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Summary of doctoral dissertation

Relevance of a personalistic approach to the relation between a woman and a man in the contemporary consumer society Analysis of a perspective applied by John Paul II and Karol Wojtyła

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The purpose of this work is to present the relevance of personalism in the relation between a woman and a man in the contemporary consumer society. The analysis is based on the personalistic thought of Karol Wojtyła and John Paul II. It shows that personalism is a valuable proposal because it underlines the meaning of a person in the world and empowers human beings. The work presents the characteristics of the world of consumption and major assumptions of personalism to reveal contemporary changes in the perception of the relation between a woman and a man. It presents the valence and good impact of personalism on the relation between a woman and a man, including in particular marriage and family relationships. It shows that a road to life in accordance with the principle of personalism is very difficult and long, however possible.

The main method applied herein is an analytic and synthetic method and elements of a comparative method because the purpose is not only to present the contemporary consumer society and the personalism of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II, but give the picture of the relevance of the personalist approach to the relation between a woman and a man in the contemporary consumer society. For that purpose, it is necessary to present the essence of personalism and values existing in the contemporary consumer world in order to reflect the impact thereof on the relation between a woman and a man and the way a family functions.

The dissertation is made of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a list of quoted works.

The first chapter contains the analysis of the contemporary consumer world, where consuming is the most important goal of human life because, through consumption, people fulfil themselves and achieve the objective of their life. Objectification and commoditisation, i.e. treating everything as things or goods, is a characteristic of the world of consumption. Since the human being becomes reduced to an object of consumption, which can be used and thrown away. In the life of a human being as a consumer, the following values prevail: pleasure, free time, fun, shopping. This is not new. The novelty is the mass nature of this phenomenon, which has also an impact on social roles played by a woman and a man. The new consumerist identity of a man is not presented in opposition to a sensitive and delicate femininity and borders between masculinity and femininity fade away. A man as a consumer should first of all take care of his appearance and tangible goods because this is an indication of success and social prestige. A contemporary woman should play roles that are independent of her sexual conditions and should not limit herself to the role of a mother and wife. A woman should always take care of her appearance and body because this defines her and her value.

The second chapter attempts to present the essence of personalism of Karol Wojtyła and John Paul II. Contrary to the contemporary world of consumption, personalism empowers the human being. A woman and a man in the personalism of Karol Wojtyła and John Paul II are mainly persons with inalienable dignity. Wojtyła singles a person out of other things and gives them a supreme position in the world. Wojtyła also pays our attention to a danger connected with treating another person as a mean to achieve the goal. Wojtyła claims that love is an opposite of instrumental treatment. Love means being driven by the interest of another person and an adequate response to the value of another person. In behaviour of a contemporary consumer, you will notice the absolutisation of pleasure, which, as Wojtyła claims, leads to utilitarian mentality which threatens the proper relation between a woman and a man. The affirmation of dignity of another person and the selfless gift of oneself is the essence of love. It is necessary to point out that the dignity of a woman and a man is identical in the personalism of Karol Wojtyła. The dignity of a woman and a man is the dignity of a really existing person.

The third chapter presents one of the most important vocation of a woman and a man: a vocation to live in marriage and family. John Paul II sees the future of a contemporary family in the personalistic model and criticises contemporary alternative forms of family life because

they omit the subjective character of the family. Partners - consumers treat themselves as goods. The perception of many values, including faithfulness and love, also changes. Everything becomes commoditised. Wojtyła claims that a woman and a man are equal in terms of dignity and different in other aspects at the same time, which means that they create a complementary community. John Paul II noticed the contemporary growing problem of unskilful satisfaction of needs by people and life based on the idea of "have" rather than "be". Preferring tangible things over spiritual values is a great threat of consumerism. Therefore, it becomes important to popularise personalism through which people can free themselves of materialism. Wise ownership and use allow for development in the personalistic way. John Paul II believed that in the contemporary consumer society people should follow a moderate consumption approach.

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