the concept of good. Our life is in fact good for us and its preservation without basic justice is not possible: “the fact, that we live, witnesses that justice, at least in its basic degree, is being fulfilled. Therefore, the justice of relationships in the process of continuous creation of value is substantial, decisive”.<sup>2</sup> We also know from history that any argumentations in questions of politics will not do without the concept of justice. Without this concept social life would have been abandoned to the tender mercies of more powerful.

Schallenberg points out, that the concept of social justice for separating a legal justice first appeared in 1840 in Italian moral philosopher Luigiho Taparelli d’Azeglio and it distinguishes justice of needs and justice of capacity. It is an internal paradox of justice, which wants to connect common standards with certain individual. State as contrasted to an individual can be just only by considering the rights and needs of many in society. Transmission of justice from the position of virtue of an individual onto state politics is a fragile and very complicated path. Nevertheless, the following applies: justice for state and individual is *an attitude of responsibility*. State must recognize human rights, otherwise it will be self-destruct. The last cause of human rights is found in human dignity, which in Christianity means: *every person is given right and dignity from God in His image*.<sup>3</sup>

According to Schockenhoff ethics as a philosophy discipline has its roots in question of sophists, whether good and justice are legitimate by themselves, and therefore can serve as a benchmark for judging human acts, or they were put into effect only with the decision of man. Exactly ethical reflection is in fact an answer to crisis, where morality and law occurred, when they raised suspicion that they do not serve people as such, but only powerful for apparent legitimation of their dominance. Since then, ethics itself alludes not only to finding authority of interpretation, but on the contrary asks itself about the reasons, to which morality and law owe for its validity. Ethics in this understanding namely is not a solitary practice, but reflection upon practice, theoretical reflection of how a person in his life and acting can achieve the highest good, thus so known Aristotelian happiness of a man (*eudaimonia*).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Dušan Špiner, *Nástin křesťanské etiky a jejího významu v hledání smyslu života*, Olomouc, Univerzita Palackého, 2004, p. 87-88.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Schallenberg, *Moraltheologie/ Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, Paderborn, Bonifatius, 2001, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Grundlegung der Ethik. Ein theologischer Entwurf*, Freiburg, Herder, 2007, p. 17.

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In the Church’s social teaching has the concept of the field of the justice, the common good, its central place.<sup>5</sup> The roots of this concept can be found in Greek *polis* and are expressed in Aristotelian Politics: “political good is just and it is by what it contributes to the common life”<sup>6</sup>, where common good is closely related with not only justice, but also with the principle of solidarity. Even a number of the Church documents shows that the deployment of justice and proclamation of faith is determinate for the mission of the Church.<sup>7</sup> Saint John Paul II warns that justice is obtainable through politic, ecologic and ethics, peace-making involvements and with the efforts focusing on development.<sup>8</sup> Actually, precisely solidarity is a determination to commit oneself to the common good and thus the pillar of justice.<sup>9</sup> Justice in the implementation of the common good is especially highlighted in the documents of Second Vatican Council as follows: “It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to his own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life.”<sup>10</sup>

And the emeritus pope Benedict XVI says that „Earthly city“ does not grow only on relationships of rights and responsibilities, but even more and more likely on relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. In human relationships charity always manifests God’s love; it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world.<sup>11</sup>

In the global era, economic activity can very difficultly prescind from gratuitousness, which fosters and disseminates solidarity and responsibility for justice and the common good among the various subjects and players. But ultimately it is a specific and profound form of economic democracy. Solidarity is first and foremost a sense of responsibility on the part of everyone with

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<sup>5</sup> Arno Anzenbacher, *Christliche Sozialethik*, Paderborn – München – Wien – Zürich, Schöningh, 1998, p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, Oxford, OUP, 2009, III. 1282b, p. 14-18.

<sup>7</sup> Synod of Bishops, *De iustitia in mundo*, 6; 36, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_19711130\\_giustizia\\_po.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_19711130_giustizia_po.html) (19.3.2021).

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 35-40, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html) (19.3.2021).

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 38.

<sup>10</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world *Gaudium et spes*, 30, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html) (19.3.2021). See also Albert Beneš OP, *Božské cnosti*, Praha, Krystal, 1997, p. 83-84.

<sup>11</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html), 6 (19.3.2021).

regard to everyone, and it cannot therefore be merely delegated to the state. While in the past it was possible to argue that justice had to come first and gratuitousness could follow afterwards, as a complement, today it is clear that without gratuitousness, there can be no justice in the first place.<sup>12</sup>

### **Justice as a philosophical and moral cardinal virtue (*iustitia*) for a building of the just society**

Given the fact that justice as a moral virtue belongs not only to the field of philosophical ethics, but theologically also to moral theology, let's try to first define it with the help of one of the definitions of the moral theology drawn by prof. Servais Pinckaers OP:

*„Moral theology is a part of theology that studies human acts in order to arrange them under the loving glance of God as the true and ultimate beatitude and for the purpose of final end of a man under the influence of theological and moral values, especially of love and justice with the gifts of Holy Spirit, using the experience of human conditions such as suffering and sin and by the help of moral laws and commandments, which show us God's ways in the light of Revelation and reason.”<sup>13</sup>*

From this definition we can see that in addition to the theological virtue of charity, justice also takes particularly important place in guiding our actions. We can even say that justice on academic ground was always essential and important topic that explains the meaning of human existence and its relation to metaethics. The teachings about virtue usually conclude the principles of moral theology in general guide books. Virtues make a fundamental part of human nature as well as vices, and therefore are of primordial importance for moral theology.<sup>14</sup> Virtue, in the strict sense, is a *morally good quality, which directs person to moral good*. It presupposes right essential decisions.<sup>15</sup>

Justice according to St. Thomas Aquinas is a moral virtue, which consists in a constant and firm will to give God and one's neighbour what belongs to them (which is the ability to possess something, recover and forget). He writes that justice is a permanent habit to render each one what belongs to him and for what he has a right to.<sup>16</sup> Justice follows reasonableness if the reality, i.e., matter is being perceived with efforts to achieve objective truth.<sup>17</sup> Justice in such way particularly gains meaning with self-realization of a person, to which

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<sup>12</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 38.

<sup>13</sup> Servais Pinckaers OP, *Les sources de la morale chrétienne*, Paris+Fribourg, Cerf, 1990, p. 18-19; 55. See also Jiří Skoblík, *Přehled křesťanské etiky*, Praha, Karolinum, 1997, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Schallenberg, *Moraltheologie/Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, p. 41.

<sup>15</sup> Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Christliche Ethik. Grundlegungen der Moraltheologie*, Trier, Paulinus Verlag, 1997, p. 384.

<sup>16</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, New York, Benziger Bros. Edition, 1947, I-II q. 58, a.1.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Schallenberg, *Moraltheologie/Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, p. 49.

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every human being is called and has a right for. John XXIII points out that care about self-realization presupposes the use of certain means, and justice demands they are not denied to a person.<sup>18</sup>

Only after the death of the biblical Abel justice becomes a necessary virtue. Since then, the definition and distribution of the rights are through the law or coercion. The original naturally legal justice is identical with love and mercy. Legal justice does not want love in the first place, but unpretentious peace and balance of interests. St. Augustine recalls that our justice, even if it is true in terms of the actual aim of good, to which it relates, is so slight that it consists more in avoiding sin rather than in perfection in virtue.<sup>19</sup>

Let us not forget that the classical teachings about virtues state that the violation of justice requires not only its restoration, but also compensation for damage, which can be best determined with commutative justice. Naturally, offences against justice are not of the same kind: they are differently judged in theft, differently in murder, adultery and slander.

### **Biblical tradition as a cultural expression of the fundamental requirements of justice**

The Ten Commandments within its biblical testimony are presented as directly revealed by God. To this St. Thomas emphasizes his first reference that the commandments of the Decalogue contain only what from each person in its strictest consideration (*modica consideratione*) can be recognized within the common principles of the moral natural law (*lex naturalis*).<sup>20</sup> In this way, the commandments of the Decalogue in a certain way are characterized as basic rules of everyday understanding, knowledge of which does not require any special ethical knowledge from experts, nor any special moral skills, because they enlighten every human being directly through mind or faith.

Schockenhoff notes that by formal defining of Commandments of the Decalogue among the first principles of practical reason and its full explanations in experiential knowledge of moral "experts" St. Thomas hit something important, what corresponds to the inclusion of the Decalogue as an intermediate stage in the transition from the field of law to ethos. By his analysis St. Thomas truly grasped biblical meaning of the Decalogue: it contains the basic requirements for the relationship of people to God and to ones'

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<sup>18</sup> John XXIII, *Pacem In Terris. Encyclical of Pope John XXIII. On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty. April 11, 1963*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html), 9, (19.3.2021).

<sup>19</sup> St. Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*. Translation by William Babcock, notes by Boniface Ramsey, Hyde Park, New York, New City Press, 2012, p. 19; 27.

<sup>20</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, I-II q. 100, a 3, ad 1.

neighbours, i.e., requirements that are clear for each believer without any special studies.<sup>21</sup> In this way St. Thomas supposes that the double commandment of love is the basic norm of the natural moral law and therefore does not preferentially come by Revelation.

Piegsa adds that this idea is based on a comparison of the commandment of love and the Golden Rule. Moral natural law alone is not enough to us, because this has to be reminded by the revealed law, the Ten Commandments and be specified through the human law, positive norms.<sup>22</sup> When St. Thomas talks about the Caesar report *De Bello Gallico*, where it says that Germans as a nation do not consider robbery as a crime, even though it clearly concerns a transgression against the moral natural law, he concludes that this example points to the need to make the Ten Commandments (directly) be revealed by God. Since moral natural law cannot be dispensed, it means that it is not possible to apply *epikeia* here.<sup>23</sup>

Even for *material* incompleteness of the Commandments of the Decalogue St. Thomas finds due cause, which explains their biblical meaning and meets the needs of systematic theologians, namely in traditionally given sequence as a known meaningful structure. Decalogue in this way does not become simply identical with the moral commandments of the natural law, but is limited to more basic demands of justice, which arise from the community of man with God and people with one another.

This view leads to the first principle of classification, which says that these ten particular commandments will be divided by the rate of two basic relations of man to God and to ones' neighbours on both boards of the Decalogue. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> commandments refer to the love of God: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind." This statement is an attempt to combine Decalogue, accentuating justice and the gospel – accentuating love (an answer to the rich young man). In St. Thomas' clearly differentiated speech it means: *all the commandments of the Decalogue aim at love, but yet refer to the act of justice, which must show love if that one on the way to its goal does not want to ruin order among semi-final matters*. St. Thomas writes: "the commandments of the Decalogue belong to love according to 1 Tim 1,5: the end of the commandment is love. However, they belong to justice if they are immediate acts of justice."<sup>24</sup> Such reflection in the context of interpretation of the Decalogue will obtain concrete clearness, forasmuch as it is directly understood that a person does not love one's neighbour if at the same

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<sup>21</sup> Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Grundlegung der Ethik. Ein theologischer Entwurf*, p. 261.

<sup>22</sup> Joachim Piegsa MSF, *Der Mensch Das moralische Lebewesen. Fundamentale Fragen der Moralthologie*, Erzabtei St. Ottilien, EOS, 1996, p. 299.

<sup>23</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, ST I-II q.94, a.4. See also Joachim Piegsa MSF, *Der Mensch Das moralische Lebewesen. Fundamentale Fragen der Moralthologie*, p. 301.

<sup>24</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, II-II 122,1 ad 4.

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time is cheating one's husband, steals his property, makes one's respectability questionable or goes after one's life.<sup>25</sup> St. Thomas concludes that it would be insufficient to want to implement peace among people with commands of justice, if love does not drive its roots among them.<sup>26</sup>

In the terminology of the Holy Scripture the meaning of the virtue of justice is moved to the field of law. Fair judge must be direct, firm and impartial. In the Old Testament it concerns sanctity, integrity, honesty and general innocence, which eventually comes near mercy and compassion. New Testament describes St. Joseph as a just man (Mt 1:19), which means devotional in every respect. Blessed are nonetheless those who fail to get what they are entitled to and, secondly, those who suffer from the fact that in human terms they owe it much. And finally, a justice towards God is "the virtue of piety".<sup>27</sup>

According to Viviano, Jesus' saying on the Sermon on the Mount: *I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 5: 20) points out on a very important motivation of a man from the New Testament. In fact, if we ask Apostle Matthew what important Jesus brought compared to the Law of Moses, he probably would answer **greater justice**.<sup>28</sup>

Ethics of St. Paul, outlined in his letters in the Holy Scripture, is Trinitarian. Christ is the manifestation of the love of God the Father, His mercy, which by the gift of the Son will complete forgiveness for Jews and Greeks, give them justice and wisdom through faith (1 Cor 2: 7).<sup>29</sup> According to St. Paul, the greater good a person does, the freer he becomes. True freedom is in service of good and justice.<sup>30</sup>

## **Possible failures of young democracies in the post-communist bloc**

In this context we will now look at the development of our post-communist societies after the end of the totalitarian regime. This initially Christian-oriented society underestimated the 41 years of communism as a non-European social system, forced with the division of Europe by the victorious powers of World War II. The socialist-communist Soviet system did not understand the concept of justice as St. Thomas Aquinas referred to Aristotle's

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<sup>25</sup> Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Grundlegung der Ethik. Ein theologischer Entwurf*, p. 263.

<sup>26</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles*, New York, Hanover House, 1955-57, vol. III, 130.

<sup>27</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM) § 1807, (19.03.2021).

<sup>28</sup> Benedict Thomas Viviano OP, *Kázanie na bore*, Tišnov, Sursum, 1992, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Servais Pinckaers OP, *Les sources de la morale chrétienne*, p. 146.

<sup>30</sup> Albert Beneš OP, *Principy křesťanské morálky*, Praha, Krystal, 1997, p. 65.

expression in the Latin culture of Europe: *suum cuique* (firm and resistant will to give everyone his due)<sup>31</sup> and even the concept of solidarity, which according to John Paul II is a firm determination to commit oneself to the common good, that is "to motivate will from the common resolutions so that it acts what we owe to each other."<sup>32</sup>

The first mistake of the new open society was that it failed to convince people about the danger and incorrectness of the former regime, which established aggressive atheism and communism. People nowadays partly still think they were better off back then. The second mistake of the young democracy in the East European countries was so called bold line under the past. New democrats thought that the democratic institution can no longer go back and generously wanted to make a historic gesture. The result is the society that has no direction and orientation. Historically it is pulled up to the byzantine environment where ethics and morality do not play such an important role as loyalty and obedience to the hierarchy with the vision of gradual climbing up the social ladder.

The worst fact here is the example that is in such way given to the next generation. So called bold line or forgetting the past obscures the unjust acts of the past or contemporarily justifies them. In this way it does not indicate its incorrectness, even criminality. It also does not point out to silent collaboration of most of the nation with the former regime. People who publicly did damage in the past regime were not appealed to make public apology. Thereby, the sense of guilt and injustice is being worn off. Failure to differentiate between victims and offenders ("that was the time ..."). Many people set apart under the former regime are even nowadays out on a limb instead of highlighting their brave attitude in the hostile past times.

### **Finding solutions against injustice for a building of better modern society**

Considering the consequences of terrorist attacks on the "twins" in New York in 2001, John Paul II also reflects upon solutions to justice. In his message for World Day of Peace he says: "I have often paused to reflect on the persistent question: *how do we restore the moral and social order subjected to such horrific violence?* My reasoned conviction, confirmed in turn by biblical revelation, is that the shattered order cannot be fully restored except by a response that combines justice with forgiveness. The pillars of true peace are justice and that form of

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Schramm, „Gerechtigkeit“, *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 4, Freiburg, Herder, 2009, p. 498-500 here p. 498.

<sup>32</sup> John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 38.

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love which *is forgiveness*”.<sup>33</sup> Also Fazakas’ post-totalitarian model of reconciliation says that history in the first place should be reconstructed, not constructed (or "reduced").<sup>34</sup> Especially in the age of freedom we must truly interpret and talk about the past, the way as it actually happened, because as the late Czech playwright and statesman Vaclav Havel emphasizes, the truth makes us free.<sup>35</sup> In this way we can reach reconciliation. However, it is important that we learn to (correctly) forgive. In any case, we must not forget about the past, but we have to admit it and accept. Nation without the past, indeed, has no future. Ultimately, to look at it theologically, also the liturgy of the Church is a constant remembrance of Christ's redemptive act.

Another model that according to the author we might call Embrace by Miroslav Volf again highlights the fact that without the will to embrace it is not possible to talk about any truth among people. However, the will to embrace cannot succeed and will not lead to a true embrace if the truth is not enforced. Embrace needs the truth. The being of my neighbour is more important than my truth. The truth will set us free: on the way from us to others and back to catch a glimpse of common history from the two perspectives.<sup>36</sup> A great personality of South Africa, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu adds his solution in his book titled *No future without forgiveness*.<sup>37</sup>

For fair acting Jewish secular existential and phenomenological philosopher Hannah Arendt suggests skills that respond to the human condition of plurality. These capabilities are medicine against the come back and unpredictability of acting. It concerns capability of forgiveness, giving and keeping promises.<sup>38</sup> If we were unable to forgive each other, then we would always be victims of the consequences of acting, which would become as one large act that would quasi close us into ourselves. Without the ability to promise and keep it, we again would have been forever lost in the ocean of uncertainty without continuity (not to mention durability) in relationships among people. If

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<sup>33</sup> John-Paul II, *No peace without justice no justice without forgiveness. Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the World day of peace 1 January 2002*, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_20011211\\_xxxv-world-day-for-peace.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace.html), 2 (17.09.2016).

<sup>34</sup> Sándor Fazakas, *Erinnern um Versöhnen. Möglichkeiten der Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung und der Erinnerungskultur in einer Postkonfliktgesellschaft*, in Inocent-Mária V. Szaniszló OP, Samuel Falat (eds.), *Searching of personal Identity of Biblical man coming to the pluralistic society on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Prešov, VMV, 2014, p. 180-203 here p. 191.

<sup>35</sup> Sándor Fazakas, *Erinnern um Versöhnen. Möglichkeiten der Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung und der Erinnerungskultur in einer Postkonfliktgesellschaft*, p. 181.

<sup>36</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Odmítnout nebo obejmout? Totožnost, jinakost a smíření v teologické reflexi*, Praha, Vyšehrad, 2005, p. 240.

<sup>37</sup> Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, New York, Doubleday, 1999.

<sup>38</sup> Hannah Arendt, *La condition de l'homme moderne*, Paris, Calman-Lévy, 1958, p. 266.

we were not connected with promises, we would have been incapable of preserving our own identity, doomed to err aimlessly without the goal and strength in the darkness of our lonely hearts. This darkness would only be dispelling by the light of the public space by the presence of others who would confirm the identity of a person who promises and a person who completes.<sup>39</sup>

The capacity to keep promises in our European tradition implies stabilizations, the origins of which can be found in the Roman legal system (inviolability of treaties and agreements) and as Arendt adds can be traced back to Abraham, of whom the Bible testifies that he had a passion for agreements.<sup>40</sup> This capability effectively helps to deal with uncertainty and weakness of people *to know who they will be tomorrow*. It is the price for human freedom, that is man's ability of rely upon himself or even to have complete faith in oneself. This also cures the human inability to predict the result of action and remain unique masters of what they do. Here again it is about the price that one must pay for pluralism and reality in the world where it is a joy to live together and whose reality is guaranteed for each by the presence of all. The function of this ability to deposit a promise opposes security based on domination of one's self and rule over others.

Arendt adds that both skills in isolation would be unrealistic, because no one can forgive himself, nor can be tied with a promise that he gives only to himself. The role of these capabilities in politics sets up a series of guiding principles diametrically opposed to the inherent "moral" standards owned by Platonic government. The discovery of these two abilities Arendt attributes to Jesus of Nazareth. According to her, Jesus supports arguments against the Pharisees and Scribes that:

- it is mistakenly to think that God alone has the power to forgive (according to Lk 5: 21-24; comp. Mt 9: 4-6 or Mk 12: 7-10).<sup>41</sup>
- this power is not from God (as if God forgave notwithstanding people), but on the contrary must be exchanged between people who only afterwards can hope for God's forgiveness.

However, Jesus, in her view, expresses himself even more radically. The person in the gospel Mt 18: 35 does not cease to forgive, because God forgives (cf. Mt 18: 35; cf. Mk 11: 25 and Mt 6: 14-15: "But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.").<sup>42</sup> From this she implies that the power to forgive is much more of a human power, because God forgives us our trespasses as we forgive our offenders. And importance here lies in the following sentence: "for they do not know what they are doing". Of course,

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<sup>39</sup> Hannah Arendt, *La condition de l'homme moderne*, p. 263.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 274.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 269, note 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, note 2.

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Arendt adds that these obligations do not apply to such extremities like crime and perversion, because Jesus then would not have taught: "even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, 'I repent', you must forgive them!"(cf. Lk 17: 4). However, herself she adds that the crime and the will to evil are rare, even rarer than good acts and God will be concerned with them at the final judgment, which plays no role in the earthly life and absolutely does not characterize forgiveness, but fair reward (cf. Mt 16: 27).

Shortcomings and errors are everyday acts, because they flow from the very character of the act itself, which constantly raises new relationships in the network of relations and because "it is necessary to forgive and let it go, so that life could continue in a way that it will free people from that, what they unconsciously performed (cf. Lk 17: 1-5)." Only mutually freed people can remain free agents in such a way that starting a new beginning, they can get a gift of that great power that is inherent in them, and thus start again, innovate.<sup>43</sup>

In this way, forgiveness is an antipole of revenge, which responds to the initial lack and instead of terminating the consequences of the initial behaviours it ties people in the process of chain reactions. Unlike revenge, forgiveness is not predictable, and thus retains something of the original character of behaviour. This will relieve consequences of actions at the same time in a person who forgives, as well as in the one forgiven. Arendt emphasizes here that freedom, which is contained in the teachings of Jesus, frees us from revenge, which at the same time closes the acting person together with the bearing person into inconvertible automatization of the process of negotiation, which will never stop.<sup>44</sup> A different choice to stop actions, in contrast, is offered by punishment. Arendt supposes that the most beautiful proof of existence of equally close link between the acting and forgiveness, as well as between production and destruction, comes from one aspect of forgiveness, where the abolition of what has been done seems to be a testimony of the same nature of revelation than of the acting itself. "Forgiveness with relationship that will be established will always remain always a matter of personal privilege (although not necessarily individual or private). In this behaviour, forgiven is *that, which* is committed with respect to *the one, who* did it"<sup>45</sup>

German theologian Sievernich in his dissertation on the role of forgiveness in Arendt's writings points out that the ability to forgive has never been taken seriously in a political sphere because of its connection with religious

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 270.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 271. Cf. Inocent-Mária Vladimír Szaniszló OP, „How Can Science Lead Us to the True Knowledge of the Truth?,” in *Astra Salvensis*, VIII (2020), no. 16, p. 185.

<sup>45</sup> Hannah Arendt, *La condition de l'homme moderne*, p. 272.

world and its dependence on love.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it is the forgiveness together with actions that reveals a person and establishes a relationship. Forgiveness as a basic and unavoidable servant for justice in public spaces is also admired in Arendt's writings by Shriver, who perceives her view of empirical truth in humane politics as an important contribution with the help of which the modern Jews, Christians and their secular neighbours could seek common starting points for a fundamental question: how to transfer society through committed by her past evil and how to make it better?<sup>47</sup> According to Shriver exactly Jesus created horizontal necessity of forgiveness in human society.<sup>48</sup> Also according to him forgiveness is a cure for damaged social relationships and an attempt to change society for better.<sup>49</sup>

### **Mutual relationship of love and justice for a building of the civil society**

In this search for solutions by reconciliation, we must realize an important metaphysical relationship of the theological virtue of love and philosophical virtue of justice. In social interpersonal environment precursor of relationships of love is justice flowing from knowledge, rational reasoning and logical reasons. Nevertheless, the relationship with others experientially transcends this dimension. Honek classically points out that the common factor of all forms of natural love is the desire for known good and beauty. Love, that is to say, always wishes good. Also St. Thomas reminds us that to love means to want the good of the other.<sup>50</sup> Thus justice in theological ethics leads to poured divine virtue of love.<sup>51</sup> Günthör points out that study of relationships of the divine virtue of love by modern theologians is often seen only from the angle of justice. Every Christian act towards one's neighbour, though, should also be guided by love, without which even justice cannot be such as it actually has to be.<sup>52</sup>

Benedict XVI adds that here the particularly important is justice. *Ubi societas, ibi ius*: Every society creates its own system of justice. Love exceeds justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is "mine" to someone else. However, it is never without justice that is leading to give to the other what is

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<sup>46</sup> Michael Sievernich, *Schuld und Sünde in der Theologie der Gegenwart. Frankfurter Theologische Studien*, Vol. 29, Frankfurt/Main, Josef Knecht, 1982, p. 200.

<sup>47</sup> Donald W. Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies. Forgiveness in Politics*, New York- Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 1995, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> Donald W. Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies. Forgiveness in Politics*, p. 239.

<sup>49</sup> Donald W. Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies. Forgiveness in Politics*, p. 35.

<sup>50</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, I-II 26, 4; see Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika*, p. 187.

<sup>51</sup> Alois Honek, *Žijem vo viere v Božieho Syna*, Banská Bystrica, 1991, p. 98.

<sup>52</sup> Anselm Günthör, *Morálna teológia II/a. Špeciálna morálna teológia. 1 časť. Vzťahy kresťana k Bobu*, Rome, Slov. ústav sv. Cyrila a Metóda, 1990, p. 226.

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"his", what belongs to him by reason of his being and his actions. I cannot "give" another from what is mine until I give him first what due to him by justice. Someone who loves others with serving love is above all just to them. In respect of relationship of love and justice Benedict XVI writes: "Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the 'economy' of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth. For holistic development of society that is unescapably found on the way of globalization (which in itself is no evil), this service for the truth in love means above all that the ethical behaviour must focus on justice (as the minimum measure of love) and the common good".<sup>53</sup>

Schockenhoff recalls that in St. Thomas' writings Decalogue stands for Magna Carta of justice. In other words, in their architectural common overview love and justice behave not as two rivalling principles, but rather as grace and freedom, revelation and reason together. The way as revelation does not extinguished the light of natural reason and grace does not destroy human freedom, so does love in justice and *through* justice; whose actions are somewhat a particular form in which love completes its own work.

Hence, justice and love do not compete, as love began where justice ends, or as if it predicted extinction of love in order to thus prepare certain order marked with factual objectivity of the common human life. Justice and love are a lot more, they are rather two concentrated circuits depended on one another, which are enclosed by all commandments of the Decalogue into one closely formed bracket and to the next level.<sup>54</sup>

According to Schallenberger essential relationship between justice and love lies in fact that every responsibility of justice is the responsibility of love, but it does not quite apply on the contrary, because love exceeds justice. Justice is the minimum of love. Even justice of today is the love of yesterday, the love of today is justice of tomorrow.<sup>55</sup> Peschke continues that anything what justice requires is required by love as well, but not vice versa. *Justice therefore must be inspired by love in social order.* Love is more an extensive virtue; the requirements of justice make up the minimum of its requirements. *The requirement incompatible with love cannot be a requirement of justice. However, it is not possible to give up justice and replace it with love to one's neighbour.* Justice clearly states where love must begin before other initiatives of good will appear.<sup>56</sup>

When looking for today's connectivity of justice, law and respect Peschke recalls that *justice allows others to be what they are and leaves what belongs to them.* Love above it is in service to others, so that they can reach the fullness of

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<sup>53</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 2.

<sup>54</sup> Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Grundlegung der Ethik. Ein theologischer Entwurf*, 263.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Schallenberger, *Moraltheologie/ Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, 49.

<sup>56</sup> Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika*, Praha, Vyšehrad, 1999, p. 216-217.

their being. Love gives justice ability to see things correctly, because only love can really know the neighbour and helps determine the demands of justice (especially the requirements of social justice). Love must moderate the demands of justice, but this must be understood as a moral virtue based on the requirements of the natural law. Although the obligations of justice represent minimum requirements of love, they are always *more significant and urgent* than duties imposed only by love. Therefore, moral theology must require that the obligations of justice are fulfilled mainly by acts of Christian love. On the other hand, Christians must not lose a sense of higher ideals and highest goals of love that Christ revealed in the Sermon on the Mount and in the commandments of love through His example.<sup>57</sup> Therefore St. Thomas does not count with the concept of reconciliation. Where true love is, it is not necessary to speak of reconciliation.<sup>58</sup>

### **Justice encouraging the acts of a person**

Second Vatican Council emphasizes the fundamental principles of good neighbourly relationship, which are love and justice.<sup>59</sup> Psychological and chronological primacy of love from justice shows us that the acts of love towards neighbour can attain preferential importance. In this way through love towards neighbour a person ascends to the love of God. One of the reasons for this direction according to Günthör is also globalization and greater social sensitivity, i.e., bigger pressure on social justice. Even contemporary secularization emphasizes autonomy of love, because many in fact are nowadays asking: If we inseparably unite love to one's neighbour with the love of God, where the latter is central and is the source of love to one's neighbour, do we not inappropriately sacralise the love to one's neighbour?<sup>60</sup> In social and political life this order of love plays an important role, because it is essentially connected exactly with justice.<sup>61</sup>

Only in a particular historical period, a person can approve and represent himself. Therefore, the personal love applies not only to the present revelation of one's neighbour, but also to his past and future. The loving remembers the past with gratitude for what has been experienced together and

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<sup>57</sup> Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika*, p. 0217.

<sup>58</sup> Otto Hermann Pesch, *Versöhnung in der Kirche. Eine theologiegeschichtliche Hypothese-und einige Faustregeln des Verhaltens*, in Thomas Eggensperger, Ulrich Engel, Otto Hermann Pesch (eds.), *Versöhnung. Versuche zu ihrer Geschichte und Zukunft*. Walberberger Studien, vol. 8, Mainz, Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1991, p. 189-213, here p. 194-5.

<sup>59</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world *Gaudium et spes*, 21; 30; 72; 76; 77, see Anselm Günthör, *Morálna teológia III/a. Špeciálna morálna teológia. Vzťahy kresťana k Bohu*, Trnava, SSV, 1996, p. 12.

<sup>60</sup> Anselm Günthör, *Morálna teológia III/a. Špeciálna morálna teológia. Vzťahy kresťana k Bohu*, p. 53.

<sup>61</sup> Joachim Piegsa MSF, *Der Mensch Das moralische Lebewesen. Fundamentale Fragen der Moraltheologie*, p. 201.

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thus gains deepening of his relationship. At the same time, however, personal love demonstrated the good of forgiveness, especially when injustice happens. As we have already seen, mastering the past with its gained wounds is an important presupposition for the capacity of open and whole-hearted love. The desire of beatitude, however, also applies to the future of one's neighbour.

In another important encyclical *Deus Caritas est* Pope Benedict adds that God's eros is a forgiving love that turns God against Himself, *his love against his justice*. It is not about apathetic God of Greek philosophers, but as the Father of Jesus Christ approaches the world and man with his emotional involvement: so great is God's love for man that by becoming man he follows him even into death, and so *reconciles justice and love*.<sup>62</sup> In this way Benedict shows the understanding of reality in which a person and love prevail. This message is particularly suitable for dialogue with the Eastern religions, where the goal often feathers away in losing one's ego in unnamed image of the divine. On the contrary, the meaning of existence is a devoted and selfless love.

Schockenhoff states that if the love of one's neighbour is so closely connected to the love of God so that the reality of God's love conforms to the proof of that love, so the requirement to love your neighbour as yourself cannot have any restrictions.<sup>63</sup> He also points out that love for enemy stops the vicious circle of violence and shows the contrast prophetic sign for greater justice in the kingdom of God.<sup>64</sup> God's commandments underline the seriousness of Jesus' requirement of love and are protests against daily violence in politics and daily life, and require that the circle of love is not limited to the personal field of I-You relationship. In this way they also affect remote political consequences of actions.<sup>65</sup> Viviano even adds that Jesus' teaching about love of enemies creates the possibility of new human relationships, human struggle and behaviour also at political level, even at the level of international relations.<sup>66</sup> However, the service to the good of one's neighbour is not chaoticity and moodiness of feeling, but it requires a well-considered appropriate justice.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the capacity to accept suffering for the love of good, of truth and justice is an essential criterion of humanity. Abandoning these factors destroys man himself.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Deus Caritas est*, [http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html), 10 (19.03.2021).

<sup>63</sup> Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Grundlegung der Ethik. Ein theologischer Entwurf*, p. 220.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 227.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 227.

<sup>66</sup> Benedict Thomas Viviano OP, *Kázanie na bore*, p. 38.

<sup>67</sup> Anselm Günthör, *Morálna teológia III/a. Špeciálna morálna teológia. Vzťahy kresťana k Bohu*, 40.

<sup>68</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, [http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20071130\\_spe-salvi.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html), 38.

Building common world, Benedict XVI draws attention to the fact that the requirement for justice and love is to want common good and take effective steps to secure it. To take a stand for the common good is on the one hand to be solicitous for, and on the other hand to avail oneself of, that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of society, juridically, civilly, politically and culturally, making it the *polis*, or city. The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbours, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practise this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *polis*. This is the institutional path — we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbour directly, outside the institutional mediation of the *polis*. When animated by charity, commitment to the common good has greater worth than a merely secular and political stand would have. Like all commitment to justice, it is a part of the testimony of divine charity that paves the way for eternity through temporal action. In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations, in such a way as to shape the earthly city in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided city of God.<sup>69</sup>

Benedict XVI adds that we ourselves build the human community, but we can never, purely by our own strength, be a fully fraternal community that would become a truly universal community. The unity of the human race, a fraternal communion transcending every barrier, is called into being by the word of God—who-is-Love. In addressing this key question, we must make it clear, on the one hand, that the logic of gift does not exclude justice, nor does it merely sit alongside it as a second element added from without; on the other hand, economic, social and political development, if it is to be authentically human, needs to make room for the principle of gratuitousness as an expression of fraternity.<sup>70</sup>

Benedict XVI warns that even since the nineteenth century Marxism attacked the Church's charitable activities, claiming that poor do not need charity but justice, in order for the rich to shirk their obligation to work for justice and a means of soothing their consciences and thus not robbing the poor of their rights that it is necessary to recognize the faults of the Church, but he talks about truly proper relationship between charity and justice, which is based on the following:<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 7.

<sup>70</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 34.

<sup>71</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Deus Caritas est*, 26; 28.

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1. central responsibility of politics is *just order of society and the State* (State which is not governed according to justice would be just a bunch of thieves). Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice, which by its very nature has to do with ethics. Justice is the question of practical reason, which if to be exercised properly, must undergo purification from ethical blindness, caused by the dominance of own interests and power. Here politics and faith meet. That is why faith is a purifying force for reason, so it can see what is proper to him. This is where Catholic social doctrine helps out, because it wishes to help forming conscience in politics. Here comes the distinction between State and the Church, (so called the autonomy of the temporal sphere). The State may not impose religion, yet it must guarantee religious freedom and harmony between the followers of different religions.

2. charity will always prove necessary, even in the most just society. There is no any ordering of the State that will make love worthless. Whoever wants to eliminate love is preparing to eliminate man as such. There will always be suffering, loneliness and material need. The Church here does not simply offer people material help, but spiritual care and cure. Subsequently Benedict XVI is asking, if the promise of love is so great that it justifies the gift of myself? In the history of humanity, Christian faith has awakened the capacity of accepting suffering what is decisive for our humanity. In this way, truth, justice and love are not simply ideals, but enormous realities. God desired to suffer with us. To suffer for the sake of the truth is the measure of humanity.<sup>72</sup>

### **Ultimate justice and the virtue of hope**

Eventually, in the horizon of the infinite there remains the question of ultimate justice, that is, of the meaning of one's existence and the opportunity to accept one's own life. From a Christian perspective, this remains an unanswered in this world question. The answer thus sounds: the result of such justice is God's judgment as a verdict and salvation on us and our possibilities. This is the theological conclusion of any ethics, that the last verdict is redemption! Thus, we must courageously and hopefully look into the eyes of the last inner worldly uncompletedness.<sup>73</sup>

Honek draws attention to the fact that the expectation of the Messiah is a principal subject of hope for Israel.<sup>74</sup> Messianic hope was initially secular, but it is gradually changing. At first, the *age of justice* was expected, good government, freedom from oppression, the time of abundance, rich harvest, harmony and peace. Benes calls these factors primary objects of hopes of the Old Testament,

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<sup>72</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, 39.

<sup>73</sup> Peter Schallenberg, *Moraltheologie/Christliche Gesellschaftslehre*, 51.

<sup>74</sup> Alois Honek, *Žijem vo viere v Božieho Syna*, 95.

along with generation offspring. But the prophets were fighting with presumptuous hope, which concerned the presence of God in the temple. Finally, by the belief of many Yahweh will take care of the rest faithful from Israel and restore the kingdom.<sup>75</sup>

Synoptists in the Holy Scripture do not underlie the word hope, but the reality of hope is here expressed in words like seek and expect.<sup>76</sup> As we have already seen in the previous sections, Christian hope does not consider willingness to active deployment as redundant, but, on the contrary, rather requires it. Man hoping for God's justice and peace is also trying for its *gradual implementation*. Hope to which we are called (Eph 1, 18; 4, 4) is a command to become mediators in the process of return of all things into the Kingdom of Christ and under his rule. This hope purifies desires for only human arrangement of this world.<sup>77</sup> Christian hope therefore calls for the transformation of the world in the perspective of God's creative plan and his redemptive intentions. This should be the driving force of all earthly hopes. In this way a man is heading towards the heavenly, as well as earthly completeness, due to Christ himself, in whom human community and the whole world are living.<sup>78</sup> Creative following of Christ corrects and sets order, thus transforming the face of the earth, where person lives.<sup>79</sup>

In Benedict's Encyclical *Spe Salvi* the Last Judgement after prayer and suffering is the third place of school and practice of hope. The prospect of the Last Judgment remains as a place for learning and practicing hope. It has given Christianity a sense of present moment.<sup>80</sup> Benedict points out that the protest of atheism of the 19th and 20th centuries against the injustices of the world and of world history, and thus denial of God, has happened by putting a person in God's place as the one who is called to establish justice. However, a world which has to create its own justice is a world without hope. There can be no justice without the resurrection of the dead.<sup>81</sup> There is an undoing of past suffering, a reparation that sets things aright. For this reason, faith in the Last Judgement is first and foremost hope—the need for which was made abundantly clear in the upheavals of recent centuries. It is the strongest argument in favour of faith in eternal life.<sup>82</sup> *God is justice and creates justice.* This is our consolation and our hope.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Albert Beneš OP, *Božské cnosti*, 47.

<sup>76</sup> Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika*, 80.

<sup>77</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern World *Gaudium et spes*, 38.

<sup>78</sup> Anselm Günthör, *Morálna teológia II/a. Špeciálna morálna teológia. 1 časť. Vzáťahy kresťana k Bohu*, 211.

<sup>79</sup> Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika*, 89-90.

<sup>80</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, 41.

<sup>81</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, 42.

<sup>82</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, 43.

<sup>83</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, 44.

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However, Christian hope does not expect a new creation at the end of times. The Spirit of the Lord was sent to restore the face of the earth. Thus, the Kingdom of God must grow among us now. In this way to the object of hope also belongs the restoration of human hearts in justice and holiness, better ordering of the modern world, the establishment of peace between peoples and nations, who complement the eschatological hope. Although in traditional teachings of moral theology these goals belong to the secondary object of hope, but it doesn't result in its minority whatsoever. Peschke sees the problem only in a sufficiently precise definition of such small hopes, which fall within the area of spiritual and temporary means.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, *solidarity hope for all* should already in these times lead to practice of resurrection experience that lives despite all the injustice and manifold indications of death of solidarity in the structures of this world. Hope thus gains social and critical, and at the same time political dimension. It is not satisfied with contemporary condition, but protests against injustice and misery caused by people. Hope asks about the causes of needs for which people are responsible for. At the same time, however, it does not replace the reality of the world with its deficit condition as a consequence of sin, but sees many more possibilities for change and better possibilities for existence of realities that are in it. Hope in this way becomes a *service* to the coming Kingdom of God, which in practice of resurrection is already occurring. The resurrection of the Lord is therefore only the beginning of the completion of the world. This fact is aiming at the new being of inner person in faith, hope and love, followed by conversion of a sinner and the establishment of God's kingdom within oneself. This is how the incoming day of redemption should come to the fore in the life of a converted Christian (Origenes).<sup>85</sup>

Peschke points out that Jesus, according to the Holy Scripture proclaims the closeness of God's Kingdom, which must grow. This kingdom brings God's reign over mankind and the world and the promise for those who live according to God's will, but especially for those *to whom love and justice have been denied*. Those who fall behind the law of God's kingdom will not be excluded, but need conversion. The kingdom of God requires transformation of the world in accordance with God's will and commandment of love.<sup>86</sup> However, we cannot create the kingdom of God on our own; it is a big and beautiful gift as a response to our hope. We cannot even earn this kingdom. However, we can open our world for God to enter it as all saints did, who were in such way contributing to the salvation of the world. In this way we will discover clear

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<sup>84</sup> Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika*, 83.

<sup>85</sup> Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Grundlegung der Ethik. Ein theologischer Entwurf*, 207.

<sup>86</sup> Karl-Heinz Peschke, *Křesťanská etika*, 81.

sources of creation, and thus together with the creatures that precede us as a gift according to its inner requirements and goals we learn to act correctly.<sup>87</sup>

Viviano adds that, even while awaiting God's Kingdom it is about compelling vision of the future of this world and the human race, it is about *His* Kingdom after all that God gives when considers if we are able to accept him. Although it is the highest grace, but nevertheless just grace. The struggle for social justice, which vision and promise inspires the kingdom of God cannot be accepted without faith in God, prayer, community life and studies.<sup>88</sup> Christians have hope for this world through God's kingdom in the New Testament (as a basis for preaching social justice, peace and freedom), however realized in non-pelagiid way. Otherwise, our views will get a lot closer to communism, to where Viviano also ranks liberation theology in Latin America and Moltmann's theology of hope.<sup>89</sup>

At last, Viviano warns not to understand justice and peace in terms of Luther as something entirely internal. On the contrary he sees these terms in real context that is already operating here, in this world. It is then possible to express the concept of Christian love by the expression of Joy in the Holy Spirit from Paul's definition Rom 14: 17.<sup>90</sup> The theme of the kingdom of God today also affects the mutual acting of faith and society, politics and doctrine of the Church. Its encompassment is very important for the future orientation of the Church, in regard to its competitors and those who like to uplift Marxism.<sup>91</sup> Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate* adds that we cannot understand human community unless we recognize it to be something more than the sum of its material parts, if we do not understand the ability of man to sin and anchoring of the entire community within the gift of the grace of God. This implies to an important lesson for public acting: there is no morality or justice without moral and righteous people.<sup>92</sup>

### **Future expectations for a justice**

As we have shown in our work, a very important element for the development of justice is the emphasis on moral personality of an individual. Several analysts also warn that democratic politics cannot get along without intellectual and moral elite.<sup>93</sup> In addition Bubík emphasizes that justice should be reflected in concrete social practice, in actions, which go beyond the system of rules of respectful treatment. This means that it must be tangible also in human,

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<sup>87</sup> Benedict XVI, Encyclical letter *Spe Salvi*, 35.

<sup>88</sup> Benedict Thomas Viviano OP, *Kázanie na bore*, p. 25.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Sirico, *Caritas in veritate vue d'Amerique*, Vie de l'Église, 17. 7. 2009.

<sup>93</sup> Tomáš Bubík, *Filosofický o spravedlnosti*, Univerzita Pardubice, Pardubice, 2007, p. 149.

„How much justice are we able to do in our political society? Social ethical and theological reflections on the virtue of justice and its implementation for a development of our post-communist countries also in the period of COVID-19 pandemic,” *Astra Salvensis*, IX (2021), no. 17, p. 91-113.

not only in civil solidarity as it was pointed out more than 55 years ago in Pastoral Constitution of Second Vatican Council *Gaudium et Spes*.<sup>94</sup>

From the perspective of human behaviour, biblical times after Cain and Abel show us how finally idealist of love and the reality of law draw apart. Nevertheless, justice carries the foretaste of idealist and is not at all possible to implement without existing ideals of individuals. Pope Francis reiterates example of injustice of Cain to Abel, but to the relationship between people and God he adds a relationship to nature.<sup>95</sup>

Another important element for growth of the development of justice is also to mention wrong and unfair acting with the help of historical experience, which could have significant consequences for the future. Eventually, as pointed out by several authors, forgiveness should be done in public forms with the help of (and also in) the Church and should be based on the recognition of guilt ("and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us" cf. Mt 6: 9).

Besides that, the Church must carry out a more active role in the process of development of justice. It is extremely important that she stops to be concerned only with her own problems, but shows her outstanding role in building of society. Schockenhoff adds that the Church must remit everything she does to critical measure of the commandment of love of God and neighbour. This commandment must become the Church's definitive maximum for the proclamation of the Gospel, if Christianity does not want to lose its unchangeable identity facing civil religion of enlightened humanism. This could include, for ex. zeal for peace and justice, the fight against slavery and violence, protest against human rights violations of all kinds as well as helping poor and disadvantaged people.

Pope Francis adds that “peace is not simply the absence of warfare, based on a precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day toward the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect form of justice among men”.<sup>96</sup> In the end, a peace which is not the result of integral development will be doomed; it will always spawn new conflicts and various forms of violence.<sup>97</sup> He also adds an important attention

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 149 and see also GS 30.

<sup>95</sup> Pope Francis, *Encyclical letter Laudato Si'*  
[http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html), 70 (19.03.2021).

<sup>96</sup> Paul VI, Encyclical letter *Populorum progressio* on the development of peoples,  
[http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_26031967\\_populorum.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html), 294-295 (19.03. 2021).

<sup>97</sup> Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* on the proclamation of the gospel in today's world,

that in the Church we should not be concerned simply about falling into doctrinal error, but also remain faithful to this light-filled path of life and wisdom. For “defenders of orthodoxy are sometimes accused of passivity, indulgence, or culpable complicity regarding the intolerable situations of injustice and the political regimes which prolong them”.<sup>98</sup>

However, despite great efforts to solve the problems of this world, this whole activity cannot be exchanged for what Christianity and the Church must really proclaim to this world, as Karl Rahner has already said: love for God with all his heart and will, which is not the same as the maximum - save the world! However, in this challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic, our efforts to develop lasting peace in the world need to look at the virtue of justice in its entirety.

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[https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html), 219 (19.03. 2021).

<sup>98</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of The Faith, Instruction on certain aspects of the theology of liberation *Libertatis nuntius* (6. 8. 1984), [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19840806\\_theology-liberation\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html), 907- 908 (19.03.2021). See Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* on the proclamation of the gospel in today’s world, 194.

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