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The Social Role of Media as Presented in Selected Texts of the Post-Conciliar Literature

ABSTRAKT

Społeczna rola mediów w przekazie wybranych tekstów literatury posoborowej

Celem artykułu jest próba refleksji nad problematyką mediów prezentowaną w wybranych tekstach literatury posoborowej. Sobór Watykański II uznaje wagę postępu w świecie i jego znaczenie dla człowieka. Wiele współczesnych tekstów literatury posoborowej, zwłaszcza tych napisanych przez Jana Pawła II i Benedykta XVI, traktuje media jako "dar od Boga", który powinien być wykorzystany w sposób rozważny.

Słowa kluczowe: media, literatura posoborowa, społeczna rola mediów, Kościół katolicki, środki komunikacji, media katolickie.

Introduction

The Second Vatican Council emphasises that the most valuable inventions are the devices that by their very nature are capable of moving not only individuals but also entire human community¹. As such, we consider, among others, press, cinematography, radio and television. Because of their nature, we can call them a means of social communication. The article will oscillate around the problem of the social role of the media in the teaching of the Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council. It is possible thanks to critical analysis that was carried out on the leading texts of literature that is the fruit of post-conciliar deliberations in relation to papal teaching. It is obvious that the article does not exhaust the subject, but only becomes a contribution and inspiration for other authors for

¹ K. Kucharczyk, M. Uryga, *Manipulacja w mediach – mit czy realne zagrożenie?* [in:] *Edukacja, wczoraj-dziś-jutro. Edukacja w dialogu pokoleń i budowaniu lepszej przyszłości*, E. Sałata, M. Mazur, J. Bojanowicz (ed.), Radom 2015, pp.320-322.

further exploration of the presented subject matter.

The theoretical and research perspective

The term „media” means press, radio and television, which we shall henceforth refer to as mass media, due to their nature. These are institutions producing information and entertainment messages disseminated *en masse* and reaching simultaneously large dispersed collectives of recipients. In a broader sense, media is a combination of technology and communication². The very word “media” is used in the plural and comes from the word „medium” – it functions as a collective term, as in the expression „in the media”³. This term is used in relation to both „communication media” as well as specialised institutions and organisations in which people work, and which include: print media and press, photography, advertising, cinema, electronic media (radio and television), the publishing industry, etc⁴. The term „media” is also used in relation to the cultural and material products of these institutions, i.e. particular forms and types of information, road films, and series which take the material form of newspapers, paperback books, films, cassettes or CDs. In Polish, two names are correct: „media” (or „mass media”) and „środki masowego komunikowania”–„mass communication media”. Other names are incorrect – „środki społecznego przekazu”–„means of social communication” is an imprecise term because one cannot talk about mass communication, only about mass audience – or too general, e.g. the term „publikatorzy”–„distributors”⁵. In the official publications of the Catholic Church, the term used more and more often is „media”. It is divided into three main categories: means of expression, i.e. speech, facial expressions, gestures; means of registration, ranging from the simplest, that is a pencil and a piece of paper, to the ones as complicated as a hard drive or a computer server; and transmission media, such as radio, television, the Internet⁶. Each medium has its own features which determine how it operates. The Council observes that creators have to, to some extent, be aware of all the conditions and circumstances in which the message is created, such as the goal, people, place, time, and others, and how they may change or even distort its integrity. Attention should also be paid to the manner of action appropriate to each of these media

² T. Goban-Klas, *Media i medioznawstwo*, [w:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, red. E. Chudziński, Warszawa – Bielsko-Biała 2007, p. 9.

³ R. R. Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (Rediscovering Vatican II), New York 2006, p. 109.

⁴ M. Lister, J. Dovey, S. Giddings, I. Grant, K. Kelly, *New Media: a critical introduction*, Routledge, London 2009, p. 15.

⁵ A. Lepa, *Media w świecie słowa*, wyd. Edycja Świętego Pawła, Częstochowa 2011. p.10.

⁶ L. Manovich, *What is new media?*

<https://www.mheducation.co.uk/openup/chapters/0335217109.pdf>, (10.10.2018).

types, and its impact, which can be so great that people – especially if they are unprepared – can hardly notice it, control it or, if necessary, resist it. In the present era of transmediality⁷, we can observe migration of content and intellectual property between various forms of the media. Although some still watch one-and-a-half-hour films in the cinema or gather in front of the television with the whole family⁸, media consumption performed in this way is now becoming rarer and rarer. There is a shift from auditoriums to users and from consumers to producers⁹. This is due to the rapid development of technology, e.g., the screens one looks at today are small and mobile. In media, communication is the key concept. T. Goban-Klas writes that „Lasswell states that the act of communication can be studied by asking five fundamental questions: Who is talking? What does he say? With what medium? To whom? With what results? These questions correspond to the five elements of the process: sender, message, medium, recipients, effects”¹⁰. The main purpose of media is to provide information, which results from the right of a citizen of every democratic country to have access to information and freedom of speech. According to the Article 6¹¹ of the Treaty on European Union, the basic principle of functioning in the European Union is respect for basic human rights. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, understood as freedom of expression of opinions, and to receiving and sharing information and ideas without interference of public authorities and regardless of national borders. In Poland, this principle is developed in “Act of 6 September 2001 on access to public information”¹². Access to information about events and current affairs gives people a more complete knowledge, thanks to which they can contribute effectively to the general good and influence jointly the broad progress of a given society. However, it should be remembered that information should always be true and complete, in compliance with justice and love, as well as fair and appropriate, so that it can follow moral principles and legitimate human dignity and rights, both in its collection and sharing¹³.

For the believers, it is also important what the media say and how they inform about the activities of the Church, i.e. about the Pope, the Holy See, individual

⁷ See: W. Rubiś, *Zagadnienia transmedialności w sztuce współczesnej. Wokół książki Sztuki w kulturze transmedialnej pod redakcją Tomasza Załuskiego*, [in:] „Estetyka i krytyka” 35 (4/2014) (on-line), R. Kluszczyński, *Transmedializm. O twórczości Ryszarda Wałki* [in:] *Obrazy na wolności. Studia z historii sztuk medialnych w Polsce* R. Kluszczyński, Warszawa 1998, pp.87-89.

⁸ J. Matejek, K. Kucharczyk, *Contemporary family – social changes and risks*, [in:] *Human resources management – interdisciplinary perspective*, A. Sapiński, S. Ciupka, I. Khlobystov (ed.), Odessa 2017, pp. 122-125.

⁹ N. Ciaciu Grasu, *The impact of new media on society*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/215489586_The_impact_of_new_media_on_society, (10.10.2018), p. 4.

¹⁰ T. GOBAN-KLAS, *Media i medioznawstwo*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2012:326:FULL&from=EN> (10.10.2018).

¹² Dz.U. z 2001 r., Nr 112, poz. 1198; Cf. B. FISCHER, *Regulacje prawne*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, op. cit., p. 446.

¹³ *Inter Mififica.*, Dekret Soboru Watykańskiego II, Watykan 1963, point 5.

episcopates, orders and Catholic universities¹⁴. The right to information is related to the right to education. Well-prepared journalistic materials are of a great help in understanding the modern world. The media can play the role of a teacher for all those who are no longer covered by the education system, or a tutor for these people who learn while performing the functions of long life learning¹⁵. In cooperation with parents, various means of social communication and the entertainment industry are involved in the mission of raising children by showing them models of human life and love¹⁶. The relationship between children and the media, and the media and upbringing can be seen from two points of view: the formation of children by the media and the formation of children to respond appropriately to the media. This mutual connection between the two indicates the responsibility of the media as an industry and the need for active and critical participation of readers, viewers and listeners. One must first ensure proper formation for the proper use of the media – this is important for the cultural, moral and spiritual development of children¹⁷. Thanks to their educational function, the media are able not only to teach their recipients, but also to shape their opinions and form their attitudes. The educational function of the media, in a sense, orders them to speak about education, its quality, reforms and current problems. Thanks to this function, the media can help families in solving problems related to raising a child¹⁸.

Media technologies work by encoding audio and video signals, that is sounds and images. In the past, this was done in the analogue way, now digital encoding is used. The audio and video signals are transformed into the binary form, the transcription of which includes two digits, conventionally, 0 and 1. It allows one to use the same medium for different messages, creating the so-called multimedia. If the communication channels are connected to one another and certain devices allow to direct the traffic of information within them, we can talk about a network. Modern media are more and more commonly included in the Internet network, becoming the so-called on-line media.

The Church sees the media as a „gift of God” because they bring about fraternal friendship among people who can, in this way, respond to the salvific will of Christ more easily¹⁹. Therefore, it is encouraged that the means of social

¹⁴ A. LEPA, *Media w świecie słowa*, Częstochowa 2011. p. 15.

¹⁵ Cf. M. Bonikowska, *Media w XXI wieku [in:] Media a wyzwania XX wieku*, M. Bonikowska (ed.), Warszawa 2009 p. 18.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

¹⁷ Cf. Benedykt XVI, *Dzieci i środki komunikowania – wyzwanie dla edukacji*. Orędzie na 41. Światowy Dzień Środków Społecznego Przekazu, „OsRomPol” 28(2007) nr 3 (291), pp. 5-7.

¹⁸ K. Kucharczyk, *Instytucja rodziny w kontekście aktualnych przemian społecznych*, w: *Možnosti uplatnění sociálního pedagoga/sociální pedagogiky v současné společnosti*, Hradec Kralove 2016, p. 356.

¹⁹ K. Kucharczyk, S. Woźniak, *Działalność na rzecz bezdomnych – problematyka instytucjonalnej pomocy społecznej organizacji pozarządowych, studium prawno-pedagogiczne*, w: *Sociální pedagogika 2016. Budoucnost Evropy; Řešení sociálně kulturach problémů*, M. Jůzl, E. Jarosz, D. Markocá, S. Neskšanova (ed.) Brno 2016,

communication really serve the search of truth and human progress. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to share, through the means of social communication, an evangelical message that will lead to a brotherhood between people having a common Father, God. However, we also need to remember that the value and, ultimately, the meaning of social media depends on how they are used²⁰.

New media are the techniques, technologies, and communication institutions that use digital methods to record, save and store data, and create and transmit messages. New media are characterised by the hypertext structure of transmission and reception, the possibility of programming, interactivity, global coverage and individualisation of access²¹. The term new media is very popular due to its practical versatility because, unlike the adjectives „digital” or „electronic”, it does not emphasise any formal and technical definition of itself; it also does not pay attention to individual property, as it is in the case of the term interactive media. This term is commonly used for a whole range of different phenomena. Therefore, it has many cultural connotations rather than a narrow technical or specialist meaning. The instruction of Aetatis Novae states that „the Church, at the same time, ought to create, maintain and develop its own specifically Catholic means and programs of social communication, despite various difficulties. These include Catholic press and publishing houses, radio and television, information and press offices, educational institutions and programs in the field of social communication and media research, and, finally, connected with the Church organizations of people working professionally in the media²²”.

New technologies enable dialogue between people from different countries, cultures and religions. The emerging digital space in the so-called cyberspace allows people to encounter and learn about the values and traditions of others. It is important to ensure that such meetings are fruitful, which means there is a need for honest and correct forms of expression as well as for listening carefully and respectfully. A dialogue with another person should be rooted in a sincere and mutual search for the truth so that it can lead to better understanding and greater tolerance. New technologies – serving the good of the individual and society – should reject everything that fuels hatred and intolerance, impoverishes the beauty and intimacy of human sexuality, and exploits the weak and vulnerable²³. Pope John Paul II, in the encyclical *Centesimus annus*, emphasises that the pressure of „these policies are extending their field of action by the use

p. 344.

²⁰ Instrukcja Papieskiej Rady ds. Środków Masowego Przekazu, *Communio et progressio*, Vatican 1971, point.2 cf. *Communio et progressio*, Vatican 1971, point 3.

²¹ Z. Bauer, *Nowe media*. [w:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, op. cit., p. 45.

²² Instrukcja duszpasterska Papieskiej Rady ds. Środków Masowego Przekazu, *Aetatis Novae*, Watykan 1992. point 17.

²³ Cf. Benedykt XVI, *Nowe technologie, nowe relacje. Trzeba rozpowszechniać kulturę szacunku, dialogu i przyjaźni*. Orędzie na 43. Światowy Dzień Środków Społecznego Przekazu, „OsRomPol” 30(2009) no. 3 (311), pp. 5-7.

of new techniques to the point of poisoning the lives of millions of defenceless human beings, as if in a form of „chemical warfare”²⁴.

The media evolution is called mediamorphosis. It is based on the mutual adaptation and transformation of the media, which, in order to survive, have to change. This is noticed in the transfer of the traditional media to digital platforms. As a result, one may observe the convergence (devices begin to perform similar functions and become similar, although they were not originally technically related) of the old media, such as television, with the new ones, such as the Internet and mobile telephony. New television and radio programs introduce elements of interactivity by sending text messages or allowing studio calls. We also notice entire programs are available in the Internet²⁵.

Benedict XVI notes that, under the influence of new digital technologies, basic communication models and interpersonal relations change. These changes are particularly visible among young people, who are in close contact with new communication techniques and feel well in the digital world, which in turn often seems alien to adults, who are forced to learn to understand and appreciate the communication possibilities it creates. Increasingly wider access to mobile phones and computers, combined with the global reach spread of the Internet, creates many opportunities that allow us to send words and images to the remotest and most isolated areas of the world instantly. Young people, in a special way, seize great opportunities created by new media in terms of connectivity, communication and understanding between individuals and communities. They use them to keep in touch with friends, make new friends, create communities and networks, search for information and messages, share views and opinions. The recently emerging communication culture is the source of many benefits. For example, families can maintain contact even if they are separated by large distances, students and researchers have easier access to documents, sources and scientific discoveries, which allow them to work in teams even if each of them resides elsewhere. The changes might contribute to better social progress²⁶.

The media also carry threats, as noticed by the sociologist and media specialist T. Goban-Klas. In his opinion, „contemporary societies and human lives are so saturated with the media and so dependent on them that one can legitimately talk about the birth of a new form – the media society. The media influence the social structure of modern society, which is described as information or even network”. The power of the mass media is so great in that they can affect not only how people think, but also what they think about. For many people, reality is what the media consider to be real; everything that is not addressed by the media

²⁴ Encyklika *Centesimus annus*, Watykan 1991, point. 39.

²⁵ Cf. T. Goban-Klas, *Media i medioznawstwo*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, p. 16.

²⁶ Cf. Benedykt XVI, *Nowe technologie...*, op. cit., pp. 5-7.

does not matter to them²⁷. Often, people start their weekday not with a prayer but with turning the radio on and end it not with an evening prayer but with turning the radio off. Accustomed to the media, they do not feel the artificiality of a telephone conversation, e-mail or TV talk show²⁸.

It is noted that the new media is a WWW network, virtual training environments, social platforms or blog networks. All are connected to a huge, dense and global network, which the users can browse. However, they are partially supervised and limited by firewalls, passwords, access rights and equipment requirements. These networks are used not only via designated computer stations that are connected to landline telephone lines but also through the use of wireless technology, on the move, on devices such as laptops, pocket computers, GPS devices or cell phones²⁹. The media should contribute to discovering the truth about human, defending it against those who try to deny it or destroy it. Presenting the truth about humanity is the highest call for social communication. The use of all means of communication, more and more beautiful and sophisticated, is the task entrusted first of all to the superiors and employees of this sector. However, this task applies to everyone, because everyone in the times of globalisation is a user and employee of social communication³⁰.

The instruction of *Aetatis Novae* points out that „church personnel requires at least a working grasp of the impact which new information technologies and mass media are having upon individuals and society.” It should also be noted that „they need to know how to engage others in a dialogue, avoiding a style of communicating which suggests domination, manipulation, or personal gain. Therefore, it is necessary to gain professional skills in this field alongside with traditional doctrinal education and spiritual formation³¹”.

With the invention of print and its subsequent development, the first newspapers were created. The nineteenth century is called the „age of the press” because, in this century, the circulation of newspapers has increased from several hundred copies to a million, and the concept of popular newspapers was introduced³². In the nineties of the twentieth century, media researchers observed the process of change in the Polish press market from the so-called real socialism to the market economy system³³. Tadeusz Kowalski writes that „there

²⁷ Cf. Encyklika *Centesimus annus*, Watykan 1991, point 4.

²⁸ Cf. T. Goban-Klas, *Media i medioznawstwo*, [w:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, p. 17-18. Translation mine.

²⁹ C. A. Scolari, J. M. Aguado, C. Feijóo, *Mobile Media: Towards a Definition and Taxonomy of Contents and Applications*, <http://onlinejournals.org/index.php/ijim/article/viewFile/1880/2179>, (11.10.2018), pp. 29-31.

³⁰ Benedykt XVI, *Środki społecznego przekazu na rozdrożu między gwiazdorstwem a służbą. Szukać prawdy, by się nią dzielić*. *Orędzie* na 42. Światowy Dzień Środków Społecznego Przekazu, „OsRomPol” 29(2008) nr 3 (301), s. 8-10.

³¹ Instrukcja duszpasterska Papieskiej Rady ds. Środków Masowego Przekazu, *Aetatis Novae*, Watykan 1992. point 18.

³² Cf. Z. Bajka, *Media w rozwoju historycznym* [in:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, op. cit., p. 33.

³³ Cf. G. Jankowicz, *Literatura a ekonomia* [in:] *Literatura polska po 1989 roku w świetle teorii P. Bourdieu. Raport*

are many indications that not only has a market media system developed in Poland but also that it is a system of a mature and competitive market, which simply became part of the European media system. The market of newspapers and magazines in Poland, although possessing certain specific and national characteristics, does not differ from other markets in developed European countries”³⁴.

In the modern world, one also needs magazines that are printed in religious communities. The religious press is understood as the set of periodic publications issued for the benefit of followers of a given religion. The confessional press refers to different traditions and theological schools in a given religion. In Poland, there are followers of Judaism, who are divided into the orthodox, reformed and conservative ones; Christians, divided into Catholics, Orthodoxes and Protestants; and Muslims, divided into Sunnis, Shiites and Wahabites. Each of the mentioned movements has its own press system of the national or international reach. The church press is limited to a specific Christian denomination. We can talk about the Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, and Greek Catholic press, as well as of the Orthodox and other Eastern rite communities’ press, the Evangelical and other Protestant denominations’ press³⁵.

Encouragement to support the Catholic press is quite common in the post-conciliar literature. In order to give the readers access to full Christian spirit, it is necessary to create and develop a truly Catholic press. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen and support public opinion in accordance with the natural law and Catholic dictates. Messages should properly explain the facts about the life of the Church. The oldest local periodicals are „Kalendarz Parafialny” (Warsaw 1873-1874), „Tygodnik Kościelny” (Poznań 1912-1939) and „Głos św. Franciszka” (Częstochowa 1908-1926). The task of parish periodicals is to describe local issues, commenting on them in reference to the Gospel and the Decalogue. The parish press arose from the need of the hearts of young people and enthusiasts of the information service – the Diakonia of the word – for the community of believers. In 1991, Katolickie Stowarzyszenie Dziennikarzy (Catholic Association of Journalists) was established, gathering employees of Polish religious media.

The first Polish magazine published its electronic version online in 1994. It was a Cracovian supplement of „Gazeta Wyborcza”. Newspapers of this type are called e-editions. With the appearance of digital newspapers, the reading rates of the traditional ones have fallen. According to Gemius research, in November 2006, almost 60% of network users read the Internet daily newspapers, and 35% – weeklies or bi-weeklies. At the same time, just over 40 %of the internet users

z badań. Kraków 2014, pp. 22-25.

³⁴ T. Kowalski, *W kierunku rynku. Zmiany w prasie codziennej na tle tendencji europejskich*. [in:] *Podstawowe czynniki przemian polskiego rynku prasowego w latach 1996-2006. Materiały konferencyjne*, J. Kania (ed.), Poznań 2006, p. 8.

³⁵ Cf. M. Glogier, *Prasa parafialna*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, op. cit., p. 149.

reached for the traditional daily newspaper, and for a weekly or biweekly paper – about 20 %³⁶.

In the twentieth century, a new medium was introduced, that is radio. Initially, it was considered a threat to press, but, as it turned out, it became its ally, providing information to press customers faster. The subsequent great interest in radio resulted in the creation of many radio magazines, which discussed radio programs and people creating them. Radio broadcasting is a mass message, although its actual impact may turn out to be small. It depends on the content and form of the programs and the skills, creativity and professionalism of those who create it. This parallel reception of the same content creates a sense of community with other listeners, while, at the same time, the individual reception and isolation of the listeners give a sense of intimate contact with the sender³⁷. With the development of the internet, radio also began its activity in this space. Over 20 licensed radio stations, with RMF FM and Radio Zet ahead of others, have already started operating in the network. On the Polish Radio website, one can listen to the programs of Jedynka, Dwójka, Trójka, Radio Bis and Radio Polonia in stereo, and also download and post one's own podcasts. A certain novelty has been introduced by Radio Katowice – it launched an internet portal whose listeners can influence the program via the contact form, surveys and discussion forum, and comment on the blogs created by the radio team.

In Poland, the number of the Internet users exceeded 8 million in 2004, three years later there were already 10 million. In Europe, 122 million people use the network every day³⁸. The concept of the Internet cannot be clearly defined. None of the features of the Internet distinguishes this medium from others because it does not displace the „old” media, but – in a specific way with regards to its own technological capabilities – „consumes” communication practices appropriate to other media³⁹. In a simplified way, the Internet can be called a „means of communication that for the first time allows many to communicate with many at their chosen time and on a global scale”⁴⁰.

Benedict XVI encourages all Christians to join the network of relationships that the digital age has enabled and to bring to them confidence and responsible creativity. This action is to serve the purpose of not only satisfying one's own desires for online presence but also making this network an integral part of human life. The Internet itself contributes to the development of more complex forms of intellectual and spiritual awareness of shared beliefs⁴¹. The Internet

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 149-150.

³⁷ Cf. A. Ostrowska, *Nowe media – przykład polski*, [in:] *Media a wyzwania XXI wieku*, op. cit., p. 141.

³⁸ Cf. Z. Bajka, *Media w rozwoju historycznym* [in:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, op. cit., pp. 38-40.

³⁹ Cf. P. Andrusiewicz, *Internet na tle „mediów tradycyjnych”*, [in:] *Słownik wiedzy o mediach*, dz. cyt., p. 196.

⁴⁰ M. Castells, *The Internet Galaxy: Reflections on the Internet, Business and Society*, Poznań 2003, p. 12.

⁴¹ Cf. Benedykt XVI, *Prawda, przepowiadanie i autentyczność życia w erze cyfrowej*. Orędzie na 45. Światowy Dzień Środków Społecznego Przekazu., „OsRomPol” 32(2011) no. 3 (331), pp. 8-10.

users have transformed themselves from passive consumers of services provided via the network into the virtual reality creators. The active users write blogs, record and post their music videos and films online, improve online games, create their own online communities, develop virtual encyclopaedias. Press has even begun to describe them as the „fifth power” because they control and often influence politicians and journalists. 2006 was a breakthrough year for the network development due to the fact that users began to take advantage of the possibilities inherent in new media and became co-creators of websites. This phenomenon was named by the media industry Web 2.0⁴².

Benedict XVI shows that new technologies not only change the way of communication but change the communication itself. We are therefore facing a significant cultural transformation. Along with this way of disseminating information and knowledge, a new way of learning and thinking emerges, in which establishing contacts and building a community through the so-called social networks becomes a new possibility. This action leads to establishing new interpersonal relations, affects the perception of oneself and, inevitably, raises the question about the authenticity of one's existence⁴³.

Conclusion

Thanks to the advances of technology, the media have bypassed the social problems generated by time and space, enabling immediate and direct communication between people, even if there are great distances between them. This situation offers a substantial potential that can serve the common good and is „a heritage to be protected and developed”. We should always strive for a reliable coverage of events, comprehensive explanation of public issues and fair presentation of various points of view. It is particularly important to support and promote marriage and family life precisely because they form the foundation of every culture and society⁴⁴. Pope Francis notes that, at the global level, one can see the distance between the luxury of the life of the richest and the poverty of the poorest. In this world, the media can help people feel closer to one another, help to see the unity of the human family, which in turn stimulates solidarity and a greater commitment to a more dignified life. Contemporary communication helps to be closer to one another and to familiarise oneself with others better. The condition is being ready to listen to and learn from one another. Differences must be reconciled with forms of a dialogue that allow people to grow in understanding and respect. The media help us in this respect. Human

⁴² Cf. A. Ostrowska, *Nowe media – przykład polski*, art. cit., pp. 115-120.

⁴³ Cf. Benedykt XVI, *Prawda, przepowiadanie i autentyczność życia w erze cyfrowej*,. prew. cit., pp. 8-10.

⁴⁴ Benedykt XVI, *Środki przekazu: sieć komunikacji, jedności i współpracy*. Orędzie na 40. Światowy Dzień Środków Społecznego Przekazu, „OsRomPol” 27(2006) no. 4 (282), pp. 4-6.

communication networks have reached an unprecedented size, especially, the Internet can offer greater opportunities for meeting everyone, and this is God's gift⁴⁵.

The influence of the media on a human being can be observed above all in the attitudes and decisions a person makes. Personal attitudes play an important role in the life of society. Therefore, it is necessary to know the threats posed by mass media in the upbringing of man. It is also worth emphasising that manipulation is the biggest problem from the beginning of the existence of the media.

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The Social Role of Media as Presented in Selected Texts of the Post-Conciliar Literature

Summary

The aim of this article is to reflect on the issue of media as presented in selected texts of the post-conciliar literature. The Second Vatican Council recognises the significance of progress in the world and its importance to humanity. Many contemporary texts of the post-conciliar literature, especially those written by John Paul II and Benedict XVI, treat the media as a „gift from God” that should be used judiciously.

Keywords: media, post-conciliar literature, social role of media, Catholic Church, means of communication, Catholic media.