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AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF THE KENOSIS IN THE WRITINGS OF HANS URS VON BALTHASAR

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An intra-Trinitarian, a disinterested love of God becomes for Hans Urs von Balthasar a key to apprehend and describe a kenosis in general¹. The Swiss theologian perceives a beginning, a primitive source of this reality in the inner life of God, where a continuous exchange of love between the Trinity of Persons is accomplished. To point at this phenomena, the theologian from Basel uses a description of relationships between the Trinity Persons, through reciprocal references of “I” to “You”, which consist in surpassing oneself with regard to the other person². Simultaneous endowing each other with love, devolution as well as its accepting, conceding and receiving, constitutes a reality of kenosis, which expresses a personal love of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

A kenotic life of the Triune God gets outside and it reaches a creation. First, an intra-divine kenosis of the Triune manifests itself in the act of creation, and then in a definite moment of the Salvation’s history – sending the Son. Eternal God cringes Himself stepping into the reality of world, and He takes a battle on the cross for a man, revealing completely His love in the external sign of lowliness³. A kenotic manner of God’s life becomes simultaneously a basis, a source

¹ H.U. von Balthasar, *Chwała. Estetyka teologiczna*, vol. III/2, part 2: *Nowy Testament*, transl. J. Fenrychowa, Kraków 2010, p. 172.

² Idem, *Teodramatyka*, vol. II: *Osoba dramatu*, part 2: *Osoby w Chrystusie*, transl. W. Szymona, Kraków 2006, p. 494–495.

³ Idem, *Chwała*, III/2–2, op. cit., p. 175.

and a capability of a kenotic way of the human existence and mission, which essence comes down to a relational enduring, deriving "from" God's love and heading "for" a community of love with Him. This is the act of an infinite love of God, who pours His love on the creation, revealing His splendor and beauty to it, and also giving an access to His glory. A man participates in that gift of God, in the relational personal reference relying on a free decision of receiving and giving. Therefore, the reality of kenosis does not seem to be a necessity imposed from above, but a free and sovereign act of a person in a life of God, as well in a life of the man, who is on the image and similarity of God⁴.

A devotion of God to a man

A prekenosis of God, accomplished within the Trinity, it is giving God himself to the world. By the procreation of Son, Father donates himself entirely to the world. The kenosis of God finds here its primitive source, that is a precedent and more capacious in its content with reference to the kenosis of Incarnation⁵. The intra-Trinitarian kenosis concerns all the Persons in the Trinity. Each of them is infinitively rich in love, and at the same time the poor one, by donating what it possess – itself, in the most absolute way⁶. The intra-Trinitarian love of God manifests itself in mutual directing of all of the Persons in the Trinity towards each other, where an exchange of love is accomplished. That love of God reveals itself first in the act of creation, as this way God demonstrates its splendor and beauty to the creature, and also provides it with an access to His glory. This is the way that world exists in the Trinity⁷, as an expression of a free and a sovereign act of God's love and His desire to pour it outside, beyond Himself. The lowliness of the second Person of the Trinity is in turn the lowliness of the Triune God, His loving self-declaration outside⁸, where love of Father to the man in the Holy Spirit is revealed. This becomes accomplished in a dialogue of love between the Trinity Persons through an authentic and entire donating to the other one. That kind of the dialogue causes a communion, created by an endowment, with the Holy Spirit as its fruit⁹. The Trinitarian love of God realizes itself externally in the economy of salvation¹⁰, in the Eucharistic-kenotic form. A mystery of the Cross, where God's

⁴ J. O'Donnell, *Klucz do teologii Hansa Ursa von Balthasara*, transl. A. Wałęcki, Kraków 2005, p. 200; see: K.T. Wencel, *Teologia chwały: Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Kraków 2001, p. 206, 208–209, 213.

⁵ M. Sztajner, „Rozumienie kategorii kenosis w pismach Hansa Ursa von Balthasara”, *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 139 (2002) No. 261–262, p. 240–256.

⁶ J. O'Donnell, *Klucz do...*, op. cit., p. 107.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200; see: K.T. Wencel, *Teologia chwały*, op. cit., p. 206, 208–209, 213.

⁸ H.U. von Balthasar, *Teologika*, vol. II: *Prawda Boga*, transl. J. Zychowicz, Kraków 2004, p. 266–267.

⁹ S. Mycek, „Otwarta miłość. Cierpienie Boga w trynitarno-chrystologicznej interpretacji Hansa Ursa von Balthasara”, *Communio* 140 (2004), p. 92–94, 97, 99.

¹⁰ J. O'Donnell, *Klucz do...*, op. cit., p. 76, 101–103, 117.

love fights with a sin, for the rescue of man¹¹ becomes the height in pronouncing God' love.

That mission becomes a common decision of the whole Trinity. The mission (missio) of the Son turns into a mysterious entrance into the world, revealing itself in the way of an existence, that is a subject to the constraints of time and human way of being, with all its consequences. Such a lowliness of God, His deprivation perceptible for the senses, in a visible human form, is just the pronouncement of God's love to His creation, being offered by Him with a freedom in the act of love. However, God does not confine Himself to it, but He pursues this kenotic declaration of love to the creation by entering into an alliance. It expresses itself in an entrance into a partnership dialogue with a man, upon which he acquires a gift of being entitled to exercise a freedom.

The Cross is the place, where a fullness of the Trinitarian gift of salvation offered to the man is revealed. All Persons of the Trinity are engaged in this gift. In the occurrence of the Cross, Balthasar perceives also a presence and acting of the Holy Spirit, besides a saving activity of the Father and the Son. The Person of Spirit seems for him to be a warranty, and simultaneously a 'stage of love' between a separation of Father and Son. The Son disposes the Spirit, that He had got from the Father for a whole duration of His earthly mission, and He also disposes the Spirit in the mystery of cross. In the experience of a separation from the Father, a presence of the Spirit becomes an ultimate instrument of a reconciliation between the Father and people, who are sons in the Son since the saving events in the mystery of cross became fulfilled. Once the work of salvation was accomplished, the Spirit was returned by the Son to the Father, to become finally a gift for man. Thus the Holy Spirit as a personal love of the Father and the Son, is actually the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Father. Moreover, He's been offered by the Father and the Son to the man, to point him out a way to an eternal life, and to guide him. The Spirit is not only a warrant of a success of the work of salvation, but He becomes also the warrant of its fulfillment and an efficacy. Thanks to His presence, a sacrifice of Christ in the mystery of cross gained a nature of an endless and imperishable value¹².

At last, the Son alongside with His divinized Body returns to the everlasting glory of the Father, leaving however the Church in its earthly existence with His sacramental presence. This particularly refers to the Eucharist, that is also some kind of God's lowliness, as He is ready and in an agreement with being broken, distributed and followed, until the end of the world's history and for a salvation

¹¹ H.U. von Balthasar, *W pełni wiary*, transl. J. Fenrychowa, Kraków 1991, p. 188.

¹² A. Paciorkowska, „Trinitarny wymiar śmierci według Hansa Ursy von Balthasara”, *Legnickie Studia Teologiczno-Historyczne Perspectiva* 4 (2005) No. 1, p. 39; see: M. Pyc, *Chrystus Piękno-Dobro-Prawda. Studium chrystologii Hansa Ursy von Balthasara*, Poznań 2002, p. 85, 555.

of many people. "(...) Following a personal unification of the God-Man, and His resurrection, a Christian (and in the beginning each person) at least receives a grace of experiencing his time in the eternity, his earth in heaven, and even his mortality in the world of resurrection¹³.

The mission of grace and sending does not come to the end along with the paschal occurrence of Christ. His obedient offering Himself pro nobis¹⁴ still persists, reaches all of the people with its consequences, it becomes accomplished by a solidarity of Christ with all of them in a death as a kenotic obedience to the Father in the Holy Spirit¹⁵. This way, offering of Son to the Father, and also by the Father to the people, one should apprehend in the context of the saving workmanship of love.

A detachment of the Cross from the Incarnation, like a human life from its kenotic feature, is not only a simplification of a mystery of the God's Son life and mission, but also a simplification of a mystery of a human life and a death drama. Each departure from the Cross, its dissociation from a Paschal-Christological connection, causes a dangerous and risky endeavor, which ends up with the impoverishment of a humanity from its *specificum christianitatis*, up to an illusion of self-salvation¹⁶.

2. A devotion of a man to God...

Balthasar defines a human existence as an existence of a person in a mission. An existence of a man is the existence, that man does not own by himself, but which is a donated one, and simultaneously an entrusted one, like an assignment. To better underline this missionary existence of a man, the theologian uses a certain analogy by comparing a human existence with a loan raised from the God's treasury¹⁷.

In his anthropological considerations, Balthasar distinguishes a spiritual subject and a person¹⁸. This distinction becomes important to apprehend a man in a mission, since a spiritual subject becomes a person only when God announces him whom he is and indicate him a purpose of the existence, by entrusting him with his lasting mission, as something that constitutes a person¹⁹. The

¹³ H.U. von Balthasar, *Eschatologia w naszych czasach*, transl. W. Szymona, Kraków 2008, p. 68–79.

¹⁴ Idem, "Crucifixus etiam pro nobis", transl. L. Balter, *Communio* 19 (1984) No. 1, p. 18–28.

¹⁵ Idem, *Chwała*, III/2–2, op. cit., p. 181–183, 188–189; see: K.T. Wencel, *Teologia chwały*, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁶ See: J. Szymik, *W światłach Wcielenia. Chrystologia kultury*, Katowice–Ząbki 2004, p. 66–67.

¹⁷ H.U. von Balthasar, *Ty masz słowa życia wiecznego*, transl. J. Zychowicz, Kraków 2000, p. 21, 36–37.

¹⁸ Idem, *Theodramatik*, Band II: *Die Personen des Spiels*, Teil 2: *Die Personen in Christus*, Einsiedeln 1978, p. 140.

¹⁹ M. Pyc, „Misja Jezusa Chrystusa w teodramatyce Hansa Ursa von Balthasara”, *Studia Gnesnesia* 26 (2000), t. 14, p. 168.

mission is then a person-creative one. Here, a particular connection between a human mission and his existence is emphasized. This is because an identification of man with a sole and unrepeatable mission, being entrusted to him, determines an existence of man by a free response to his mission, which becomes accomplished through a kenotic dedication²⁰.

Therefore, one may say that man is called in his existence for something, he exists for a certain reason, and for a certain purpose. This purpose becomes revealed in his mission, and it discloses a dialogue kind of the human existence. By bringing the man into being, God discloses him a purpose of the mission, and the man gets into a dialogue with His Creator by his answer of life. Balthasar perceives a human answer, comprising that kenotic feature, in a fruitful government of the entrusted gift of life. In the opinion of the theologian, an acceptance of a gift of an existence itself by the man, is the kenosis already itself, owing its primitive source in the kenotic admittance of deity of the Son from Father. As Son is the existence donated by the Father, and owing everything thanks to this offered gift of Father, as the man acknowledges himself and his existence entirely from God, becoming "an existence from". The kenotic feature of his existence reveals then initially in a passive acceptance of his existence from the Creator, which should next enter into a dynamic path of "an existence for".

By accepting himself and his own existence, the man becomes fully "an existence from" and simultaneously "an existence for". His agreement for giving himself and his existence to a full disposal of God, expresses the highest activity, coming out in a life 'donated' to others.

Thus, an existence in a mission assumes not only an acceptance of the existence, and everything what it means, but it also assumes a devotion to all whatever that mission comprises. The man, being a donated and simultaneously an endowed existence, enters into a dialogue path with God, who fulfills and realizes Himself in the very centre of a human life. Everything whatever the man possesses – life, skills, vocation – becomes simultaneously a call for answering to this bestowing, accordingly with the Donor's intention. A life answer to the mission rises first from accepting itself as a donated existence, and if compliant with the Donor's intention, it assumes a form of an Eucharistic thankfulness in the life of the endowed one. A donation to the mission has a sacramental nature. The man receives it in the Sacrament of Baptism, and he continuously validates all what he had obtained in the sacramental endowment²¹ during his whole life.

Thus a kenosis in the human life as an existence of the person in a mission comes down first to an acknowledgment of its dependency in the existence, that

²⁰ H.U. von Balthasar, *Duch chrześcijański*, transl. Z. Włodkowska, Paryż 1976, p. 203; Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, transl. F. Wycisk, Paryż 1971 (Kraków 1999), p. 79.

²¹ Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, op. cit., p. 79.

is not dependent on him himself. He owns it only as an endowed one, and only as such one he can accept it from his donor. Then an acceptance of an existence itself contains that kenotic feature, which reveals a dependency of the endowed one from a grantor, and an agreement for this certain – and not another one – existence. Therefore, a kenosis of man is a consent to a full abandonment to God. There, something like a second phase of the kenotic existence of man is manifested. A consciousness of his own dependency from God, and even more – a consent to this dependency, means a resignation from relying on himself, and leaving a free space in himself for an unexpected God's will with respect to the man²². A courage of such a consent becomes possible only in the space of faith, as it guides the man in a direction of surpassing him God's love.

It is "the love sacrificed for himself", rising out of the faith, that makes the man able to donate himself entirely to God, and to be fully at His disposal. An acceptance of faith enables the man to act with a disregard to himself. Since the faith, which engages the entire man, together with love, makes him also able to donate himself to the One, who can command him²³.

The kenosis through an act of obedience, becomes an answer of man for a call to a sacrifice. Only in the space of faith, granted by God's grace, a sacrifice²⁴ of man may become fulfilled through a kenotic obedience, leading to a liberation from selfishness²⁵. A grace accepted by the man, brings him into a path of an entire process, wherein he is instructed about a transition of the existence "from himself, for himself and in himself" into the existence in his "being for": "the faith means a resignation from whatever is 'his' and, instead, to adopt a "gift of grace" intended for him and meant as the existence for everyone²⁶". A whole difficulty in surpassing this path, in the process of his kenotic, sacrificed obedience in the faith through love out of the God's grace, consists in "liberating himself from being in love with himself²⁷".

The kenosis is the path of an acceptance and an accomplishment of the mission. It assumes a form of the man's consent to deprive him by God because of the mission, that he had been bestowed. In such a deprivation the mission gains an advantage over the one's own person, and it means the man's ability to disinherit himself from his property²⁸.

²² Idem, *Chrześcijanin i lęk*, transl. A. Klub, Kraków 1997, 56

²³ Idem, *Wiarygodna jest tylko miłość*, transl. E. Piotrowski, Kraków 1997, p. 80; Idem, *Chrześcijanin i lęk*, op. cit., p. 53.

²⁴ Idem, „Duchowość Elżbiety z Dijon”, transl. J. Adamska, in: *Śługawiona Elżbieta od Trójcy Przenajświętszej*, ed. by J. Adamska, Kraków 1987, p. 242.

²⁵ Idem, *Wieńczysz rok darami swej dobroci*, transl. M. Marszał, J. Zakrzewski, Kraków 1991, p. 234.

²⁶ Idem, *Ty masz słowa życia wiecznego*, op. cit., p. 79.

²⁷ Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 184, 215.

²⁸ Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 233.

3. ... in a life

Each man is endowed with his own mission, and even if a path of its accomplishment takes various forms, the way of its completion comes down to the implementation of faith to the best of man's abilities in the space of his own life and mission²⁹. It extends between a sacrificial, entire devotion to God in a prayer, and a consent to dispose his everyday life³⁰. Thus, the man's answer to a vital God's calling comes down to working on a shape of the Christian existence, among which the man fulfills his individual mission, the mission that he had been personally endowed with. This work comprises both an inner and outer range of his life, and it consists in a continuous harmonization of his internal disposition, readiness, commitment, and bringing them up to date with the external symptoms of his life. It always becomes accomplished through an acceptance of the mission and a devotion to it, that results in a kenotic deprivation. In practice, this means an inner, spiritual dying for itself, in itself, for its own will, aimed for making a room for God's will, that reveals and controls the man, and leads him towards a confided, vital destination.

A beginning of the work over the own Christian existence, wherein the man fulfills his specific mission, takes place in a spiritual space, in a prayer and in a contemplation, which seem at a first glance to be enormously static and passive. However, exactly at this point, when God's demand towards a human existence becomes revealed, the man in the act of faith and without calculation, assumes a responsibility for whatever it had been revealed to him³¹. First of all, "a deprivation of a whole life and its devotion to God's will" takes place just here³².

As noticed by Balthasar, a prayer and a contemplation are the path of a daily persistent struggle, a school of self-dying, through which the man becomes less important for himself, thus he can devote himself to the others, approaching a holiness³³.

A kenotic devotion of the man is than a specific form of his involvement in the endowed mission, the vital mission. The greater deprivation of the man and the fuller kenosis, the higher efficacy and a fertility in the accomplishment of the mission. Balthasar pays a special attention to this specific element of the kenosis. The fertility deriving from a kenotic devotion of the man in his vital mission

²⁹ Idem, „Tajemnica śmierci”, transl. L. Balter, *Communio* 48 (1988) No. 6, p. 36.

³⁰ Idem, „Kim jest laik?”, transl. F. Mickiewicz, *Communio* 7 (1987) No. 39, p. 38; Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 123; Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 460.

³¹ Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 459; Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 137; Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, op. cit., p. 69–70.

³² Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 237.

³³ Idem, „Duchowość Elżbiety z Dijon”, op. cit., p. 200–202; Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 462.

to God, through a resignation of the man himself, his desires, intentions and plans, it reveals a reality much wider and much richer than the purpose which was set or read out by the man himself. The purpose, that seem for the man to be achieved only through the efficiency of his human efforts, wherein the efficiency is perceived as a warranty of his own intentions and plans to be successful.

Thus, a sphere of an active self-shaping and forming the world does not depend first of all on the own activity of man, but on the submission to God. This is a starting point in any active human operations aimed for reaching the mission accomplishment, followed then by transforming the world, where the mission becomes accomplished³⁴. One should simply make this activity first from a self-donation of man to God. Active operations of the man in his life, through which the man reveals an accomplishment of his mission, are somewhat like a consequence of that primary activity, the internal consent of donating himself to God's disposal. The theologian from Basel points out at the existence of Jesus Christ as an example of such a kenotic fertility: Jesus Christ, who allowed Father "to plan himself; he was consumed and abused for the salvation of the world, in such a radical manner, that in no way he could exercise it by himself³⁵".

Simultaneously, Balthasar pays attention to the fact that a fruitfulness of that fertility, deriving from the kenotic devotion to God, depends both on an anonymity and on a stability of this devotion. The anonymity becomes than a principle of the fertility, as the man in its devotion to God does not only neglect himself, but he also becomes the silent one in this devotion, who forgets about himself, certainly not meaning a depreciation of its own "ego". All intentions of the man, in his free and an obedient devotion to God, become the silent ones, as they give up their place to intentions of God towards the man³⁶.

The fruitful fertility of the endowed, vital mission depends also on a stability of man's silent devotion to God's disposal. Balthasar perceives here an importance of the man's decision made once for all. An unconditional, an absolute and an irrevocable devotion to God becomes almost an established form of the man's life. An irreversible and a definite type of the man's decision becomes possible on the way of a continuous obedience, which is a form of a sacrificial devotion to God in dying for himself. That leads the man in turn towards a particular kind of a community with God, wherein through a sacrifice of an obedient devotion to God, the man participates in a Trinitarian unity of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. A durable maintenance of that community resulting from an obedience to God, becomes possible on the way of a vigilant attitude in a believ-

³⁴ Idem, „Życie oddane Bogu. Sens życia według rad ewangelicznych w dzisiejszych czasach”, transl. A. Niklewicz, *Znak* 24 (1972) No. 219, p. 1165–1166.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1166.

³⁶ Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 231; Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 74, 137.

er's life, since the vigilance makes the man disposed in his readiness for an accomplishment of God's intentions. Thus an attitude of the vigilance is somewhat like a sort of a permanent availability of the man for God and His intentions. A necessity of a prayer becomes very clear here, and it appears as a permanent and an inner formation of the vital vigilance in maintaining the community with God, through an awakening readiness for the devotion to His disposal in a concrete of the vital mission³⁷.

Only such a devotion guides the man into a way of the authentic love, which makes his ability of loving similar to the love of God, and provides him a share in the Trinity's life. Since the love of God realizes itself through a kenotic devotion of the Divine Persons to each other. A devotion of the man to God on the way of the kenotic obedience shapes in him an image and a similarity of God. "Christian activity becomes thanks to God's grace an inclusion in His activity, 'co-loving' with God (...) Love means there the unconditional commitment, which presupposes (when needed) also a death (...)"³⁸.

An essence of this commitment in 'co-loving' with God, through a self donation prepared up to a death, is described by Balthasar on the basis of two particular forms of the kenotic man's existence, that accomplish his unique mission in the earthly life – a marriage and a monastic life. He perceives the marriage as a kenotic expropriation for a neighbor through a meeting of people, who admit each other in sharing their freedom. It does not mean that one of spouses possesses a special right to dispose its consort, but a readiness to a disinterested service of love. The essence of such love comes first down to a mutual openness for each other, an acceptance of each other, and further in depriving oneself from any features, qualities, properties in order to give oneself to the other person³⁹. He perceives the essence of a marital love in the exclusivity of giving oneself to each other, what forms a community. At the same time the theologian underlines that love of God in Christ is the source of that love. Out of the absolute and unconditional giving oneself to each other, the spouses extract a strength and a power to a mutual communion in giving oneself to one another⁴⁰.

Balthasar considers a monastic life as a more supreme form of the Christian existence, which realizes itself in the attitude of an obedient and a sacrificial acceptance of the call for a close cooperation with Christ. In the opinion of Balthasar, living according to the Evangelical advices is nothing else than a disposable devotion to Christ through a participation in His dedication to the

³⁷ Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, op. cit., p. 72, 73; Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 116, 141, 146; Idem, „Duchowość Elżbiety z Dijon”, op. cit., p. 243.

³⁸ Idem, *Wiarygodna jest tylko miłość*, op. cit., p. 91; see: Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, op. cit., p. 72.

³⁹ Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 154.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 154–155.

Church⁴¹. The essence of this dedication is a readiness for an absolute and an unconditional devotion to God's disposal⁴², that becomes accomplished in the sacramental way, by the Baptism and the Eucharist, an act of getting rid of oneself in the faith and cleaving to God⁴³. Here, similarly to the marital way of the mission accomplishment, a lasting and an irrevocable type of the life becomes the essential form of the called life. It does not realize itself through a compulsion, but through an availability, being named by the theologian as a Christological duty⁴⁴, as it challenges the devoted person to a radicalism in the form of its existence. Such a radicalism, which becomes a kenotic way of the dedication of the divinely-called one to God, comes out in the imitation of Christ, which through an abandonment and a deprivation, guides the devoted person through the Cross to the Resurrection. In the external form it also expresses itself in the obedience to the monastic rule by submitting oneself to the Holy Spirit and the superiors inspired by the Holy Spirit. The devoted person, rooted that way in Christ, accomplishes a path of the unconditional dying for the world in the temporality⁴⁵.

Regardless a way of the calling accomplishment, the man's answer to God's mission that he had been endowed with, shall be a disinterested service through a sacrifice, suffering, or dying. It assumes a form of going beyond oneself to discover a way towards the others, and to become an existence of the sent by the Father through donating oneself. The man overcomes the kenotic movement of life, first in a relation to God, and then in a community with his brothers and sisters. The kenosis of life donated to God and people is first achieved in the internal space of life, from where in the community with Christ, it imitates a humble figure of His love in external forms of the life⁴⁶. This is always a personal and a free choice of the man, named by Balthasar the freedom of a service nature, that man experiences a paradox in his temporal existence⁴⁷. Upon his mission, he becomes a person conscious about himself and the mission, but simultaneously he reads out in the mission a command of Christ, relying on a necessity to serve the others. That command, in turn, is not a compulsion for him, limiting his liberty, but the work of God, deriving from His grace⁴⁸. Simultaneously, a consent to an obedient joining the Christ cooperation service is releasing the

⁴¹ Idem, „Życie oddane Bogu...”, op. cit., p. 1164.

⁴² Ibid., p. 1170.

⁴³ Idem, *Wiarygodna jest tylko miłość*, op. cit., p. 104; Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, op. cit., p. 79; Idem, „Życie oddane Bogu...”, op. cit., p. 1167.

⁴⁴ Idem, „Czym są święccy w Kościele?”, transl. K. Czulak, *Communio* 1 (1981) No. 6, p. 10.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁶ Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 170.

⁴⁷ Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁸ Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 170; Idem, *Kim jest chrześcijanin?*, op. cit., p. 80.

man's own existence from a temptation to keep his life closed only for himself and in himself⁴⁹.

The existence of the person in a mission it is the life of a Christian, who cannot conceal his identification with the vital mission, that he had been endowed with. The love is the reason both for sending the man by God, and accepting the mission by the man. This is the love that calls the sent one for a specific responsibility, not only for his own life and the mission, but also the responsibility for the world and people, among whom his mission becomes accomplished⁵⁰. Here, the activity of the man, that follow his inner kenosis, manifests itself in the exclusion-of-himself, up to forgetting-about-himself⁵¹. The kenotic nature of the Christian life of the sent person consists in an absolute and voluntary fellowship with loving Christ, humble by the voluntary and the obedient surrounding himself, up to the fulfillment of the commandment of love in the context of the Cross⁵², where the essence and mission of the man is revealed in the most absolute, being-with, being-for, being-response and being-at disposal⁵³.

Calling the man on the path of imitating Christ in his personal mission is the calling for repeating a Paschal path of Christ – from the Cross to the Resurrection. This is the way of kenosis relying on a difficult submission to the will of God in the course of a whole man's life. A consent given to God for governing human volition, and in the consequence, for a fulfillment of the basic God's call, is the man's involvement in what is the most important in his life, and what shall finally become the content of his eternal life. This is a continuous acceptance for dying in temporality for himself, his weaknesses, intentions and plans, so that a capacity for a divine life and fulfillment of the own existence of the person in a mission in it, shall arise⁵⁴.

4. ... in a death

In the cross of Christ, in His death, Balthasar perceives a fundamental moment, wherein the Son of God undertakes – through an exchange of place – a sin of the man, and thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit, who assists Him, overcomes a separation caused by the sin between Him and the Father. It is not only an overcoming of the remoteness from Father that take a place here, but

⁴⁹ Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 124; see: S. Budzik, *Dramat odkupienia. Kategorie dramatyczne w teologii na przykładzie R. Girarda, H.U. von Balthasara i R. Schwagera*, Tarnów 1997, p. 205.

⁵⁰ See: S. Budzik, *Dramat odkupienia*, op. cit., p. 205; W. Hryniewicz, *Pascha Chrystusa w dziejach człowieka i wszechświata. Zarys chrześcijańskiej teologii paschalnej*, vol. 3, Lublin 1991, p. 61.

⁵¹ H.U. von Balthasar, *Chrześcijanin i lęk*, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵² Ibid. p. 52.

⁵³ See: Idem, „Duchowość Elżbiety z Dijon”, op. cit., p. 229.

⁵⁴ Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 453.

also all what determines the most serious consequences of that remoteness. The death has no longer a dominion over the man, it was overcome in the death of Christ. That gap as an inaccessibility in the relation of God and the man, being the consequence of the sin, has vanished in Christ thanks to a bond of love between the Father and the Son, sustained by the Holy Spirit, who becomes their silent nearness in the removal⁵⁵.

We are approaching here something what opens a completely different and the new perspective with a regard to a mystery of death in front of the man. The death remains still a mystery, but the mystery, in which the old perspective of a hopelessness in the human existence has been overcome. Thanks to the Paschal events of Christ, the death ceased to be the occurrence connected only with the sin and the punishment, but it became a gate through which believers enter into a divine life. A key to revalue this mystery is placed in the Jesus Christ's Cross mysteries, that give the man hope for a continuation, for a life, for a lasting relation with God and people. They allow to notice that a death is not a final word about the man's existence, and its content is not limited only to the nature of negative or definite moment of an earthly life. The death of Christ becomes somewhat like a breakthrough, which leads the man towards a new life in God. This is all the fruit of the Christ's Cross, thanks to which the man lives only when he *lives towards the Cross*⁵⁶ first.

This means a relation of a life and a death with the mystery of Christ's Cross, which becomes an entrance into a personal relation of the man with God. God becomes there someone close and personal, uniting and solidarizing with the man, providing him a solution of death in the mystery of Christ's resurrection. Thus a personal union of the man with God in a life and a death is the union that commits to the obedience of faith against the vital call from one side, and from the other side, by this obedient vital surrender to the disposal of God, God shepherds the man from the death to the life.

Balthasar indicates there an eternal importance of the human suffering, being indissolubly connected with the Cross of Christ, since the Cross exposes that suffering is not only a remembering. God in a very clear way sympathizes there with the man, with his suffering, and He gives it a new meaning and sense in the mystery of Resurrection. However, the suffering happens in the earthly life, it acquires a value for the eternal life of the man.

By taking a voluntary suffering in the Paschal mystery, Christ indicates its saving and transforming the life value⁵⁷. By that fact, He invites the man to accept his own suffering in a kenotic manner. Since the acceptance of suffer-

⁵⁵ Idem, *Theodramatik*, II/2, op. cit., p. 44–46; Idem, „Tajemnica śmierci”, op. cit., p. 35.

⁵⁶ Idem, *Theodramatik*, II/2, op. cit., p. 44–46.

⁵⁷ Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 263; Idem, *Credo. Medytacje o Składzie Apostolskim*, transl. J.D. Szczurek, Kraków 1997, p. 80.

ing means somewhat like the man's acceptance for a dispossession of himself. In such a vital movement, the fear that accompanies the man seems to impeach the faith, hope and love, but in fact, it is the action that aims for omitting-himself, forgetting-about-himself⁵⁸. Since in the voluntary acceptance of suffering, and all what is associated with it, in the overcoming of the own fear, the man comes into the kenotic steps of Christ, identifies himself with Him – deprives himself and grants a place in himself to God⁵⁹.

A kenotic dedication of man to God through co-suffering with Christ, just contains somewhat like a foretaste of the Christian co-dying⁶⁰. Since the death applies first to the whole temporality of the man, wherein he unifies his life closer and closer with the life of Christ, by the consent to dying. Next, in the last moment of his earthly life, the man surrenders himself to God definitively, entering into a perfect community of life with Him. A dedication in a biological death follows his former continuous surrendering to God in managing his life. Since the kenosis appearing both in a dying and a death, boils down in its essence to the attitude, wherein the man expresses his consent to an unavoidable reality of death, 'regardless of how long or short, easy or painful will be the way leading to this end⁶¹'. Thus, it is impossible to clearly separate the man's life and his death. They both make up a mystery of his existence, which, through the kenotic dedication to God and the obedient consent to fulfill God's plan towards man's life, unifies life with death, leading the man through a death to life. A relation of life and death in the man's existence allows him to experience some paradoxes: how death becomes present in life, and how life manifests itself in the death. "(...) An element of 'death' has been previously presented in what is the most vital in the life. (...) A dream, considered since the dawn of history as a 'brother of death', reflects it externally only, as it is much more alike as brother of life, that could be just regained by the death of acting(...)⁶².

In such an understanding of a mystery of death, it is hard to determine its well-defined borders, as the man once dying, he dies in Christ and he resurrects in Him⁶³. The death itself is not a tragedy, a despair or a hopelessness, but it is a return to the Life the man's existence originates from. The return is accomplished by donating a finished life to the Endless Life, a limited freedom to the

⁵⁸ Idem, *Chrześcijanin i lęk*, op. cit., p. 53–54.

⁵⁹ I. Bokwa, *Trynitaro-eschatologiczna interpretacja eschatologii w ujęciu Hansa Ursa von Balthasara*, Radom 1998, p. 229

⁶⁰ H.U. von Balthasar, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 128: „A death is equally mysterious as an existence itself (a birth), and even is more mysterious, since from one side it radically bears what had already been entered into the existence, and from the other side, the death cannot still bear it”

⁶¹ Idem, „Tajemnica śmierci”, op. cit., p. 35.

⁶² Ibid., p. 36.

⁶³ Idem, *Theodramatik*, Band IV: *Das Endspiel*, Einsiedeln 1983, p. 121.

Absolute Freedom⁶⁴. Through the death the man does not return to the nature, but to God: the man was born out of His eternity and he has to confront His eternity with good or bad deeds, the man free from any 'nature' faces the Absolute. A final deprivation in the death becomes simultaneously the sign of his highest dignity – his hope for an eternity⁶⁵.

The death in such a meaning becomes the mystery of passing to the eternal life of God, which is accessible to the man by attaching the own death and ability of dying, in the way of obedience, with death of Jesus the Savior. He overwhelmed each human existence that had lost an access to God because of the sin, by the consequences of His own death and resurrection. The death of the man with its objective reference to the life-giving death of God's Son has lost its goal. Dying of Christ was a deed of life and love, that is why it succeeded to the advantage of man⁶⁶. Thus a return to life means a participation in the mortal passing of Christ⁶⁷, by subordinating an obedience and a will in the capacity of loving. Thus finally, the death affects the man who does not love in its absolute way, meant as a sinful falling away from God for ever, a meaningless and hopeless existence, remaining in a complete isolation from divine life. Since love of Christ, being always ready for devoting itself to the others, is the principle of life and it delimits the death, that leads the man through a gate of life and not the gate of nothingness (comp. 1 J 3, 16). By surrendering to the death, Christ inculcated a resurrection in it, so the reality of the man's dying became incorporated in the process of eternal life⁶⁸.

Thus, the death with its kenotic feature in a relation with the death of Christ, means donating its life to a full disposal of God, so it could become a gift for the others, with a disregard to own benefits. Dying for own profits, for oneself, it is a sacrifice of the man's life, his vital approaching to the Cross. Here he joins his life with the life of Christ, and his death with the death of Christ, he dies here for himself and he arises to live for the others. An affirmative glance on the mystery of death, as a reality that is necessary to regain the life in God, is possible thanks to an intimate relation with the Crucified and Resurrected Christ. On that, as Balthasar indicates, "it depends if a physical death will take us by a surprise one day as a someone strange, and even hostile, or on the contrary, it shall come as a well-known friend, with whom we got friendly by renouncing itself every day, and this way unveiling his true face (...). In such an authentically disinterested

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 309.

⁶⁵ Idem, *Eschatologia...*, op. cit., p. 33.

⁶⁶ Idem, *Credo...*, op. cit., p. 46, 79; I. Bokwa, *Trynitarno-eschatologiczna interpretacja eschatologii...*, op. cit., p. 228–229.

⁶⁷ E. Piotrowski, *Teodramat. Dramatyczna soteriologia Hansa Urso von Balthasara*, Kraków 1999, p. 183.

⁶⁸ A. von Speyer, *Teologia śmierci*, transl. M. Węclawski, Poznań 1999, p. 38.

involvement, a proper preparation to death becomes accomplished ('I'm dying every day' – 1 Kor 15, 31). The associated pain removes from us stains of egoism and introduces into a state, in which we shall be taken away from ourselves for our salvation"⁶⁹. A gift from the own life does not mean an end of the life, but a transition through a death to its very centre. Somehow and in some way it may become possible already in an earthly existence of the man as the person in a mission, but it shall be completed in the passing the Gate of death with Christ.

Moreover, Baltasar perceives a kenotic mark of the death in its biological dimension – in an absolute consent of the man to an inevitability of this occurrence and his obedient surrender to this mystery⁷⁰. This is the death that rules over the man, and not the opposite – as to the time of its coming, and the way it shall happen. An obedient surrender to this mystery consists either in a renunciation of such a death, that man wishes himself to happen, and he would foresee for himself⁷¹. This actually means that in the death, whatever it will be, when accepted by the man, he comprises his entire dedication to God. The kenosis in the mystery of death comes down to devoting oneself to God in that what is the most profound and the most personal in the death. By a consent to such a death as determined by God, the death of man becomes his most personal gift to God, through the kenotic obedience and confidence⁷². The kenosis in the death, being a self-deprivation of the man for God, means his absolute abandonment to whatever he meets in the occurrence of death, and despite his natural fear. For lot of people, a reality of death seems to be a nonsense and an emptiness, that might be intensified by a fear of its inevitability. However, a Christian by following a kenotic way of Christ to a death, might overcome his fear through a confident donation of his fear of dying to God⁷³.

Balthasar points out also another aspect of the *misterium mortis*, comprehended as a final moment of temporality. The theologian underlines the death to be something extremely personal and individual, as the man has to measure himself against it in a loneliness. Everyone dies alone⁷⁴. The loneliness of dying expresses itself in the fact that man has already nothing to cover himself in the moment of the death, he faces God as someone completely discovered⁷⁵. The man faces God with all the truth about himself in a loneliness and an abandonment. This experience provides him, in a very unusual way, with an opportuni-

⁶⁹ H.U. von Balthasar, „Tajemnica śmierci”, op. cit., p. 38.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

⁷¹ A. von Speyer, *Teologia śmierci*, op. cit., p. 45.

⁷² Ibid., p. 44.

⁷³ H.U. von Balthasar, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 141; Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 259; A. von Speyer, *Teologia śmierci*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁷⁴ H.U. von Balthasar, *Teologia misterium paschalnego*, op. cit., p. 136; Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 113.

⁷⁵ Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 132.

ty to recur the kenotic attitude of Christ in his own dying, wherein the man imitates death of Christ through his own dying⁷⁶.

The death as an experience of the abandonment is somewhat like a self-deprivation in the truth, wherein the man faces God, with whom he had carried on a dialogue of love during his whole earthly life, and who becomes his Judge in the moment of the death⁷⁷. An exceptional meeting of the truth about the man becomes accomplished here – whom he is, whom he was in his earthly life – with the truth of God, that reveals to the man whom God wanted him to be, what were his human abilities able to reach and what were his temporal efforts. This is a “face to face” meeting of the man with God’s love⁷⁸, that becomes a measure of God’s judgment. Since the man is “(...) a dialogue with God in his interior: the same way he commences with God the same way he terminates, faces God and responds to the Word. God who wanted the man to become, to be for Him himself, He has to accept the man such as he is when it comes to his end and fully returns to Him – with a body and a soul. This direct meeting with the First Beginning reveals simultaneously, that also each moment in between his birth and death, was lived not far from Him, not in an alleged, a closed immanency of the world, but in a closed connection both with God and with the world⁷⁹. In that hour of the biggest loneliness, where the Church accompanies the man “in silence⁸⁰”, he obtains an exculpation exclusively thanks to the Crucified⁸¹.

This is the meeting wherein a glance of the Crucified creates the man once more, since the man returns to God his soul, and he gives whatever he possesses, his own existence for God’s disposal⁸². “A fulfillment of life lies in that in a moment of death it becomes a nothingness, providing a completely free place to a new life⁸³”. This absolute and radical dedication to God expresses kenosis, which becomes simultaneously a condition to an eternal life in a communion with God.

The fruits of the man’s kenotic extermination and destitution in the mystery of his dying and a death become visible in the communion of the saints. Only life of that community of the saved people reveals a final purpose of the kenotic death of individual persons – in the self-deprivation, in the abandonment, in the devotion. Their sacrifice of life and death was not only about the sacrifice of the

⁷⁶ Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 131.

⁷⁷ Idem, *W pełni wiary*, op. cit., p. 125; cf. Idem, *Eschatologia...*, op. cit., p. 28.

⁷⁸ Idem, *Eschatologia...*, op. cit., p. 98–103.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 34.

⁸⁰ Idem, *Catholica. Wierzę w Kościół powszechny*, transl. W. Szymona, Poznań 1998, p. 50.

⁸¹ Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 260.

⁸² A. von Speyer, *Teologia śmierci*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁸³ Idem, *Lumina*, transl. J. Kozbiał, Kraków 1998, p. 39.

death itself. As the man lives with a purpose, heading for something, as he dies for someone and for something – *no one of us lives to himself and no one dies to himself: where we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. And so in life and in death we belong to the Lord (Rz 14, 7–8)*. Therefore, a communion of the Saint is the communion of life, wherein nobody is the saint one for himself, but there is a continuous exchange of sharing each other, giving oneself for a disposal to others, renouncing own purposes to make God's objectives fulfilled, following the kenotic existence of the Persons in the Trinity⁸⁴. Here then, "everyone lives thanks to the others, but he also gives out himself to the others. (...) Altogether they think about a great common task, assigned by God, the God's Kingdom, that should be raised and expanded among the people"⁸⁵.

A summary

The occurrence of the Incarnation, through which God had revealed Himself in the God-Man, is the only dimension of the kenosis, appropriate for God. The radical love of God became the source of the radical mission of the Son, being revealed in the consequences of His radical destitution. The mission of the Son becomes accomplished in the mystery of the Incarnation, through an acceptance of a human nature by the Eternal Person of the God the Word, and a deprivation of the perceptible glory, being always owned by the Son. As noticed by Balthasar, the Son does not treat an eternal existence in a Divine form as a booty – a good being tightly kept, and a position being unconditionally defended⁸⁶. The Incarnation is such a separation of the Son from the Father, consisting in the abandonment of the heaven, that all the richness belonging to the Son of God remains with the Father⁸⁷. Thus, the Incarnation becomes a radical dispossession, with the mystery of Cross as its consequence and a fruit of love. The Incarnation presence of the Son of God in a human world reveals that an absolute power and a sovereignty does not rely upon keeping tightly to this what is owned, but upon an absolute loving in the unconditional self-giving⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ H.U. von Balthasar, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 72.

⁸⁵ Idem, *Wieńczysz rok...*, op. cit., p. 232; see: Idem, *Duch chrześcijański*, op. cit., p. 72, 214.

⁸⁶ Idem, *Teologia misterium paschalnego*, op. cit., p. 23.

⁸⁷ E. Piotrowski, „Teatr Pana Boga (Hans Urs von Balthasar)”, in: *Leksykon wielkich teologów XX/XXI wieku*, ed. by J. Majewski, J. Makowski, Warszawa 2003, p. 14.

⁸⁸ H.U. von Balthasar, *Teologia misterium paschalnego*, op. cit., p. 34; see: J. Szymik, *W światłach Wcielenia*, op. cit., p. 72; P. Althaus: *Kenosis*, in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Tübingen 1959, vol. 3, p. 1245n.

Thus the man, created on the image and the likeness of God and deriving from Him as His creation, is kenotic by “the nature”⁸⁹. A profound anthropological consequence of this mystery, indicating a kenotic nature of the human existence, as of the person in a mission, is revealed there. A similarity of the man in his existence, relying on accepting himself as the sent one and an accomplishment of the vital mission, is proceeded through a disinterested gift of oneself, and not a tight self-concentration.

In the kenosis of Logos, God reveals Himself in its most profound essence, however a kenotic way of the existence of the Son of God contains methodological effects of recognizing the world and the man. The Incarnation is not only the way of expressing God himself to the man, but it also becomes a disclosure of the truth about the man and the world, wherein the man lives and fulfills his basic call of God. In other words, the kenosis as a way of the existence is the truth about God and the man. Being itself in a kenotic way means an obedient consent to the self-abatement, a dispossession, a consent to the love ready for anything⁹⁰. The earthly existence of the Son of God makes itself known to the man through the way of God’s existence, by His appearance revealing a vastness of His love, prepared for a self-abatement because of love. This is a privileged way of God’s existence, throughout He straightly enters into the world, to redeem it. In the kenotic weakness, *sub contrario*, a truth on God of the highest importance is revealed, wherein the man discovers the truth about himself. God and the man, being His image and likeness, is oneself if he accepts love ready for hurting⁹¹. The act of kenosis becomes the act of love. The consent of God to the fate of a body, pain and death, the consent to “a scandal of limited abilities” of God, entangled with time, space and culture⁹², is the consequence of the Divine Pre-kenosis. The intra-Trinitarian love of God, that gets outside and reaches the created world and the man, becomes the way and a pattern of a kenotic self-dedication in love to the man, in his own vital mission.

A self-giving of God in a mystery of a deprived love of the Incarnated Son of God, is the continuous exposing God’s love for being rejected. Since God makes a gift of a sacrificial love dependent on the man “knocking with really Divine humility at the door of human freedom”⁹³. The Incarnational kenosis becomes a radical apparition of God’s love to the man, but it also becomes an invitation of the

⁸⁹ M. Pyc, *Chrystus. Piękno-Dobro-Prawda*, op. cit., p. 64.

⁹⁰ H.U. von Balthasar, *Teologia misterium paschalnego*, op. cit., p. 25–26, 34.

⁹¹ See: E. Jünger, „Trójjedyny Bóg jako tajemnica świata”, transl. J. Zychowicz, *Znak* 44 (1992) No. 2 (441), p. 59, 68.

⁹² J. Szymik, *W światłach Wcielenia*, op. cit., p. 71.

⁹³ *Ibid.*; see: J. Bađeni, J.A. Kłoczowski, *Boskie oko czyli po co człowiekowi religia* (talk A. Sporniak, J. Strzałka), Kraków 2003, p. 254–255.

man on the kenotic way of love “despite”, or simply “in” human fragility and weakness. The radical love of God, that entered in a solid way into the human world by the Affair of the sent Son of God, had revealed not only a Divine love to the man, but also a human ability of loving, being even ready for hurting⁹⁴. As noticed by Balthasar “the Embodiment into such a human form, as we are, is already loving as a death, it is a self-giving as a readiness for an inevitable killing Him – by God and by the world. In this way, ‘a devoted one’ becomes inevitably ‘the betrayed one’ by God (Romans 8, 32), and in Judas by all of us (J 18, 2.5). Everyone who follows Him, will be betrayed as Him (Mt 24, 9 and other)”⁹⁵. A self-giving in a disinterested gift of love is not only a human answer to God’s declaration of love, but also a man’s fulfillment on the deepest level of its personality⁹⁶, accordingly with the intention of God, who “developed such a dimension of human existence through the Carnation, as He planned to bestow the man from the beginning”⁹⁷.

The acceptance of the kenotic way of existence by the man and an accomplishment of his life mission is then constructing a human world in the accordance with God’s intention and thanks to His Divine rules. An entire, trustful self-giving of the man for a disposal to God, accordingly with the Truth of Love revealed in the Occurrence of Christ, leads the man towards a fulfillment. The fulfillment means a definitive happiness of the man, that he finds out in the communion of love with God, wherein love in giving and accepting becomes its essence⁹⁸. However for Balthasar, a fulfilled happiness of the man is not a way of “self-realization”⁹⁹, but an accomplishment of the mission endowed to the man by God, throughout the man returns the glory to God¹⁰⁰. There is only the one accessible way of an earthly life that leads the man towards the end of a the happy life. “Through His ‘kenosis’ God reveals to the man that since the very beginning he had been designed in a kenotic state, and that in such a destitution and poverty, he will share the glory and richness, being already shared by him to some extent”¹⁰¹.

The kenotic way of fulfilling the own existence as the existence in a mission, the sent existence, is the Good News, manifesting one more anthropological conclusion. The absolute consent to the received and the demanded existence, protects

⁹⁴ See: T. Halik, *Drzewo ma jeszcze nadzieję*, transl. A. Babuchowski, Kraków 2010, p. 27.

⁹⁵ H.U. von Balthasar, *Eschatologia...*, op. cit., p. 36.

⁹⁶ See: A. Dulles, *Blask wiary. Wizja teologiczna Jana Pawła II*, transl. A. Nowak, Kraków 2003, p. 292.

⁹⁷ Jan Paweł II, Encyklika *Redemptor hominis*, 1.

⁹⁸ See: T. Halik, *Drzewo ma jeszcze nadzieję*, op. cit., p. 81: „Withering love means a bankruptcy of relations.”

⁹⁹ See: Benedykt XVI, *A speech of Benedict XVI during the Marian Vespers, dated September 23th in Etzelsbach*, <http://ekai.pl/biblioteka/dokumenty/x1254/przemowienie-benedykta-xvi-w-czasie-nieszporow-maryjnych-wyglaszane-wrzesnia-w-etzelsbach/> [2011–09–28].

¹⁰⁰ H.U. von Balthasar, *Chwała*, III/2–2, op. cit., p. 199–200.

¹⁰¹ Idem, *Catholica...*, op. cit., p. 73.

the man against his diabolic temptations of pride about his own divinity, what finally leads him in a direction of destructing that existence. From the other side, the kenosis of the received and the sent existence means discovering a consciousness about the own identity of the Child of God, what becomes achieved only if it follows in the footsteps of the kenotic love of the Son of God. "(...) The creation when it understands itself, it knows simultaneously one and the other: that God exists, and that it is not God itself"¹⁰².

Finally, there is also a social anthropological conclusion. The acceptance of the kenotic way of the existence and the accomplishment of the own life, enters the man not only into a personal relation of love with God, but it also creates relations among the people, who similarly through a kenosis, accept a responsibility not only for themselves and their lives, but also for each one of them and the world they live in¹⁰³.

¹⁰² See: Idem, *Eschatologia...*, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁰³ J. Szymik, *W światłach Wcielenia*, op. cit., p. 74–75.

Streszczenie

Antropologiczny wymiar kenozy w pismach Hansa Ursa von Balthasara

Artykuł podejmuje zagadnienie życia i śmierci człowieka pozostających w związku z życiem i śmiercią Chrystusa w kluczu kategorii *kenosis*, zaproponowanej przez szwajcarskiego teologa Hansa Ursa von Balthasara. Podstawą antropologicznego ujęcia kenozy staje się kenotyczne życie Trójjedynego Boga, które wydostaje się na zewnątrz i dociera do stworzenia. Wewnątrzboska kenoza Trójcy uzewnętrznia się najpierw w akcie stworzenia, a następnie w określonym momencie historii zbawienia w posłaniu Syna. Odwieczny Bóg uniża się, wkraczając w rzeczywistość świata, i podejmuje walkę na krzyżu o człowieka, odsłaniając w zewnętrznym przejawie uniżenia swoją miłość w pełni. Kenotyczny sposób życia Boga staje się jednocześnie podstawą, źródłem i możliwością kenotycznego sposobu istnienia i posłannictwa osoby ludzkiej, której istota sprowadza się do relacyjnego trwania, wywodzącego się „z” miłości Boga i zmierzającego „ku” wspólnocie miłości z Nim.

Teolog istnienie człowieka widzi jako podarowane, a jednocześnie zadane. Od samego początku zmierza on w kierunku śmierci, gdyż nie egzystuje inaczej jak tylko w sposób śmiertelny. Jednocześnie śmiertelny sposób istnienia człowieka przybiera kenotyczny rys drogi, na której wchodzi on w ślady Paschy Chrystusa. Kenotyczne istnienie staje więc przed człowiekiem jako zadanie życiowe, które upodabnia go i przybliża do Boga. Ograniczony ze swej natury i grzeszny, przez dzieło zbawienia Trójjedynego Boga człowiek został uzdolniony do życia wiecznego. Tu zaznacza się związek życia doczesnego i wiecznego, gdzie śmierć odgrywa znaczącą rolę tak dla doczesności, jak i wieczności człowieka. „Umieranie w życiu”, jak i „oddanie się w śmierci” są drogą człowieka do wiecznej komunii z Trójjedynym Bogiem.

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