

"Practical Dimensions of Christian Solidarity in the Global World"

The topic of solidarity is well developed in the social teaching of the Catholic Church. Moreover, the principle of solidarity is one of its pillars, along with respect for human dignity, subsidiarity, and the common good principle. There are many church documents, Encyclicals, including the last Encyclical of Pope Francis "Fratelli tutti," which raises this topic. Therefore, I would not like to repeat and retell what we all already know. In my brief reflection, I would like to shed some light on a few aspects of subsidiarity, which are less "popular" or discussed.

I would like to begin my brief presentation with words of one of the most prominent representatives of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and the Ukrainian people - the righteous Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, whose beatification Ukrainian Greek Catholics are fervently awaiting. Unfortunately, our meeting could not take place here in Lviv, because in that case, we would visit his resting place on St. George's Hill, from which he took care of his flock for almost half a century. He led it through two world wars, the Ukrainian-Polish conflict, acting as a Church and a social leader of the stateless people.

In 1934, he wrote a Pastoral letter containing a very strong and, at first glance, rhetorical title, "Who's to Blame?" I will first briefly describe the context of writing his message. The letter was caused by socio-political events in his ecclesiastical province. At the end of the First World War, Ukrainians were able to create a Ukrainian state, but it had a short history. Almost immediately, a part of Ukrainian society came under the rule of communist Russia and in 1932–33 experienced one of the most terrible tragedies in human history - the artificial Famine (Holodomor), which took the lives of several million people. The rest of Ukrainian society came under the rule of several Eastern European countries that emerged after the First World war. The Metropolitanate, headed by Metropolitan Andrew, came under the rule of the Republic of Poland. Among young people, under the influence of frustration with the moderate methods by which the older generation tried to gain freedom, extremist ideas spread, which sometimes manifested themselves in terrorist acts.

The global economic crisis has provoked additional problems in such an impoverished region as Galicia, which has led to many social diseases: alcoholism and other forms of immoral behaviour. Analyzing the situation and trying to answer the question "Who's to blame?", the Metropolitan doesn't speak as a historian or sociologist. He writes first of all as a pastor and theologian and even a mystic. First of all, he calls (the message was sent to the priests, but I think this part of it applies to all without exception) to a serious, deep and sincere examination of conscience. Emphasizing first of all the analysis of those sins that entail the suffering and poverty of the whole society: "Encouraging you to the test of conscience, I would like to draw your attention to that side of our mistakes and sins, which harm not only ourselves but also others. Again, I do not have in mind those special sins with which a man can directly harm his neighbor, such as temptation or damage of property or insult honour, but the harm inflicted on his neighbour by hidden and secret sin. Because there is a law, perhaps quite mysterious, that we cannot doubt: the law of solidarity

of all humankind and, in a special way, of all Christians, or in an even more special way of all Catholics." And again: "In some sense and to some extent, we humans are so connected to ourselves that we are responsible for each other and all for each other, the merits of one are credited to all; and the sins of all are the death and evil of all. According to him, physical, visible solidarity is only a manifestation of hidden, supernatural solidarity. "... Not so that every man does not have his merits and personal sins /... / But, despite the personal responsibilities of each, in particular, there is a mysterious law of common merit and responsibility."

In my opinion, our reflection on practical dimensions of solidarity requires, first of all, focusing on the spiritual dimension of unity of the human community. During the last few months, I've heard this rhetorical question, "Who's to blame?" a lot of times. And as it was a hundred years ago, our answer should start with a sincere and personal reflection, remembering that every sin and every good act of mine shape an atmosphere in which my family, city, country and Church exist.

The next point I would like to dwell on in this presentation concerns one of the most talkable topics of our days. I mean the torrents of "fake news," which flooded our media and the phenomenon of the "post-truth." I like the phrase of the famous French existentialist philosopher A. Camus: «To call things by the wrong name is to add to the world's misfortune. » But I've met this phrase not during a reading of his works but in a book written by Cardinal Sarah "The Day Is Now Far Spent". In the first chapter of his book, Cardinal says: "The devil is afraid of being called by his name. He likes to drape himself in the fog of ambiguity. Let us be clear about one thing. "To call things by the wrong name is to add to the world's misfortune."

Today it is quite certain which mechanisms (not mentioning technological means) contributed to the fact that the distinction between good and evil, truth and lies has become so challenging, and substitution of the first with second is easier. Western "postwar consensus", the purpose of which was to weaken all that seemed "strong" and thus protect the world against the next disaster, concerned not only a "physical" dimension but above all philosophical. Everything "strong" that may require the person's full "inclusion" complete subordination of his life is dangerous because it can pave the way for another totalitarianism or authoritarianism. And hence the new catastrophe. Conversely, "weak" seemed a key to peace.

The search for the "transcendent truth", which is quite a common desire (and belongs to the essential features of human beings), in the context of the weakening of "strong" truths began to be a dangerous temptation. The word "truth" became a too "heavy" word. Those who use it too often may become subject to suspicion imposing a black and white world. It seemed that when everyone recognized the relativity of their own beliefs, they would become more or less like-minded. However, this did not happen; our societies aren't like-minded but fragmented. The multiplying of "alternative points of view," the use of "critical thinking" without a similar critical approach to its methodology, became a source of unhealthy irony, skepticism and cynicism. In addition to other social, political, and economic trends, it brought us to the VUCA-world

(volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) described by the US Army War College analysts in the early 1990s. We are all living in such a condition. This spring, a group of Christian intellectuals (Catholic, Orthodox, and Evangelicals), laymen and priests from Ukraine issued a joint statement called "*Longing for the Truth That Makes Us Free.*" In the first chapter of this document, they gave an accurate analysis of the present situation with the spreading of "fake news" – "*it is not about creating an alternate truth, but about eroding our basic ability to distinguish truth at all. /.../ the novelty of our current situation is that evil "hides itself from our eyes and avoids recognition of its very existence, of 'what evil truly is.*" I was surprised how this phrase coincided with the words of Cardinal Sarah cited above, and it brought me to the conclusion of the need for *solidarity in truth.*

As authors of the document summed up their statement: "*Falsehood and deception are a global and systemic phenomenon, pervasive and seemingly invincible. However, it can no longer be opposed by a system but by a single community – a community of people who are fighting for truth, raising their voices against wrongs. Our purpose is not merely to "do no harm"; our purpose is to change the values and principles of the social, political, and legal order in order to break the chains binding us to a system permeated by and enslaving us in Falsehood.*"

On May 13, 2004, in his lecture on Europe's Christian roots, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger spoke about the phenomenon of Europe's secularization. The loss of faith, Ratzinger argued, had brought with it three other kinds of loss: a loss of European identity, a loss of moral foundations, and a loss of faith in posterity, evident in the falling birthrates that he described as "a strange lack of desire for the future." The closest analogue to today's Europe, says Ratzinger, was the Roman Empire on the brink of its decline and fall. It seems that we are moving now in the opposite direction. The Roman Empire declined, and Christendom emerged. Christianity became a "Universal key" for all doors; Christian values became defining for almost all aspects of humans and states' lives. We are experiencing today in our culture, a reversal movement. I think everyone will agree that it would be naive to hope that at the present moment we can rapidly return to the time when Christianity will once again become for our societies a "universal key" to all "doors" and all "puzzles". Christianity is becoming again a path of discipleship as it was at the beginning of its history. Simultaneously, walking together on this path, we can't only learn by heart and replicate old formulas but become a "creative minority", as former Pope - Benedict XVI - used to say. I find this notion of "creative minority" very useful and inspiring. We can find many examples in the world's history when such "creative minorities" transformed the whole environment. But being a minority, we need more cooperation than before. One of the practical fields of this cooperation, or practical solidarity as you wish, is *solidarity in creativity.* As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks once said, "True creative minorities fight the battles of tomorrow, not those of yesterday." I'm convinced that our organizations and our Churches have developed many good and fruitful programs and projects of evangelization, defending of social justice, social enterprises etc. that can be useful to other organizations and Churches. We can share them and thus be more prepared for tomorrow's battles, which are already on our threshold.