

The Abstract of doctoral thesis:
***The Revalorization of Sunday after the second Vatican Council in Polish
theological literature.***

Contemporary times are bringing about significant changes in the world and within the church. The changes concerning diverse aspects of human life, however, have a negative impact on the spiritual life of an individual. This is particularly evident in the realm of glorifying God's Day, which has currently lost its value while the modern world offers newer and increasingly attractive ways of spending leisure eclipsing what is spiritual and essential in establishing a deep friendship with God. The phenomenon of celebration practices is rooted in the very beginnings of the development of civilization and constitutes one of the major component of Christian existence. Since early times it has referred to spirituality and therefore transcendental reality, which outreaches what is human and materialistic. Therefore, Sunday constitutes the oldest and the most fundamental holiday which ought to be introduced and instilled into the religious piety of the Church members in such a way, that it would also become a day of joy and rest from work.

The time frames taken into consideration result from a change of the Church conception in perception of Sunday after 1962. For this reason, the first day of the week is the main subject in *The Revalorization of Sunday after the Second Vatican Council in Polish theological literature*. Consequently, the post-conciliar theological literature undertaking the issue of Sunday Mass would constitute the source of the research. Due to the fact that a human by nature is a man of rejoice, not only does he work but also celebrate, rest and enjoy himself. Celebration is therefore an experience encompassing everyone's life, conditioning his proper functioning in the modern world. It is determined by the first day of the week - Sunday, which should be a celebration of all Christians. Contemporary Catholics, however, are not always eager to celebrate. Either they have no idea how to do it, or have forgotten how did the Church to which their ancestors belonged. As there is an urgent need of the revalorization of God's Day, it is essential to restore its forgotten value, so that people living today would be able to perceive the celebration as meaningful in the terms of the temporal and eternal life. In order to understand and intensify the experience of this day, it is important to reflect on its theology and genesis. In addition, numerous questions emerging during the writing of this dissertation, such as:

Why Sunday constitutes the first day of the week?, The day of Christ's resurrection?, The day in which the heart is the Eucharist? and others ought to be raised.

The main purpose of this thesis is to rediscover Sunday as a day truly devoted to God. Recent studies present the most important forms of God's Day celebration and point to their positive aspects for the development of Christian spiritual life. They evidence that the constantly growing progress of civilization may also have a positive influence on diffusing diverse and abundant values of Sunday in the contemporary world and the life of every human being. On the contrary, what needs to be emphasized is the fact that the modern society is losing respect for Sunday as the day sacrificed to God. Although, it arises from a variety of causes, it is mainly connected with the lost sense of the Sacred God and the secularized society trying to replace the Creator and take His place. Not only Sunday should constitute an unoccupied day of rest, but the problem is also within the conscience of a man who is unable to relax, trying to compensate for the previous days' chores. That results in becoming exhausted and incapable of celebrating God's Day properly. The man of the early 21st has undoubtedly lost the value of blessed Sunday and desisted to glorify holy and transcendent things in the name of the pursuit of prosperity and materialistic lifestyle. Whereas, Sunday celebration should lead to the unity and rest in God Himself, who desires to sanctify the life of those who are eager to cooperate with His grace in the Work of Salvation.

The diversity of research undertaken demanded gathering affluent literature and the usage of certain methods, such as the historical- canonical descriptive method, the analytical method and the synthetic method. The theme of Sunday is still present in papers and contributions published by distinguished doctors of Philosophy and theologians of the Church. Among them are : priest K. Konecki, priest B. Drożdż, priest Cz. Krakowiak, priest J. Gręzlikowski, priest W. Nowak and A. Dylus. A remarkable contribution to the subject of sanctifying God's Day has also been made by Pope John Paul II, which is manifested in his Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*.

Presented doctoral dissertation covering 239 pages, consists of a listing of abbreviations, an introduction, four chapters divided into paragraphs, conclusions, summaries in Polish and English, a bibliography, and appendices. In order to provide a detailed interpretation of the theme of the revalorization of Sunday, the opening chapter entitled *Sunday in the History of Salvation* unveils

a historic glance at Sunday Mass. On the basis of biblical reference, a theology of Sunday has been shown with its forecast in Old Testament, discussing the genesis of Sabbath, the forms of its celebration and the influence of Saturday on Christian Sunday formation. The conclusions made in the thesis, emphasise the significance of the first day of the week in the context of New Testament and depict the three aspects of its celebration as the work of new creation, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the special time spent with the Holy Spirit . Since it is the oldest and the most fundamental festival of the Church, its justification is rooted in the resurrection of the Son of God which is in the center of the celebration of every Eucharist and shapes the new creation, a man who wishes to glorify God's Day with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Sunday celebration is therefore, a task involving effort and initiative from a man. Sanctifying this day is the answer to a former God's act. What influence has Sunday on sanctifying the Church life, the family or the individual? What is the meaning of God's Day for the contemporary Christians? The answers for the above questions have been included in the second chapter, entitled *The Role of Sunday Celebration in Sanctifying Christian life* in which attention is paid to forms of Sunday glorification. Sunday Eucharist, the Liturgy of Hours, reading Holy Bible, common prayer, spending time among family members contribute to a fervent experiencing of Sunday and make that day truly saint. In this way people are able to see authentic significance of the first day of week.

The third chapter entitled: *Sunday in the Age of Globalization* opens the subsequent part of the thesis. It presents the factual situation of the contemporary man, who despite the fact that he derives a vast variety of profits from technological progress (mobile phones, the Internet, mass media) has lost the value of blessed Sunday. Moreover, instead of glorifying holy and transcendental things, he worships materialism, consumerism, McDonaldization, multiculturalism and overuses the available means of social communication (the Internet, TV, coloured papers and magazines, etc.).

What need to be emphasized, is the fact that the contemporary human, often a Catholic, living in a global village constitutes a part of a secular society, lay and materialistic, which is experiencing a serious crisis of faith. Frequently deprived of deep relationship with the Creator, he is determined to seek new forms of spending Sunday that are not devoted to God, such as buying goods, spending time in restaurants, pubs, at funfairs, supermarkets or McDonald's. In addition, he becomes incapable of developing an insight into himself and encountering

God in silence and solitude. The Holy Mass and prayer are being replaced by the rituals of weekend trips, meetings, sitting in front of a television or a computer. Therefore, the priority is to restore Sunday its dignity and protect what is sacred, due to God, good and essential in human development in every sphere of his life. For this reason, the subject of constitutional and legal protection of God's Day and its significance for modern civilization has been taken into consideration. Thus, not only it is important to sanctify time, but also to sanctify the man.

Threats facing Sunday today form a postulate, which is presented in the fourth chapter of the dissertation entitled *The Postulate of the New Evangelization of Sunday*. This indicates that the process should involve the whole Polish society including families, Church Communities and individuals. The way families observe Sunday will depend on several factors, such as raising children in the Catholic faith, the revival of sacramental life, and other forms like Religious Education or parish catechesis. However, the purpose of the catechesis is being questioned by clergymen or religion instructors due to low attendance by children and young people in Sunday Mass. Their participation mainly depends on the good example of parents and the religious atmosphere within their families. Catechesis, which fulfills only the subsidiary and formation role, prepares also for the conscious and active participation in the liturgy, explaining the meaning and content of the ceremonies, signs, symbols and liturgy prayers. This is why, theological motivation of Sunday Mass involvement should be spread via a special catechesis about the Eucharist and God's Day to families and all the Church members. Therefore, a great challenge stands before the Church to implement modern forms in this matter.

The main focus of the New Evangelization is to *encourage* modern society to profess their faith, practice living according to the Gospel message and consequently, to glorify and celebrate God's Day worthily and solemnly. The promotion of Sunday may be possible through various Community media such as radio, television, press and the Internet. Accordingly, Catholic mass media like *Radio Maryja*, *TV Trwam* and other local catholic broadcasting services play an important role in realizing postulates of the New Evangelization in promotion of Sunday . However, nation-wide actions involving advertisements or interesting slogans are not enough to produce a desired result. It is important to engage entire families and parishes, and to identify not only with those who sanctify this day, but to go forth and reach those to whom the Gospel is

unknown. In this respect, what is indispensable is the flotation of energy of the whole Church. This will be possible thanks to formation meetings organized by different pastoral groups e.g. (Domowy Kościół (Home Church), Ruch Światło – Życie(Light-Life Movement), Krąg Biblijny (Bible Study), Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Młodzieży (Catholic Youth Association), Akcja Katolicka (Catholic Action)), as well as preaching catechesis, giving testimonies or organizing retreats coordinated by local catholic ministry. A huge role in the revalorization of Sunday plays Społeczny Ruch Świątowania Niedzieli (Social Movement of Sunday Celebration), which has been remaining about the value of this day. Thanks to its formation programme, this group has taken a variety of actions, such as conferences, happenings, marches, meetings, etc., which give rise to the fact that the New Evangelization of Sunday becomes an essential element in the development of human conscience. In this respect, every human should take into account the practical aspect and testify to be a faithful disciple of Christ who truly celebrates the Day of the Lord.

Taking everything into account, what should be noted is that Sunday, which constitutes a great day of significance, cannot disappear from the consciousness and life of the contemporary people. It is the human, who has to make an effort in order to answer to God's love. However, it mainly depends on the involvement of his heart, soul, thought and will, and the whole human. It is crucial to defend and protect the value of Sunday and give continuous testimony to those who disapprove of this day. Sunday is the Risen Christ, who lives and works within a man. Depriving himself of the true spirit of Sunday, the human is losing himself with his humanity.

Key words: Sunday, celebration, the Risen Jesus, the sanctification of a man, rest, globalization, the preservation of Sunday