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Today's Christmas and Easter Customs and Traditions in Poland

Summary

In Poland, the two main seasons of the liturgical year, namely those of Christmas and Easter are filled with a number of customs and traditions, which contain both strictly religious elements and those enriching people's daily, mundane lives. Some of the abovementioned customs stem in a direct way from the Gospel message referring to the two "powerful seasons" of the liturgical year while others mainly result from the Polish folklore or regional traditions and are loosely associated with the doctrine of the Paschal Mystery or with the theology of the Incarnation of the Word of God.

Key words: the Season of Easter, the Season of Christmas, customs, traditions.

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Theological Inspiration after the Union of Brest in 1596

Summary

The concluding of the Union with Rome in 1596 gave rise to a split and confrontation, but also to the strengthening of creative activity. Although these days the historical event and its consequences constitute the basis for discussion about the controversial issues involved, in the past each of the two interested parties sought to resolve the dispute in its favour. However, the updated and exhaustive arguments, which have evolved over the years now result in an in-depth and balanced discussion. This contributes to the dialogue between the different faiths and imparts a novel quality to it. Such beneficial interaction is possible due to the introduction of a dynamic process of exchanging one's experiences concerning the doctrinal differences.

Key words: theological inspiration, the Union of Brest, the mission of the Church, the Holy Spirit.

Testimony of the Deacon Ministry as a Convincing New Way of Evangelization

Summary

The main purpose of the article is to demonstrate the value of the deacon ministry for the new evangelization. Four stages of the problem have been presented. First, the nature of the deacon ministry is defined as man's service to the needs of others, carried out through the apostolate in the supernatural dimension and by means of charity help in the temporal dimension. The second stage outlines the qualities of a deacon. For the deacon ministry to be effective, the minister should be characterized by wisdom and the fullness of grace granted by the Holy Spirit. While helping others the deacon should be guided by cordiality, kindness, patience and, above all, by the love of God. The next stage unveils the essence of the new evangelization. This involves preaching the Gospel message with a renewed apostolic zeal by means of methods which are comprehensible for the contemporary listener. The fourth stage refers to the nature and practical implementation of the deacon ministry as well as to disclosing the essence of the new evangelization. Thus the author shows the value of the deacon ministry in the fruitful process of the new evangelization. There is no doubt about the existence of the abovementioned value. Once the preacher's evangelizing attitude is reinforced by his deacon ministry, his Gospel message becomes increasingly fruitful.

Key words: Deaconia, New evangelization, love of the neighbour, proclamation of the Gospel, zeal.

The Passover of Jesus Christ as a Revelation of God's Glory in the Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar

Summary

The whole existence of Jesus Christ is a continual act of adoration of God. This refers to all the mysteries of His life in which Hans Urs von Balthasar, a Basel theologian discerns the unending manifestation of God's glory, the greatness of His unconditional love. The aforementioned manifestation reaches its climax in the paschal mystery of the passion, death on the cross and resurrection, where the truth about God, who "so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life." (Jn 3:16), is definitively revealed. Our reflection upon the paschal event first focuses on the mystery of the cross (p.1) and then on the mystery of resurrection (p.2) and on God's glory that manifests itself in them.

Key words: Hans Urs von Balthasar, the Passover of Jesus Christ, God's glory, cross, resurrection.

The God and Spirituality of Islam as Seen from a Catholic Perspective

Summary

Muslims portray Islam as “a religion of peace”. Lamentably, the recent developments related to the rise of the Islamic State, the November 2015 Paris terrorist attacks and the terror attacks in Brussels in 2016 make many Europeans fear Islam as a religion of intolerance and violence. Those fears are more or less justified. This article does not aim at defining and appraising the above apprehension, but it endeavours to look upon Islam’s teachings on God and spirituality in a more fundamental and theological light with reference to the Christian concept of God and spirituality. The author discusses point by point the Quran’s notions of the revelation and of the Quran as the Word of God, the Islamic teachings on God and spirituality with the particular emphasis on the Muslim idea of prayer. This is in turn confronted with the Catholic approach to the Bible as the Word of God, to God ultimately revealed in Jesus Christ and to Christian prayer, which can be illustrated, for example, by *the Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. The article concludes that dialogue and cooperation constitute the optimal prevention against religiously motivated terrorism. The realization by the Christians and by the Europeans that in its assumptions Islam is a religion adhering to the belief in one and true God and a religion of genuine spiritual experience, should encourage the willingness towards the culture of dialogue, the culture, which does not give priority to the confrontation and clash of civilizations, but promotes dialogue perceived as an encounter.

Key words: God, revelation, religion, spirituality, Islam, Christianity.

Faith and its Consequences in a Christian’s Life

Summary

Faith is a cardinal virtue opening one to God. Without it, one cannot reach and unite with Him. Therefore, everything must be done to help everyone become more aware of their Christian discipleship and renew the relationship between them and the Gospel. This is what the signs of the times indicate. Therefore, the Church encourages reading and meditating on the Word of God, prayer life, corporal and spiritual acts of mercy in order to be a true witness of Christ. The most beautiful model of this faith is Mary.

Key words: faith, Word of God, love, understanding, the Holy Spirit, Mary.

From the Satisfactory to the Sanctifying Model of Purgatory. The Ecumenical Perspective

Summary

Christian eschatology is a relatively neglected area within the ecumenical debate. This may indicate that the issues in this area do not have such a destructive impact on the inter-confessional relations as the questions of soteriology and ecclesiology. At the same time it is known that the issue of indulgences for the dead was the cause of the sixteenth-century dispute within the Church over the doctrine of justification. The consensus on the aforementioned doctrine, reached in 1999, put an end to this chapter. However, the declaration requires the reception of both confessions in the Church doctrine, which involves expressing the content of faith in a language understood in other theological traditions. A case in point is the recent development of the Doctrine of Purgatory. In Catholic teaching, the evolution of language in the description of this reality has been observed whereas the Protestants are known to have made some attempts at the adaptation of that doctrine to their own model of theology. The common denominator for both traditions could be the sanctifying model of Purgatory. The aim of the article is to present the main theological premises and the content of that model against the background of non-theological development conditions of the doctrine of Purgatory and its rejection by the Reformation.

Key words: purgatory, eschatology, reformation, ecumenism.

The Church and Religious Freedom

Summary

All people have the right to religious liberty, the right with its roots in the essential dignity of each human being. All people must be free to seek the truth without coercion, but are also morally obligated to embrace the truth of the Catholic faith once they recognize it. The highest norm of human life is the divine law and truth, but it can only be sought after in the proper and free manner, with the aid of teaching, communication and dialogue, and it must be complied with out of one's own free will. In faith, man's response to God must be free – no person may be forced to embrace Christianity. This is a major tenet of the Catholic faith, included in the Scripture and proclaimed by the Fathers. God has regard for the dignity of all human beings as shown in the actions of Christ Himself. Jesus did acknowledge the legitimacy of governments, but refused to impose His teachings by force. The Apostles followed His word and example. The Church is therefore following Christ and the Apostles with its recognition of the principle of religious freedom, based both on the dignity of human beings and on divine revelation. This freedom from coercion as far as religious matters are concerned must also be recognized as a right when people act in a community. Seen in this light, a community, and broadly speaking, society, in its own original right, can live its own religious life in freedom, particularly in the freedom to choose religious education. The government is to protect the rights and equality of all citizens as part of its essential role in promoting the public welfare, and it must not impose on people or prevent them from the profession of any religion.

Key words: religious liberty, dignity of human being, divine law and truth, divine revelation, conscience, religious tolerance.

Migration as a challenge for the theology of religions

Summary

The phenomenon of migration is a subject of research in many fields of science. This article attempts to present this phenomenon as a problem which theology of religions deals with. Media presence of the occurrence of migration, using mental shortcuts and suggestive images may lead to the conclusion that migration is a new phenomenon. The first part of the article portrays abbreviated history of migrations, their most important stages and directions of movements of population. It turns out that continents wouldn't be populated without migration and economic and cultural development would be impossible. In the second part of the article an attempt to systematize the phenomenon of migration, combined with the demonstration of theological structures and especially positive aspects of migrations, perceived through the prism of God's revelation was made. The last, third part of the study is devoted to the meeting of Christianity and Islam as religions that should lead the dialogue.

Keywords: migration, history of migration, theology of religion, Christianity, Islam, dialogue, inculturation, peaceful coexistence.

Why We deserve the Presence of the God of Peace – the Commentary of Saint Thomas Aquinas on the Epistle to the Philippians 4: 8-9

Summary

In the presentation of the subject (preceded by the introduction in which Aquinas is portrayed as a Bible commentator), the author examines St. Thomas' interpretations of Saint Paul's texts regarding the theme of the research as confronted with the contemporary exegesis. Accordingly, the article consists of two part. In Part One the author deals with the text and division of the Epistle to the Philippians 4:8-9. Part Two is devoted to the theological-biblical exposition, which, in turn, is divided into four points: 1 – Behave well; 2 – The motive of a good act; 3 – The good act; 4 – The fruit of the act; and the Conclusion. Summing up the above remarks, one cannot but conclude that the moral and spiritual doctrine presented by Saint Thomas in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians 4:8-9 shows great clarity and prolificness, and remains valid and topical permitting one to remain in the faith, morality and spirituality of the Church.

Key words: virtues, fruits, integrity, good example, Christian life, doctrine, discipline, imitation of Christ, peace of God.

The Laity in the Church. Theological Reflections on the Basis of “Lumen Gentium”

Summary

The article shows certain aspects of the instruction of the Second Vatican Council regarding the lay people. The author explains the specific character of the participation of the laity in the triple Messianic function, the participation of the lay people in liturgical encounters, the representation of Ecclesia in the face of the world and the apostolic meaning of theological virtues. The article also mentions the new perception concerning the status of the laity in the Church. The first conclusion suggests the need for the introduction of the notion of “the ecclesial vocation” (which defines the specificity of the apostolic activity of the laity) into the ecclesiological terminology. The second one focuses on the requirement for the elaboration on the category of ecclesial virtues as the four paths of the ripening of the ethos of Jesus Christ as far as Christians’ attitudes towards the world are concerned.

Keywords: Christian vocation, the apostolate, the laity, theological virtues, the theology for the laity.

Marian Dimension of Priestly Spirituality

Summary

Spirituality denotes the total overflow of the baptized person with the event known as Christ. Spirituality is a “way of life” or “life according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:9). Mary is the Mother of the Church, because She gave birth to Christ, the Head of the Church. She is the Mother of the Eternal High Priest. Mary, in Her new motherhood in the Spirit embraces each and every one in the Church; She is the Mother of the pastors and of the faithful. In particular, she is the Mother of all priests, who were ordained to the priesthood. Mary is the model of trust in God, of service to the people, the model of priestly ministry and of contemplation. For priests, Mary is a help and an advocate in all the stages of their priestly ministry. Priestly spirituality is unthinkable without reference to Marian spirituality.

Key words: spirituality, Marian spirituality, Mary, Mother, pastor, priest, confidence, service.

The Resurrection of Christ and the Transformation of the Universe in the Theology of Olivier Clément

Summary

The universe theology is one of the key topics explored by Olivier Clément. The French thinker holds a critical view of modern and contemporary cosmology of the West, which in his opinion, fails to address one of man's most significant spiritual needs – the desire for the contact with the "earth". Referring to the Christian Orthodox tradition, Clément believes that Christian cosmology is based on cognition which we are endowed with thanks to our faith. It is Jesus Christ, the Logos Incarnate that is the key to the understanding of all the creatures because everything has been created in the Word, through the Word and for the Word. The Body of Christ, the Church with her whole wealth of mysteries, particularly the Eucharist is the setting of the universe transformation occurring in the power of the resurrection. Although the main performer of the transformation is the Holy Spirit, there is also a human being, a priest and the king of creation. The new man performs his duties towards the creatures above all through his work, studies and technology, broadly conceived. A Christian, while handling technology is invited to bear in mind the paschal logic, which imprints everything that exists as well as the Divine eschatological destiny of man and the universe. What is quintessential for a Christian is the attitude characterized by the contemplation of the world, spiritual struggle and asceticism as well as exorcism, specifically conceived.

Key words: Olivier Clément, Resurrection of Christ, universe.

The Question of Jesus's Knowledge in the Works of Polish Authors between 1945 and 2000

Summary

The article presents the history of the studies concerning Jesus's knowledge in the works of Polish authors between 1945 and 2000. In this period one may distinguish two stages. Up till the 1960's the scholastic hypothesis of the triple knowledge of Christ (*visio beatifica*, the infused knowledge, the acquired knowledge) is accepted and the major question, raised mainly owing to W. Granat, regards the psychological unity of Christ. After the Second Vatican Council the situation changes – most of the authors distance themselves from the hypothesis of the triple knowledge. During the whole period under examination, the issue of the psychology of Jesus is mentioned only occasionally, never to become the focus of interest, and the Polish authors depend upon Western theologians. The only exception is the study by I. Różycki published in 1982, implying that the effect of the grace of hypostatic union depends upon the degree of the development of Christ's humanity. However, the study did not draw a wide response.

Key words: Christology, Jesus's knowledge, the history of theology in Poland, 20th century, Wincenty Granat, Ignacy Różycki.

The Justifying Dimension of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick – Ecumenical Point of View

Summary

A sin breeds the need for justification. The justification concerns the sinner who needs healing. That is why among the seven signs of grace, there is the sacrament of exceptional healing: the sacrament of the sick. A sick person requires special divine grace to avoid losing heart out of fear as well as wavering in faith due to various temptations. The justification is related to illness because it is connected with the sin and grace of healing. God created the human being in the state of holiness and justice. The human being, however, albeit created by God in the state of justice as a perfect being, already in the beginning abused his freedom by defying God and wishing to reach his goal beyond Him at Devil's instigation. The original sin means a loss of this state. The degenerative process which came into being after the fall of the first people is expressed through the weakening of the vital forces, which results in one's death (cf. Genesis 3:16-24). Reconciliation is only restored by Christ. His work may be presented as the justification of the sinner before God. Therefore, in accordance with Christ's recommendation the Church believes and teaches that among the seven sacraments there is one specifically designed for strengthening those suffering from illness. This is the mystery of the anointing of the sick with sacred oil. The sacrament grants the sick person absolution from sins, the healing grace of the Holy Spirit, strengthens his confidence in God and arms him against the trepidation of death. The healing corresponds to the anticipation of the Kingdom of God in the full of glory of Christ's body. Illness symbolizes our transitional state: the Kingdom of God is in ourselves and it is not yet there. Illness did not disappear but the salvation force had already been working. The faith of the sick enables them to be justified and healed.

Key words: sacraments, the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick, grace, healing, justification, Church.

Polish Catholic commentaries on Apoc. 14:13

Summary

The interpretation of the text of the Apocalypse of St. John has always inspired great interest. On the one hand, this stems from the very literary genre of the Book of Revelation suggesting unveiling some mystery, especially the one related to the future (Nevertheless, as a form of prophesy, the Apocalypse should refer to the present). On the other hand, however, the language of the Book, abounding in symbols, signs and references to other Books of the Holy Scripture, has always required profound erudition. The text interpretation has never been simple let alone any attempts at explaining its meaning and message.

The issues in Apoc. 14:13 do not constitute the main subject matter of the whole Book. Nonetheless, they are important for every Christian's life. If Christ's words regarding the persecution of the disciples are of timeless and universal character, then the question concerning the reward for one's perseverance becomes essential for any believer. What will he / she receive in return for his / her efforts, rejection, suffering or death? This article endeavours to demonstrate how St. John's text was commented on and explained on the basis of the post-war Catholic exegesis.

Key words: Apocalypse, translations, the Holy Scripture, commentaries, deeds, reward.

***Calcatio* as the Triumph of God over Evil. A Draft of the Problem**

Summary

There exist a number of representations of saints defeating evil personified by means of *calcatio colli*. The saints are often portrayed while trampling the vanquished hybrids or animals. These hybrids or animals are thus overpowered as the personification of evil. The aforementioned representations can be traced back to the ancient non-Christian traditions, e.g. in the religion and art of Mesopotamia and Egypt. In Christian tradition, God is known to overcome the evil by *calcatio* in the Bible, liturgy, legends and art (e.g. in a mosaic of Ravenna). Similarly, the saints conquer the evil, and this victory has a particularly strong representation in Eastern Christian tradition.

Key words: *Calcatio*, Triumphant God, the saints, the personification of evil, the Eastern tradition.

A Critical Look of the Prophets at the Rich and at People's Wealth

Summary

Amos was the first prophet of the Old Testament who dealt with the problems of socio-economics. In 8th century BC he defended the rights of the poor and criticized dishonest rich men. He also rebuked corrupt judges, greedy merchants and ruthless women from Samaria. In the struggle for social justice he was not alone, because a similar message was proclaimed by other prophets, namely by Isaiah (8th century BC), Micaiah (8th century BC), Zephaniah (7th century BC) and Jeremiah (7th – 6th centuries BC), Ezekiel (7th – 6th centuries BC), Zechariah (6th century BC) and Malachi (6th century BC). This article briefly presents their socio-economic thinking. Each of the eight parts of the article is devoted to the presentation of the particular prophet and his criticism of wealth.

Key words: opulent, poor, wealth, poverty, criticism, prophet, judges, merchants, priests.