

SOLIDARITY, PATRIOTISM & NATIONALISM

Monsignor Piotr Mazurkiewicz, Warsaw, Poland, former General Secretary of COMECE, (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community).

IN GDANSK, THE SITE OF THE INDEPENDENT SELF-GOVERNING TRADE UNION *SOLIDARNOŚĆ*, on June 12, 1987, Pope John Paul II recalled: "'Bear ye one another's burdens' – a concise sentence of the Apostle is the inspiration for interpersonal and social solidarity. Solidarity – that is, one and the other, and burdens are carried together in a community. So never: one against the other. Never: some people – against the others. And never the 'burden' carried by man alone, without help of others".¹

Solidarity is thus associated with the awareness of a burden which should be carried and that you cannot just throw off your shoulders and escape. The second element is a sense of community to which one belongs, and which ensures that in his misery he is not alone. Next to me walks another person who helps me carry my burden. You may ask: why? Why one unconstrained takes on his shoulders the yoke that is not his? He was allowed not to do this, look on the man and then, like the Levite and the priest in the parable on the Good Samaritan, 'pass by on the other side' (Lk 10:30-37). Today, under the influence of this parable, an obligation of aid to the victim of a road accident is written in the law, but at that time, no one would have the right to blame the Levite and the priest.

Why did this man stop?

Why did the Samaritan stop? The beaten man did not belong to his family, his nation or his religious community. In this respect, everything separated him from the half-dead man. What stopped him was human misery. There is no clear, rational explanation for his behaviour. He, a man from the outside, someone completely alien, feels compassion for the suffering of another human person. If you are searching in the text of the Gospel for the difference between the reaction of the Levite and the priest and the conduct of the 'foreign' man, you will find it in very modest words added by St. Luke, so to speak, to describe the situation: "When he saw him, he had compassion on him" (Lk 10:33). That's what was absent in the reaction of the God's servants returning from the temple. This compassion in front of human misery spontaneously provokes solidarity.

Love and bureaucracy

The concept of solidarity starts with a Latin legal institution of *in solidum* (as a whole). Joint obligations resulted from a multiplicity of entities either on the side of the debtors (passive solidarity), or on the side of creditors (active solidarity), but the commitment was only one. Fulfilment of the provision by one of the debtors relieved the others from the debt, just as reception of performance by one of the creditors resulted in extinction of all the remaining claims. 'Solidarity' indicates here the legal capacity of each member of a group to accept all the benefits due to the group or to take responsibility for the whole debt. Solidarity in this sense usually arose as a result of liability of co-heirs in the case of indivisible benefits or of obligations resulting from a crime, if there were several perpetrators.²

Modern career of the word 'solidarity' begins during the Enlightenment. Pierre Leroux declares he is the first one to introduce the Roman legal concept of solidarity into social philosophy. He believed that the presence of the poor in France of his time was caused by the lack of appropriate institutions which would effectively solve the problem of poverty. He postulated that Christian charity, or *caritas*, referring to the commandment of the love of neighbour, should be replaced by human *solidarietas*, that is, a rationally organized system of state redistribution.³ Like everything in the Enlightenment, the problem of poverty and misery would also be solved in a rational way, with the exclusion of any subjective emotional elements. Love would be replaced in the society by cold calculation. Solidarity without love, "organized by an anonymous tax and the hands of anonymous civil servant striving to accomplish distribution stripped of irrationality and of the caprices of individual division. The citizen pays substantial social security and welfare taxes so that the state can take care of all the deprived. But the same citizen – Chantal Delsol writes – has less and less sympathy for his less fortunate neighbour because when he helps him directly, adding a kind look or a gesture, he feels like a fool who pays twice. This way (the state) eradicates, and deliberately, all the miasmas

¹ John Paul II, Homily, Gdansk, June 12, 1987.

² Cf. W. Wołodkiewicz (ed.) Roman Law Dictionary, Warszawa 1986, p. 142.

³ "En 1859, dans *La Grève de Samarez*, Leroux rappelle qu'il a "le premier, utilisé le terme de solidarité pour l'introduire dans la philosophie, c'est-à-dire [...] dans la religion de l'avenir" et il ajoute qu'il a ainsi "voulu remplacer la charité du christianisme par la solidarité humaine" (Leroux, *La Grève de Samarez*, Paris, Dentu 1859, p. 254). C'est effectivement dans un ouvrage de 1840, *De l'humanité*, qu'il propose cette substitution en la justifiant par le passage nécessaire du sens juridique à une signification politique et sociale, celle-là même que revendiqueront explicitement les révolutionnaires de 1848" (A. Policar, *Sociologie et morale: La philosophie de la solidarité de Célestin Bouglé*, http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/policar_alain/socio_et_morale/socio_et_morale.pdf, p. 7).

of compassion and mercy, individual preferences, obligations of gratitude, and the atmosphere of a debt that cannot be paid, in other words, all the attributes of the genuine human solidarity – all too human".⁴

St. John Paul II also pointed to the inadequacy of the bureaucratic structures: "In connection with the spread of individualism, we see an *increased weakening of interpersonal solidarity*: while charitable institutions continue to carry out praiseworthy work, one notes a decline in the sense of solidarity, with the result that many people, while not lacking material necessities, feel increasingly alone, left to themselves without structures of affection and support".⁵ John Paul II argues that solidarity "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all".⁶ Move of the heart must be accompanied by concrete action. One should, if possible, bandage the wounds, set the beaten man on a donkey, bring him to an inn and pull out two silver coins from the pocket. However, the sense of solidarity cannot be reduced solely to provision of specific assistance in meeting the material needs of the poor. In this regard, 'cold' state institutions may be equally effective. They are at a disadvantage, however, as they are not able to be moved. Bureaucratic structures leave a man in need without spiritual and emotional support, along with his sense of loneliness and uselessness; they are not able to convince him that his existence is really important for someone.

Duties and responsibilities of the temple and of the heart

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). St. Augustine, commenting on this verse of St. Paul, recalls an observation made by Pliny the Elder of living deer: "Stags cross the sea in herds, swimming in a long line, the head of each resting on the haunches of the one that precedes it, each in its turn falling back to the rear. This has been particularly remarked when they pass over from Cilicia to the island of Cyprus".⁷ The reason for proceeding this way is the horns' weight, which makes them unable to keep their heads above the water for too long.

As social beings by nature, we discover fairly easily that our fates are intertwined. Our success depends on the success of others. Our fate is a part of the destiny of the whole group. But if our discoveries ended in that, what would be the difference between our behaviours and those of Pliny's deer? One can observe a sense of social ties also among those who are just dealing with common business. They decide to play in the same team, to start a business together, to invest their money together. They sail in the same boat and either they succeed together, or go down together. This type of loyalty is quite commonly observed among businessmen, in the army and even in the mafia. It does not exclude what is sometimes called 'solidarity in evil'. There is a kind of wicked unity in hypocrisy, in violence against the weak or in insensitivity to human misery.

It can be assumed that the other priests and Levites from the Jerusalem temple not only understood their colleagues, but would even justify them. They had, after all, the right to be afraid of ritual impurity or organized traps; it could also happen that this beaten man was a pagan or, God forbid, a Samaritan. And they come back from the temple to the house; garments smelling of incense, and psalms still sounding in their ears. So why approach a man whom God has punished for his sins? They are responsible only for candles and incense, not for wounded people. Other services are paid for this kind of work. Mate justification could be even treated as a manifestation of professional solidarity.

Solidarity as a love of enemies

"What does it mean to be in solidarity?" asked Józef Tischner. "It means to carry another's burden. No man is an island. We are united even when we do not know it. The landscape binds us, flesh and blood bind us, work and speech bind us. However, we are not always aware of these bonds. When solidarity is born, this awareness is awakened, then speech and word appear – and at that time what was hidden also comes out into the open. Our bounds become visible. Then man shoulders the burden of the other".⁸ The most obvious elements come to mind at first: flesh and blood, work and speech. Family, nationality or class bounds appear. But if the Samaritan thought in these terms, he would pass by, and we would not know the answer to the question: "Who is our neighbour?"

⁴ C. Millon-Delsol, *Solidarity and Barbarity*, http://www.tischner.org.pl/Content/Images/tischner_6_delsol.pdf, p. 79.

⁵ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 8.

⁶ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 38.

⁷ The Natural History of Pliny, VIII, 50 (32), <http://www.questia.com/read/99540464/natural-history-of-pliny>; Cf. St. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Kęty 2012, p. 242-244.

⁸ J. Tischner, *The Ethics of Solidarity*, http://www.tischner.org.pl/Content/Images/tischner_3_ethics.pdf, p. 37-38.

At the time when the memory of the victims of martial law was still alive in Poland, John Paul II preached: "Solidarity – that is, one and the other, and burdens are carried together in community. So never: one against the other. Never: some people – against the others". The essence of the 'Solidarity' revolution was a rejection of the Marxist theory of class struggle, and it was possible thanks to the religious inspiration of the movement. "Faith," wrote Miroslaw Dzielski, "determines the space in which political activity is permissible for us – the space between the rebellion against slavery and the duty to love our enemies".⁹ He then stated: "Christian revolution is not a revolution directed against people. What it fights for is more important to it than against whom it fights. (...) We must keep this constantly in mind. If it would appear one day that the reform of the system is only possible without removing our enemies from the political scene, we should accept such a solution. This solution is extremely Christian".¹⁰

Do our enemies have souls?

"Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue," writes John Paul II. "(...) In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbour is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One's neighbour must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her; and for that person's sake one must be ready for sacrifice, even the ultimate one: to lay down one's life for the brethren (cf. 1 Jn 3:16). At that point, awareness of the common fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of all in Christ – 'children in the Son' – and of the presence and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit will bring to our vision of the world a new criterion for interpreting it. Beyond human and natural bonds, already so close and strong, there is discerned in the light of faith a new model of the unity of the human race, which must ultimately inspire our solidarity. This supreme model of unity, which is a reflection of the intimate life of God, one God in three Persons, is what we Christians mean by the word 'communion'."¹¹

Confronted by egoistic behaviours, determined by lust for profit, power or by an ideology of violence, solidarity refuses to fight. The logic of solidarity requires adopting an attitude diametrically opposite: instead of striving to use another human being we have a real commitment for his own good, instead of oppressing him for one's own benefit – a desire to serve him and willingness to sacrifice oneself rather than to recognize him as the enemy.¹² Solidarity is not only opposed to thinking about the social, economic and political life in terms of a combat. Although it demands a sense of responsibility for the 'other' and willingness to share with him one's resources,¹³ but above all demands concern for his humanity, his soul, even if he was previously called 'enemy'. Expansion of the group and admission of the ideological opponents as its members can be made, for example, by the discovery of an ethnic community. We must be aware, however, that if our community is too narrowly defined, if the criterion of belonging to it is badly chosen, we will always be doomed to struggle against the 'others'. It might be that our community in its dynamic will also absorb our staunchest enemies. But only because there are other strangers outside, considered dangerous. One community is opposed to the other one. Thus, the condition: "Never: one against the other. Never: some people – against the others", will never be satisfied. The only thing that opens up such a perspective is the discovery in the other being of a person – recognition that our opponent can have a soul, and then to help him to join our recognition.¹⁴ In *Centesimus annus*, published after the fall of communism, John Paul II describes the mechanism activating the 'work of conscience' on the side of the enemy:

"It seemed that the European order resulting from the Second World War and sanctioned by the *Yalta Agreements* could only be overturned by another war. Instead, it has been overcome by the non-violent commitment of people who, while always refusing to yield to the force of power, succeeded time after time in finding effective ways of bearing witness to the truth. This disarmed the adversary, since violence always

⁹ M. Dzielski, *God, Freedom, Property*, Kraków 2001, p. 47.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

¹¹ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 40.

¹² *Ibidem*, 38.

¹³ "Those who are more influential, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity, should not adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. The intermediate groups, in their turn, should not selfishly insist on their particular interests, but respect the interests of others" (John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 39).

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 39.

needs to justify itself through deceit, and to appear, however falsely, to be defending a right or responding to a threat posed by others".¹⁵

Thus, the ultimate basis of solidarity can only be a discovery that we are children of one God and brothers in Christ. "For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity" (Eph 2:14-16). Only in discovering this level of the community, we are able to honestly shed a tear over the fate of a 'foreigner', i.e. a man unknown until today, and care for the future of the people once recognized as enemies. Only then the danger of solidarity 'against' someone eventually disappears. Because we are all brothers, even though we are all also sinners. And nothing makes us so willing to carry on the burden of someone else – writes St. Augustine – as when we consider how much Christ endured for us.¹⁶

Intergenerational solidarity

Travestyng a Winston Churchill's saying, Rémi Brague concludes that democracy is the best political system from the point of view of those who currently constitute the democratic community. If, however, it prevails in the long run, it will cause the extinction of humanity.¹⁷ Brague is referring to Alexis de Tocqueville, who pointed out that religion trains the practice of dealing with the general view of the distant future. "But in proportion as the light of faith grows dim, the range of man's sight is circumscribed, as if the end and aim of human actions appeared every day to be more within his reach. When men have once allowed themselves to think no more of what is to befall them after life, they readily lapse into that complete and brutal indifference to futurity which is but too conformable to some propensities of mankind. As soon as they have lost the habit of placing their chief hopes upon remote events, they naturally seek to gratify without delay their smallest desires; and no sooner do they despair of living forever, than they are disposed to act as if they were to exist but for a single day".¹⁸ Myopia is written somehow in the nature of a democratic secular state. The community of currently living is not instinctively interested in providing rights to those who are not yet in the world. They forget easily that – as noted by Aristotle – "statesmanship does not create human beings but having received them from nature makes use of them (...)".¹⁹ In other words, children are not born spontaneously. If you run out of conscious concern to bring the next generation to life, the children simply will not be born in sufficient number to prolong the very existence of a democratic community. Thus, the greatest threat to democracy of today does not seem to be an atomic bomb, but the pill.²⁰ Meanwhile, instead of this concern we are rather witnessing the loss of a sense of intergenerational solidarity, and the growing popularity of different versions of new-Malthusianism is probably associated with the disregard of the debt to the past generations. "They are debtors because of those conditions that make human existence liveable, and because of the indivisible and indispensable legacy constituted by culture, scientific and technical knowledge, material and immaterial goods and by all that the human condition has produced. A similar debt must be recognized in the various forms of social interaction, so that humanity's journey will not be interrupted but remain open to present and future generations, all of them called together to share the same gift in solidarity".²¹

Solidarity in helplessness

Chantal Delsol objects to the idea of a 'technical', 'barbaric' solidarity, not only because it attempts to replace love by redistribution, but also because it seeks to make the human being self-sufficient. "Because distribution is perceived as an automatic reparation of an injustice of some sort, the individual believes he is self-sufficient and demands his share in social goods which will help him effectively achieve his so-called ontological self-sufficiency".²²

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Centesimus annus*, 23.

¹⁶ Cf. St. Augustine, *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Kęty 2012, p. 247.

¹⁷ R. Brague, *Modérément moderne*, Flammarion 2014, p. 304.

¹⁸ A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II, 17, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/ch2_17.htm

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1258a, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0058%3Abook%3D1%3Asection%3D1258a>

²⁰ Por. R. Brague, *Modérément moderne*, p. 299.

²¹ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 195, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

²² C. Millon-Delsol, *Solidarity and Barbarity*, p. 79.

To Saint Catherine of Siena, Jesus said: "I use the word temporal for the things necessary to the physical life of man; all these I have given indifferently, and I have not placed them all in one soul, in order that man should, perforce, have material for love of his fellow. I could easily have created men possessed of all that they should need both for body and soul, but I wish that one should have need of the other, and that they should be My ministers to administer the graces and the gifts that they have received from Me. Whether man will or not, he cannot help making an act of love".²³ God desired that people need each other. He created man as non-self-sufficient being so that people have the opportunity to show their love.

Solidarity is not about liberating man completely from the state of suffering, poverty and inequalities that are inherent in the human condition. Delsol writes: "It arises in the animal aware of its finitude, in a human being. It means that human beings are brothers involved in a tragedy. (...) It is the very wound, that can neither be negated nor healed, that reunites us".²⁴ However, living in a community it is possible to give the wound a meaning. "Solidarity means elevating love beyond suffering to show that the human wound is not entirely unarmed, without any recourse, or, in other words, that the wound is not the only human quality".²⁵ For this reason, there is also a deep sense in solidarity in helplessness; standing by the other man, even when we are not able to help him in any concrete way. You can only look at him in such a way that he knows he is very important in the world, irreplaceable. It is a joint effort of carrying the spiritual burden. You can easily find this type of solidarity in hospices, where someone, often a 'stranger', is sitting at the bedside of the sick, trying to move the suffering person out of the trap of loneliness.

National solidarity – patriotism as a moral category

Catechism of the Catholic Church in the comment to the fourth commandment of the Decalogue not only mentions the homeland, but also the duty to love the country: "The love and service of one's country follow from the duty of gratitude and belong to the order of charity".²⁶ John Paul II, in his book "Memory and Identity", stresses that the word 'fatherland' (*patria*) is combined with the concept and the reality of the father (*pater*). Fatherland is somewhat the same as patrimony, that resource of wealth that we have received in inheritance from our fathers. It is meaningful that it is also said: 'motherland'. We know, from our own experience, the extent to which the transfer of the spiritual heritage is made through the mothers.²⁷

Internal link between the concepts of fatherland with fatherhood and motherhood explains the moral value of patriotism. "If we ask about the place of patriotism in the Decalogue, the apposition is clear: it falls within the scope of the fourth commandment which obliges us to honour our father and mother. This is the sort of behaviour that expresses the Latin term *pietas*, emphasizing the religious dimension of the respect and honour due to parents. We have to honour our parents because they represent to us God the Creator. Giving us life, they participate in the mystery of creation and therefore deserve honour similar to that which we give to God the Creator. Patriotism includes such an inner attitude with regard to the fatherland which is true mother for everyone. This spiritual heritage given to us by fatherland comes to us through our father and mother and builds in us the real base for this *pietas*".²⁸ Already St. Thomas Aquinas taught – after Cicero – that one and the same virtue of *pietas* organizes man's relationship towards both parents and the fatherland.²⁹ In the order of love, according to St. Thomas, "In the second place, the principles of our being and government are our parents and our country, that have given us birth and nourishment. Consequently man is debtor chiefly to his parents and his country, after God. Wherefore just as it belongs to religion to give

²³ St. Catherine of Siena, A Treatise of Divine Providence, VII, <http://www.catholictreasury.info/books/dialogue/diag10.php>

²⁴ C. Millon-Delsol, Solidarity and Barbarity, p. 82.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 82-83.

²⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2239.

²⁷ Cf. John Paul II, Memory and Identity, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2005, p. 67.

²⁸ Cf. John Paul II, Memory and Identity, p. 71; "The fourth commandment is addressed expressly to children in their relationship to their father and mother, because this relationship is the most universal. It likewise concerns the ties of kinship between members of the extended family. It requires honor, affection, and gratitude toward elders and ancestors. Finally, it extends to the duties of pupils to teachers, employees to employers, subordinates to leaders, citizens to their country, and to those who administer or govern it. This commandment includes and presupposes the duties of parents, instructors, teachers, leaders, magistrates, those who govern, all who exercise authority over others or over a community of persons" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2199); "The fourth commandment illuminates other relationships in society. In our brothers and sisters we see the children of our parents; in our cousins, the descendants of our ancestors; in our fellow citizens, the children of our country; in the baptized, the children of our mother the Church; in every human person, a son or daughter of the One who wants to be called "our Father." In this way our relationships with our neighbors are recognized as personal in character. The neighbor is not a "unit" in the human collective; he is "someone" who by his known origins deserves particular attention and respect (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2012).

²⁹ M. T. Cicero, *De officiis*, III, 90, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/off3.shtml#23>

worship to God, so does it belong to piety, in the second place, to give worship to one's parents and one's country".³⁰

Recognition of patriotism in terms of a debt which man enlisted in the past (*maxime est homo debitor parentibus et patriae*), not making a free and informed decision in this case, implies a specific anthropology. For those who share the liberal vision of the origins of social life, according to which society arises from a voluntary agreement between adult, autonomous and rational beings, it is difficult to accept the perspective of being indebted against one's will. To take a loan, you have to go to the bank and sign an appropriate agreement. Without the prior informed consent, without a consciously made "signature", one cannot require us to repay the debt. The vision of human being as unsocial and self-sufficient causes the demand to repay debts not taken consciously to be regarded as unfair. Catholic social teaching is built on a completely different anthropology. Created in the image and likeness of God, man is by nature a social being. In other words, society is not a human product and social life is not something "artificial", later added to human existence. Each of us is born in a society as a non-self-sufficient being and becomes fully human only as a member of the society. This statement is true for the physical act of human existence (you cannot come into the world "out of nowhere", without any connection with other people), but also in relation to man as a spiritual being (you cannot become an adult, autonomous and rational being without deep relationships with other people). Before our identity is formed, we must learn to speak, think, love and believe. What an adult considers a value cannot be expressed otherwise than in a language he received from the community. An individual learns the words, but their meaning is pre-determined by the community. What's more, his individual way of thinking is closely associated with the language he has learned from his own community. If, one day, man wants to adopt other values and explain what is currently important for him, he has to do so by reference to the meaning of words that have been established by the community. In this sense, everyone is a debtor. His life story is rooted in the history of the community, in which his identity has grown.³¹

Everyone is a spiritual heir. That heritage can be rejected; one can contradict it, but there is no way to deny it. The relationship to the spiritual heritage is of moral character. One meets people who do not repay loans taken out, but this is a violation of the principle of justice. One must be very careful not to limit the understanding of the debt to the economic categories. It is about moral debt. Parents need to be loved. It is not enough to pay for their maintenance when they become shiftless. You just have to love the fatherland. It is about a deep emotional bond. You do not just leave the country having settled all the bills, for example, having paid a fee for the free tuition at state university. The virtue of justice, which morally requires a person to be a patriot, speaks about a spiritual debt to the created source of our existence. *Maxime est homo debitor parentibus et patriae*. As in relation to parents, being aware of how much one owes to them, not in the sense of the material costs they bore, associated with one's upbringing, but in connection with who one is as a person, leads to a spontaneous impulse in the human heart of gratitude; the same happens also in relation to fatherland. Gratitude is a noble man's reaction to the good experienced in the past. If, however, one were unable to be grateful in this natural way, St. Thomas recalls the obligation arising from justice, which everyone can understand with the force of natural reason.

In addition to the difficulty provoked by the liberal vision of the society, seen in the likeness of a company, also the current crisis of the family and the culture of suspicion in relation to parents probably influence the way in which contemporary people regard the country and patriotism.³² A man who has trouble loving his parents will also likely have more trouble loving the fatherland. *Pietas*, both in relation to parents and fatherland, demands absolute respect. You cannot get rid of this obligation by terminating the contract, if you consider it disadvantageous, or when in a particular situation it is difficult to find a good reason to be proud of belonging to a family or to a nation. The Bible says that you have to respect your father "even if his mind fails him" (Sirach/Ecclesiasticus 3:13). This commitment has never been understood as an invitation to a lack of criticism.

Responsibility for the material and spiritual heritage

What is fatherland? According to John Paul II, fatherland is "the heritage, and at the same time it is the property resulting from this heritage, including land, territory, but even more, the values and spiritual content that make up the culture of the nation".³³ "Patriotism means love of what is native: love of history,

³⁰ *Secundario vero nostri esse et gubernationis principium sunt parentes et patria, a quibus et in qua et nati et nutriti sumus. Et ideo post Deum, maxime est homo debitor parentibus et patriae* (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2-2 q. 101 a. 1, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/sum357.htm>).

³¹ Cf. P. Burgoński, *Patriotism in the European Union*, Warszawa 2008, p. 98-99; John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, 10.

³² Cf. J. Salij, *Patriotism Today*, Poznań 2005, p. 16.

³³ Cf. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, p. 66.

tradition, language or the native landscape. It is a love which also includes the works of one's countrymen and the fruits of their genius".³⁴ Jacek Salij explains this relationship as follows: "Fatherland is a country, which I feel to be a part of. I am a bit of this country in my spirit and my body, language and culture, memories and life environment, rootedness and ideals. It is a country with which I feel deeply connected – usually because I was born and I live here, and because here I feel most at home. The language of the country I've never really studied, because I suck it with my mother's milk. From its history and culture I draw most of my spiritual substance. The graves of my ancestors will usually be there, and I myself would like to contribute to the next generations being able to live here in peace and feel really at home here".³⁵

Homeland therefore suggests a deep linkage between what is spiritual and what is material, between culture and the earth.³⁶ We visit the graves of our ancestors who ploughed this land, erected factories and churches on this piece of the land, who sang the praises of the beauty of these and not others 'forest hills and green meadows', and then quietly died in the country, in exile, on deportation, or fighting for freedom 'ours and yours'. Recognition of how much we owe the country, how close who am I is linked with the particular landscape, bears gratitude in the heart. 'Good for us to be here' – bursts the heart at the sight of the peaks of the Tatra Mountains, St. Mary's Church tower in Krakow or Suwalki lakes.

'Being at home' is a natural human desire. Nobody wants to be a stranger; nobody wants to be "a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth" (Genesis 4:12). In this context, it is worth looking at the problem of emigration as a moral issue. It is hard to blame the man for seeking better economic conditions or an environment more suitable for intellectual development (studies, work, science). But at his heart remains the question of responsibility for the relatives he leaves at home, as well as the responsibility for the community as a whole. The question concerning homeland cannot be simply reduced to the issue of moral responsibility. It is primarily a question of 'spiritual base'. John Ronald R. Tolkien, in "The Lord of the Rings", writes: "I should like to save the Shire, if I could – though there have been times when I thought the inhabitants too stupid and dull for words, and have felt that an earthquake or an invasion of dragons might be good for them. But I don't feel like that now. I feel that as long as the Shire lies behind, safe and comfortable, I shall find wandering more bearable: I shall know that somewhere there is a firm foothold, even if my feet cannot stand there again".³⁷ Somewhere, behind your back, there is a house to which you can still come back, and the land on which you put the first steps.

The risk of becoming 'a fugitive and a wanderer' is related not only to leaving the country. It may happen that someone staying physically in his or her home country becomes completely alien to its culture. John Paul II, addressing in 1990 intellectuals gathered in Prague, said: "Notice how the beauty of this 'city of hundred spires' would be impoverished if it missed the silhouette of the cathedral and thousands of other gems of Christian culture. How much poorer the spiritual, moral and cultural life of the nation would be, had it been excluded from it or forgotten what was, is and will be inspired by the Christian faith! (...) If someone managed to make you deaf and blind to the values of Christ, of the Bible, of the Church, you would become foreigners in your own culture. You would lose the sensitivity and the key to understanding so many values of philosophy, literature, music, architecture, fine arts and all areas of your own spirit, of the national, but also the European tradition. Above all, however, you would lose an important source of inspiration and moral strength needed to solve many pressing problems of today and shape the future of civilization".³⁸

The risk of alienation applies not only to this or another nation in Europe, but also the entire continent. John Paul II, making an assessment of the European culture at the turn of the millennium, called Europe the 'continent of havoc'. He speaks of multitudes of Europeans who "give the impression of living without spiritual roots and somewhat like heirs who have squandered a patrimony entrusted to them by history".³⁹ "European culture gives the impression of 'silent apostasy' on the part of people who have all that they need and who live as if God does not exist".⁴⁰ Forgetfulness of God is – according to John Paul II – one of the reasons weakening hope in Europe, revealed by, among other things, the diminishing number of births, the

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 71-72.

³⁵ Cf. J. Salij, *Patriotism Today*, p. 15-16.

³⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Memory and Identity*, p. 67.

³⁷ J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, I, 2.

³⁸ John Paul II, *Meeting with representatives of the world of culture, Prague, 21 April 1990*, 8.

³⁹ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, 7.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, 9.

grave phenomenon of family crises and the weakening of the very concept of the family or loss of a sense of solidarity.⁴¹ I have to admit that these harsh words hit me with full force only when I read them in the context of reflection on man's responsibility for the culture contained in the book "Memory and Identity". By associating the words 'homeland' and 'heritage', the Pope recalls that people are responsible for one and the other, and that his compatriots once already failed to assume this responsibility and – as a consequence – they lost their independence. Europe is, in a sense, in a situation analogous to Poland in the eighteenth century. It is extremely important to remind the citizens of Europe the need to take into consideration also the fact that civilizations are mortal, which also applies to the European civilisation.

Patriotism and nationalism

Giovanni Reale, in comments on the writings of Karol Wojtyła, notes that patriotism and nationalism are often confused with each other. Sometimes it is done deliberately. Reale argues with the thesis that the difference between these two concepts is purely formal and rhetorical, not substantial. Patriotism – according to it – would be described by negating the least sympathetic and most shameful features of nationalism. Referring to the texts of John Paul II, Reale states that nationalism is a pathological overemphasis of the nation, and patriotism correctly understood is the antithesis of nationalism.⁴² Characteristic of nationalism is the fact that it recognizes only the good of its own people and seeks only its own fulfilment, neglecting the rights of others. Patriotism, however, as love of one's own country, recognises the same rights of every nation, and is therefore a good tool to set social love in order.⁴³ It seems that the difference between patriotism and nationalism can be clarified by recalling the difference between self-love and selfishness. Vladimir Solovyov writes: "False and evil of selfishness do not consist in the fact that man values himself too highly, gives himself the absolute importance and infinite dignity: just in this he is right; every man has, in this respect, the absolute importance and dignity, cannot be substituted by anything and no one can value himself too highly (according to the Gospel: "What can man give for his soul?"). No recognition of the absolute importance of oneself would be tantamount to renunciation of human dignity. The main falsehood and evil of selfishness lies in the fact that in rightly recognising his own absolute importance, man wrongly denies the same significance; in recognizing himself as the centre of life, which he is, in fact, man sends the others to the periphery of his existence, giving them only external and relative value".⁴⁴ Everyone has the absolute, and therefore, acts as the centre; is an end in himself and not merely an instrument to make others delighted. However, accent must be placed on the word 'everyone'. Same with patriotism. The error lies not in the fact that someone considers his own nation uniquely, but that he forgets that each nation is unique and each has the same rights. We speak here, however, only in analogy to self-love, because while the person is entitled to an absolute value, the nation has only a relative value.

Jacek Salij draws attention to another important difference. If patriotism would like to be a moral virtue, it cannot approve everything that is national, regardless of the ethical value of the proposed content. Just as the love of family requires concern about the moral state of the people you love, so love of the country requires a concern for its moral shape. "Love of the fatherland", writes Salij, "obliges us to care about our moral integrity. The answer above is based on a distinction between ethics and art. The point of ethics is that our actions are intrinsically good; in art the point is that the artefact is good. Hence, immoral man can create outstanding works of art, because here, talent and experience are the most important. Immoral man may even serve the country well, due to his economic, management or military skills. But patriotism in the strict sense is a virtue and therefore it must be founded on moral righteousness of a person, at least at the elementary level."⁴⁵

Personal moral righteousness makes also ethical evaluation of the content of national memory possible. John Paul II – in the context of the examination of conscience of the Church of the Jubilee Year – pointed out that not everything that happened in the past of the community is a source of pride and deserves to be continued. In this context, he pointed to the need for a 'purification of memory' which "calls everyone to make an act of courage and humility in recognizing the wrongs done by those who have borne or bear the name of Christian".⁴⁶ "Purifying the memory means eliminating from personal and collective conscience all forms of resentment or violence left by the inheritance of the past, on the basis of a new and rigorous

⁴¹ Ibidem, 8.9.

⁴² Cf. G. Reale, Karol Wojtyła. The Pilgrim of Absolute, Warszawa 2008, p. 156-157.

⁴³ Cf. John Paul II, Memory and Identity, p. 73.

⁴⁴ W. Sołowjow, The meaning of Love, Kęty 2002, p. 17.

⁴⁵ Cf. J. Salij, Patriotism Today, p.18.

⁴⁶ John Paul II, *Incarnationis misterium*, 11.

historical-theological judgement, which becomes the foundation for a renewed moral way of acting".⁴⁷ The past is recognized in the opportunities that are opened to modify the present day. By giving the historic acts a new meaning in the life of communities, their new qualitative effect can be assumed on the present relations between the two communities. Rather than divide, they can connect communities due to the truth about the past and common ethical assessment. "The memory of division and opposition is purified and substituted by a reconciled memory".⁴⁸ Patriotism understood as a responsibility for the moral value of the community also demands vigilance on the community's memory and the quality of moral heritage that is being passed to the next generation.

Concern for the moral quality of the heritage that continues to form sometimes requires a willingness to oppose those legitimate authority initiatives that do not respect the fundamental principles of ethics. "Wherefore, to love both countries, that of earth below and that of heaven above", wrote Pope Leo XIII, "yet in such mode that the love of our heavenly surpasses the love of our earthly home, and that human laws be never set above the divine law, is the essential duty of Christians, and the fountainhead, so to say, from which all other duties spring".⁴⁹ One also shouldn't forget that nations are only temporary. There is no national eschatology. "For the form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31).

The globalization of solidarity

John Paul II emphasizes the particular need for solidarity in the era of globalization. This process, seeming to be inevitable, causes violent opposition in many people due to fear. The growing awareness of the interdependence between peoples and nations that determines relationships in the modern world – economic, cultural, political, religious interdependence – often fosters the attitude of aggression, even in its extreme form, i.e. the phenomenon of terrorism. This is largely because the very process of globalization, subject only to the logic of profit, becomes dangerous to humans. "Our world is entering the new millennium burdened by the contradictions of an economic, cultural and technological progress which offers immense possibilities to a fortunate few, while leaving millions of others not only on the margins of progress but in living conditions far below the minimum demanded by human dignity. How can it be, " asks John Paul II, "that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads?"⁵⁰

How is this possible? The answer seems relatively simple: the growing interdependence between people and countries is not accompanied by a corresponding increase of the sense of solidarity. Current 'cooperation' often takes the form of a new imperialism, economic, military, political, or cultural. Even where we meet with some forms of assistance or support, often the underlying purpose is the desire to achieve secondary gains from offered resources. Hence, the call for a new culture of solidarity and for a new creativity in charity.⁵¹

The economic and political globalization should be accompanied by the globalization of solidarity. Only an increase in the sense of mutual responsibility, particularly for weaker nations, can open the way to the world of peace. "*Opus solidaritatis pax, peace is the fruit of solidarity*" – reads the *Sollicitudo rei socialis*.⁵²

⁴⁷ International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*, 5.1, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000307_memory-reconc-itc_en.html#Some%20Ethical%20Criteria

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Leo XIII, *Sapientiae christianae*, 11.

⁵⁰ John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 50.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 39.