Pastoral care of the family as ministry for marriage and the family

Contents: 1. Pastoral care of the family as the ministry for the truth about marriage and the family; 2. Pastoral care of the family in the service for sanctification and apostolate of the family; 3. Those responsible for the pastoral care of the family.

Pastoral care is an activity which comes from the ‘shepherd’ and it is concerned about the welfare of the soul and of its redemption. The saving activity for souls is presented in the image of the good shepherd, who takes care of the sheep helpless in the face of danger. In this way Christ was proclaimed by the prophets Isaiah (Is 40, 10-11) and Ezechiel (Ez34, 23; 37, 24) as the Good Shepherd, and therefore His saving activity is called shepherding. In the New Testament Christ calls Himself the Shepherd of the sheep, which is a metaphor of the saving activity for those who listen to His voice and who follow Him (Jn 10, 11-16). What is more, the apostles also present Christ as the Good Shepherd and His saving activity as shepherding in their letters (1 Pt 2; Heb 13, 20). The same is done by the Church who is fulfilling and continuing Her saving mission for the faithful, calling it the pastoral care.

The Church, aware that marriage and the family constitute one of the
most precious goods of humanity, wants to bring Her teaching and offer help to those who, knowing the value of marriage and the family, try to remain faithful to them; to those who in uncertainty and anxiety seek for the truth and to those who unjustly encounter obstacles in implementing their own vision of the family. The Church wants to serve to every man who is concerned about the fate of marriage and the family (FC1). The pastoral concern of the Church for the family results from the truth that ‘man is the way for the Church’ (RH14). According to Christ’s will the Church constantly serves the man through the family as ‘the family is the first and the most important’ (GS 2). In the Letter to families of John Paul II we read that the way of the family vocation is common, remaining a particular, the only and unique way each time. The family is the way that man cannot depart. Man comes from the family in order to realize his life vocation (GS 2).

Pastoral care of the family is directed at man and at bringing him to redemption on the way of his natural vocation and in the basic environment. It is the saving medium between God and the family, directed by the Church. It constitutes pastoral activity oriented at family, and at a particular man who lives in the family, at the interpersonal relationships outside and inside the community of the family and at the family environment.

1. Pastoral care of the family as the ministry for the truth about marriage and the family

The truth about marriage and the family which we can find in the Holy Scripture is the basis for the pastoral care of the family. It indicates that God created the family who is based on marriage of the man and woman, with the principle of unity and indissolubility. The family is the dialogical community, and its members are equal in the personal dignity. It is the permanent community, oriented at the dynamic development of life and love: ‘be fertile and multiply’ (Gn 1, 28), who participates in God’s particular blessing. Marriage and the family are in their deepest essence religious
communities, sacral – as the primary form of the community covenant with God⁶. However, from the very beginning, the original innocence and happiness of the man, meant as the man and the woman, was marked with the fall and sin, the loss of unity with the Creator and with the rejection of His plan for the man and for marriage⁷. The truth about the man and about marriage is marked with the sin and with mendacity throughout the whole history of the man from the moment of the first sin until today. Therefore, it is necessary to help spouses discover the beauty and greatness of their vocation, so that they would live it in the fullness, and at the same time, to help the spouses who are threatened to come back to the original love. While young people who are preparing for the life in marriage should be taught responsibility and they should be provided with the evangelical truth about marriage based on the foundation of love the source of which is God Himself.

Pastoral care of the family is, first and foremost, ‘the ministry for the truth’ about marriage and the family, so that these communities could discover the truth about themselves and, as a result, they ‘would become’ what they ‘are’ (FC 17). The Church knows the way on which the family can get into the depth of the truth about itself. She learned this way in the school of Christ, but in the history She does not impose but presents it to everybody without fear, with great trust and hope⁸. It is the truth which is above the will of human beings, above the whims of particular marriages and above all the decisions of the social authorities and governments– that God Himself is the Creator of marriage and the family⁹; that marriage is a permanent and indissoluble relationship of one man and one woman, based on the deep community of life and love, oriented at the welfare of spouses as well as at giving birth and educating children¹⁰; and that Christ raised this community of the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament (CCC 1601). As this sacramental relationship is a way of establishing relationship with God, a form of following Christ, that is the proper way for spouses to the holiness¹¹, the Church accompanies them and helps them follow this path

⁸ BIELEŃ, Duszpasterstwo rodzin we współczesnej Polsce, 47; cf. FC 86.
⁹ SPMR 28; GS 48; HV 8; FC 4; CCC 160; cf. A. SARMIENTO, El Matrimonio Cristiano. The Christian Married, Translated by P. Rak, Kraków, 2002, 72-75.
¹⁰ Cf. CCL can. 1601; CCL, can. 1055 § 1.
¹¹ SPMR 30.
The central position of marriage and the family in the life of the Church is rooted in the biblical tradition, while their evangelical mission begins with creating the Mystical Body of Christ, that was established by Jesus Himself. The pastoral care for the family and its issues are therefore rooted in the beginning of existence of Christianity. Already at that time the family was under the special concern of the Church as, from the beginning, it was in the family and through the family that work of salvation was implemented. Pastoral care for the family is also strongly rooted in the fact that the Begotten Son of the Father – Jesus Christ entered the human history through the family. Through incarnation He was also united with every man. Through the divine mystery of the Incarnation of the Word He remains in a close relationship with every human family. Therefore, Christ appears to the man in the fullness of humanity, He does it in the family and through the family, through whom He decided to come to the world and where He grew up (cf. GS 22). The Church, following Christ Who ‘did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mt 20, 28), considers the ministry for the family as one of Her most important tasks – and in this meaning both the man and the family are ‘the way of the Church’.

What is more, pastoral care of the family finds its inspiration in the fact that every Christian family is called by God to become ‘domestic Church’. The true conjugal communion also requires that the spiritual life of the spouses was ‘shared’. As the result of the conjugal unity is the mutual responsibility of the spouses for each other’s life of faith and the mutual help in its development. This principle of the common life of faith in marriage, with maintaining proper proportions and conditions, also refers to the spiritual community of parents with their children and grandparents with their grandchildren.

Pastoral activity is to lead to sanctification of the man in his natural environment, which is the family, through proclaiming the Word of God, through liturgy, the prayer and other aids (GS 52). Some of them (proclaiming the Word of God – homilies, catechesis, pastoral letters) are the

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12 The family provides religious and moral education of children, introduces into sacramental life, into participation in religious cult and the service to God. Poręba, Potrzeba naukowego duszpasterstwa rodzin, 116.
13 GS 2; cf. Bielen, Duszpasterstwo rodzin we współczesnej Polsce, 39.
14 SPMR 94-95.
preparation aids in the process of meeting the man with God, while others (liturgy, prayer, introduction into the paschal mystery of Christ) introduce into the supernatural life\textsuperscript{15}.

The necessity of such an engagement into the service for the Gospel which makes the family the domestic Church, seems to be the basis for the pastoral concern for the family. Conjugal and family love and sanctification of the earthly reality in the everyday life are the first gifts for the Church and the main testimony for the world\textsuperscript{16}. In this way pastoral care of the family not only supports the family and helps them to become ‘what they are’, but it also inspires the family – the domestic Church to fulfill the mission of evangelism\textsuperscript{17}. The family, fulfilling the evangelic and apostolic mission, both inside and outside, participates in the work of evangelization and apostolate of the Church. However, to make it so, it requires the pastoral support in order to fulfill the tasks connected with its vocation\textsuperscript{18}.

Pastoral care of the family appreciates the meaning of the family in the life of an individual, of the society and of the Church. At present the Church pays attention to the threat to the stability of the family and its proper functions as a result of the shocks which take place in the contemporary economic-social, worldview, religious-moral and cultural situation. The contemporary condition of the Church and of the family requires particular interest of the pastoral care in the problems, difficulties and needs of the family community, as well as organizing effective activity which aims at strengthening and improvement so that it was capable of apostolate\textsuperscript{19}.

2. Pastoral care of the family in the service for sanctification and apostolate of the family

In the Sacrament of Marriage the inner logic and dynamism of love turn the people – the man and the woman, not only at each other, but also at God Who is love (1 Jn 4, 8.16), and at the same time its source and aim. Love aims at realization of the perfect unity of people, and the unity of the man and the woman is only possible in God and through God. God Himself made the man and the woman a unity, and this unity was revealed as

\textsuperscript{15} Biełęń, Duszpasterstwo rodzin we współczesnej Polsce, 39.
\textsuperscript{16} SPMR 127.
\textsuperscript{17} Cf. DPC60-65; D. Tettamanzi, La famiglia via della Chiesa, Milano, 1991, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{18} Porębą, Potrzeba naukowego duszpasterstwa rodzin, 118.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 116.
the fullness of humanity. God, creating the man and the woman as a unity – as marriage, made them the image of Himself – One God in Three People, as well as the preachers of love which created them. The man and the woman are therefore consecrated with the power of God’s love of creation, and united with one vocation for love and holiness, they want to God for each other. Participation in the life and holiness of God is implemented through uniting with Christ. He renews the original plan inscribed into the heart of the man and the woman and in the Sacrament of Marriage He creates ‘a new heart’ so that the spouses could share the full and final love. Christian spouses are called to implement the ‘unconditional faithfulness with which God loves His people ‘as well as the irrevocable indissolubility that binds Christ to the Church His bride’. The testimony of the conjugal indissolubility and fidelity is one of the most precious tasks of the Christian spouses (FC 20).

Christian family is called to build the Kingdom of God in the history, through participation in the life and mission of the Church (FC 49). The common call of all the disciples of Christ for holiness and for the mission of evangelization of the world are based on the power of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. These Sacraments give grace and enable for the life according to the Spirit during the earthly pilgrimage which is leading to the Heavenly Home (CCC 1533). Eucharist is the proper and the fullest manifestation of cooperation, responsibility, relationship. Dependence and unity of the members of the Church, as well as the update of the vocation for holiness and the call for evangelization is Eucharist. In it the whole community is engaged into the supreme act of Christ’s priesthood – in His sacrifice of Self to God the Father. During Eucharist the Church proclaims the Gospel and feeds on Christ’s Body, which makes Her similar to Him and which sanctifies Her. Christian family, engaged into the Church through the Sacrament of Marriage out of which it grows and feeds on, is constantly renewed by the Lord and called for the dialogue with God through listening to the Word of God, sacramental life, sacrifice of life and the prayer. It is a priestly task which the family can and should fulfill in the inner communion with the whole Church through everyday reality of conjugal and family life. Realizing this task Christian family aims at sanctify-

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21 Ibid, 190.
22 Cf. ibid, 194-5.
ing itself, of the ecclesial community and of the world (cf. FC 55).

Through the prism of enlightenment and evangelization the Church perceives the family as the object and the subject of pastoral ministry. Sacrament of Marriage is the basis of engagement of family members into the ministry of the pastoral care of the family. The ceremony of the Sacrament of Marriage, which is the proclamation of the good news about conjugal love in the Church, for the spouses should be ‘the creed’ performed in the Church and with the Church. This creed requires to be maintained throughout the whole marriage and family life. Spouses realize it through fulfilling God’s plan in the conjugal and family community, through mutual conjugal love and through their love for children, experienced in the Spirit of Christ. The spouses can realize their conjugal creed only with the constant and deep evangelization from the community of the Church (FC 51). In this meaning they are the object of the pastoral ministry of the Church.

At the same time the family is the subject in the work of sanctifying and evangelization – the subject of the pastoral care of the family (FC 72). In the Sacrament of Marriage Christ renews the baptized and confirmed and specifies their Christian mission, providing them with the apostolic mandate in the field of the family life (FC 71). This Sacrament enables and makes the spouses witnesses of Christ ‘to the end of the earth’, calls for protecting and broadening of faith, and, first and foremost, He makes them proper ‘missionaries’ of love and life (FC 54).

The evangelizing activity begins in the family, where its members are witnesses of Christ’s faith and love for each other and they support each other on their way to the full adherence to the Saviour (cf. FC 54, 56). In this way the apostolate of the family develops first and foremost in their own family through the testimony of planning all the spheres of their life in accordance with God’s law (FC 71). On the basis of the ‘grace of the state’ and the ‘charism’ of the family community the parents are the first educators, evangelizers and catechists of their children. The evangelizing ministry of the Christian family is unique and irreplaceable. It takes on the characteristics typical for the family life, which should involve love, simplicity and everyday testimony of life. The service fulfilled by the family for the Gospel is the basic ecclesial ministry – it is inscribed into the Church, who is at the same time an evangelized and evangelizing community (cf. FC 53).

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23 Cf. FC 52-53; GS 16; ChL 34, 62.
Domestic Church animated in its inside with the spirit of the Gospel, is called to be the bright sign of Christ's and His love's presence, also to those who are far from the Church. It is to be a sign for the families who do not believe yet and to those Christian families who do not live consequently ‘in accordance with the faith that they once received’ (FC 54). The Christian family is called – as the subject of the pastoral care of the family – ‘to enlighten by its example and its witness...those who seek the truth’ (FC 54). Furthermore, the apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* indicates some ways of the family apostolate. It underlines the meaning of beaming ‘through works of spiritual and material charity towards other families, especially those most in need of help and support, towards the poor, the sick, the old, the handicapped, orphans, widows, spouses that have been abandoned, unmarried mothers and mothers-to-be in difficult situations who are tempted to have recourse to abortion, and so on’ (FC 71).

The family does not work alone in the field of evangelization and apostolate. Pope John Paul II emphasized the essential principle that the evangelizing ministry of the Christian family should be maintained in internal communion and harmony with all the other ministries of evangelization and catechesis acting in the ecclesial community, both at the diocesan level and the parish level (cf.FC 53). This ministry should be supported by all the members of the Church.

The ministry of the Christian family within the widely understood pastoral care of the family can be even more effective when the families cooperate in associations and communities of families. John Paul II paid attention to the role of associations of the faithful, which revealed the mystery of the Christ’s Church. He mainly underlined the useful contribution of the associations of the Christian perfection, formation and apostolate. The formation of the family suggested by them ‘will make Christian families into a true source of light and a wholesome leaven for other families’ (FC 72).

In their aiming at sanctification as well as in the realization of the evangelizing mission of the family, the necessity of cooperation between those who received special consecration receiving the Sacrament of the Holy Orders or the Sacrament of Marriage. These Sacraments are directed at saving in the community. They grant particular mission in the Church and they are beneficial in the way of building the community of God’ People (CCC1534)\(^{24}\). All those ‘already consecrated by Baptism and Confirmation’

\[^{24}\text{This kind of consecration is moral-sacramental in nature as a sanctification connected with}\]
(LG 10) for the common priesthood of all the faithful can receive a special consecration in the Sacraments of Holy Orders and Marriage. Those who receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders are consecrated in order to «feed on God's Word and grace» (LG 11) in the name of Christ. While «a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state »” (GS 48).

Both in case of consecration in the Sacrament of Holy Orders and in the Sacrament of Marriage, the invisible holiness of God is revealed in the visible sphere of the human existence. However, marriage is a particular way of consecration of the human body. It is necessary to emphasize that the Sacrament of Holy Orders not only serves to sanctify a priest but also other people, and the Sacrament of Marriage is not only for the ‘private’ holiness of the spouses but it is to reveal the mystery of sanctification of the human body and of the whole Church as the mystical Body of Christ (GS48)25. In this body – the Church, everybody is responsible for his own sanctification and for the sanctification of other members of the Church, and some are put on the way of their neighbours in order to provide the mutual support and strength.

In this way marriage and celibacy for the Kingdom of God are two ways of the manifestation and experiencing God’s covenant with His people (FC16) – two ways of implementation of love and fulfilling God’s plan, which lead to holiness. These vocations are complementary, they provide support for each other and serve each other, both in the work of sanctification and evangelization. The result of the mutual testimony and cooperation of these two vocations in the field of the pastoral care of the family is the fuller realization of each of them (cf.FC 16).

3. Those responsible for the pastoral care of the family

Pastoral activity is a dynamic expression of the reality of the Church engaged into Her saving mission. Also in case of the pastoral care of the family the Church is the source and initiator of it, as She acts through Her structures and employees. Apart from the family, based on the Sacrament

providing the man with supernatural life. Consecration means not only holiness as a value or as a fact but also as a sanctifying and sacrificing act in which God’s initiative meets the man’s response. Cf. BAJDA, Konsekracja ciała w aspekcie powołania osoby, in: Mężczyzną i niewiastą stworzył ich. O Jana Pawła II teologii ciała, 185.

Cf. ibid.
of Marriage, we can indicate a few categories of people responsible for his activity.

The basic subject responsible for the pastoral care of the family in the structure of the Church is the parish community in which the Christian family lives every day. ‘It is, above all, the Church as Mother’ – [as it was indicated by John Paul II] - that gives birth to, educates and builds up the Christian family, by putting into effect in its regard the saving mission which she has received from her Lord. By proclaiming the word of God, the Church reveals to the Christian family its true identity, what it is and should be according to the Lord’s plan; by celebrating the sacraments, the Church enriches and strengthens the Christian family with the grace of Christ for its sanctification to the glory of the Father; by the continuous proclamation of the new commandment of love, the Church encourages and guides the Christian family to the service of love, so that it may imitate and relive the same self-giving and sacrificial love that the Lord Jesus has for the entire human race’ (FC 49).

Parish community is the subject acting in a direct and effective way in the realization of the pastoral care of the family. John Paul II indicated that ‘In this sense every local Church and, in more particular terms, every parochial community, must become more vividly aware of the grace and responsibility that it receives from the Lord in order that it may promote the pastoral care of the family. No plan for organized pastoral work, at any level, must ever fail to take into consideration the pastoral care of the family’ (FC 70). In the light of this responsibility it is also necessary to understand the importance of the proper preparation of those who will be especially engaged into this type of apostolate. Priests, monks and nuns should be directed and gradually and properly formed for their future tasks in order to provide the family with appropriate help from the beginning of their formation (FC 70). Furthermore, the secular employees of the pastoral care of the family should also be prepared for this important ministry in the Church in a similar way.

Diocesan bishop is the person who is responsible for the whole of the pastoral care in the diocese, also for the pastoral care of the family. He employs and cooperates with the properly prepared priests in the parishes. In the exhortation Familiarisconsortiowe read that ‘The person principally responsible in the diocese for the pastoral care of the family is the Bishop. As father and pastor, he must exercise particular solicitude in this clearly priority sector of pastoral care. He must devote to it personal interest, care,
time, personnel and resources, but above all personal support for the families and for all those who, in the various diocesan structures, assist him in the pastoral care of the family (FC 73). Bishops use the help of priests in the realization of their pastoral tasks whose main responsibility is the pastoral care for married couples and families. The priest’s sphere of responsibility includes not only moral and liturgical issues but also the personal and social problems. They are to be the support for the family in its problems and suffering, they are to accompany the family members and help them in perceiving life in the light of the Gospel. Their teaching and advice should always remain in true accordance with the authentic Magisterium of the Church, so that they could help God’s People in developing a proper sense of faith used in the everyday life (cf. FC 73).

Furthermore, consecrated people perform an important role in the pastoral care of the family. ‘Both realities: the Sacrament of Marriage and the celibacy for the Kingdom of God come from the Lord. He provides them with the meaning and necessary grace so that those people could live according to His will (cf. Mt 19, 3-12). Respect for celibacy with regard to the Kingdom and to the Christian understanding of marriage are indissoluble and complementary’ (CCC 1620). Consecration for God is the basic foundation of those people for the pastoral care of the family. Because of that they remind a mysterious wedding of the Church with Christ the Spouse, constituted by God and are to be revealed in the full in the future world.

Consecrated people are witnesses of this universal love which, through chastity accepted for the Kingdom, makes them always capable for the sacrificial service to God and apostolate (FC 74). ‘The celibacy for the Kingdom of God is the development of the grace of Baptism, a meaningful sign of the prime value of the bond with Christ, the ferment expectation of His return, the sign which also reminds that marriage is the reality of the present world which is passing by’ (CCC 1619). This celibacy confirms that consecration in the Sacrament of Marriage is a gift, which is to lead to the meeting with the Spouse. It is necessary to add that celibacy for the Kingdom of God is not in contrast to marriage and it is not based on any negative opinion judgement about its importance. The decision about celibacy is based on the personal choice and it is connected with a particular gift which the man receives. It is necessary that the choice was made out of the personal freedom and that it is supernatural in nature. Talking about

26 Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich. Chrystus odwołuje się do zmartwychwstania.
celibacy for the Kingdom of God Jesus emphasizes the aim of this status of life, which is a novelty for the tradition of the Old Testament. In order to realize the spiritual fertility, which comes from the Holy Spirit, it is worth to choose the celibacy because of the deep faith, which not only shows the Kingdom of God in its future realization but also enables identification with the truth and reality of the kingdom, as it was revealed by Christ through the Word of the Gospel and in the way of His conduct\(^{27}\). Likewise the conjugal consecration is based on the conscious and free choice and it is strengthened with grace which enables spouses to persevere in their vocation. Therefore, celibacy sheds a particular light on marriage in the mystery of creation and redemption\(^{28}\).

For the spouses celibacy for the Kingdom of God is a testimony and the sign which confirms that it is necessary to learn how to make a sacrifice of oneself in marriage in order to make a gift of self to the beloved person – to husband, wife and the child but also to God. Celibacy can exert influence on the life of the spouses, on its style and value, but it can also inspire for the authentic evangelization. The final key to understanding the sacramental nature of marriage is the spousal love of Christ for His Church. Therefore, life in celibacy emphasizes the dignity of the personal gift connected with the spousal meaning of the body in its masculinity and femininity\(^{29}\).

Moreover, consecrated people who make a gift of self to the only Spouse are called for the practical service to marriage and the family, also in the pastoral care of the family. According to the apostolic exhortation Familiares consortio they can implement it in various ways. They can take particular care of children, especially those abandoned, unwanted, orphaned, poor or disabled; they can visit families, take care of the sick, get on well with single-parent families, with those in difficult situations or broken ones in relationships which are respectful and full of love. These people can serve the family offering their educational work and advice in the preparation of young people for marriage and help spouses in the preparation for the responsible parenthood. Moreover, they can open their doors with honest and sincere hospitality to those families in order to help them find the feeling of God’s presence, the taste of the prayer and concentration, the spe-

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\(^{27}\) Cf. ibid, 52-3.  
\(^{28}\) Ibid, 54.  
\(^{29}\) Cf. Ibid, 65-6.
cific example of life in love and joy of brotherhood (FC 74). Secular people perform an indispensable role for the pastoral care of the family, especially secular specialists and the employees of the media. Secular specialists such as doctors, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, advisers can give proper help to the families. Both individually and in various associations and actions they can serve for the benefit of the family through their competent help, advice and support. As a result they have influence on other people, on the good of the whole society and the community of the Church (cf.FC 75).

The same concerns the secular employees of the mass media, which in various ways influence the recipients. They can be beneficial for the life and habits of families and on educating children, but at the same time they conceal “snares and dangers that cannot be ignored” and they can become carriers of ideologies which break and distort views on life, family, religion, morality, which do not respect the true dignity and destination of the man. Those who are responsible for the mass media – especially the producers and employees of the media, are responsible for protecting children and young people from threats which they are subjected to and they must take care of regulating the amount of time of using the media in the family. The Church on Her side supports these actions and gets engaged into this field of activity in the concern for the family (FC 76).

The activity of the pastoral care of the family will be fuller and more effective the better will be the cooperation between the subjects responsible for this important part of the pastoral care of the family and the sphere of evangelization. In order to achieve that it is necessary to properly prepare the consecrated people and the secular for the pastoral care of the family, to make them aware of their responsibility for this ministry and for the engagement into the implementation of it.

Summary

The phrase „pastoral care” in the Polish language is strictly associated with the word “shepherd”, and thus it is related to the good of the soul and its salvation. Being aware that marriage and family constitute one of the most precious of human values, the Church wants to preach its messages and offer help to all who, according to John Paul II, know the value of marriage and family and accordingly seek to live faithfully, to those who are uncertain and anxious and search for the truth, and those who unjustly
face obstacles in pursuing family of their own kind. The Church also wishes to serve all who care for the destiny of marriage and family (FC 1). Pastoral care of families is directed at the man and aims at bringing him to salvation in a way of his natural vocation and his natural and basic living environment, which is family.

The main task of pastoral care of families is thus proclamation of the truth about marriage and family and assistance to realize it by all married couples, and thus help in bringing spouses and all members of the family to sanctification and salvation, as well as help for the Christian family to become a domestic church, a community of love, life and faith.

As each family is not only the subject, but the object of pastoral care of families, the task is to provide help and to inspire families to participate actively in the activities of the pastoral care of families and in the apostolate both inside and outside families.

Key words: marriage, family, pastoral of ministry, sanctity of the family, family apostolate.

Troska duszpasterska o rodzinę jako zasługa na rzecz małżeństwa i rodziny

Streszczenie

Duszpasterstwo jest czynnością pochodzącą od „pasterza”, a mającą za przedmiot dobro duszy i jej zbawienie. Kościół świadomy tego, że małżeństwo i rodzina stanowią jedno z najcenniejszych dóbr ludzkości, pragnie nieść swoją naukę i zaofiarować pomoc wszystkim tym, jak mówił Jan Paweł II, którzy znają wartość małżeństwa i rodziny, starają się pozostać im wierni, tym, którzy w niepewności i niepokoju poszukują prawdy, i tym, którzy niesłusznie napotykają przeszkody w realizowaniu własnej wizji rodziny. Kościół pragnie służyć każdemu człowiekowi zatroskanemu o losy małżeństwa i rodziny (FC 1) Duszpasterstwo rodzin jest ukierunkowane na człowieka i doprowadzenie go do zbawienia na drodze jego naturalnegopowołania oraz w jego naturalnym i podstawowym środowisku życia jakim jest rodzina.

Podstawowym zadaniem Duszpasterstwa Rodzin jest więc głoszenie prawdy o małżeństwie i rodzinie i pomoc w urzeczywistnieniu jej wszyst-
kim małżonkom, i tym samym pomoc w doprowadzeniu małżonków i wszystkich członków rodziny do uświęcenia i zbawienia, oraz pomoc w tym by chrześcijańska rodzina stawała się domowym Kościołem, wspólnotą miłości, życia i wiary.

Jako, że każda rodzina jest nie tylko przedmiotem, ale i podmiotem duszpasterstwa rodzin, jego zadaniem jest także pomoc i inspiracja rodzin by uczestniczyły aktywnie w działalności duszpasterstwa rodzin i w apostolacie tak wewnątrzrodzinnym jak i wobec innych rodzin.

**Słowa kluczowe:** małżeństwo, rodzina, duszpasterstwo rodzin, świętość rodzinna, apostolat rodziny.