

## Editorial

The present issues of “Theological-Historical Studies of Opole Silesia” is the first time in the history of the journal when one specific topic is the main focus. The issues main concerns is connected with the post-synodal apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis *Amoris laetitia*. The pontifical document has become the subject of a lot of discussions in the media, during academic conferences and debates with specialists throughout the whole world since its publication in March 2016. From the contents of the post-synodal exhortation, which was discussed during the two synods of bishops on family sprang many questions and controversies and many different forms of interpretation were taken. It especially concerns threads which can be specified as a *novum* relative to the traditional depictions and present practices towards complex problems of marriage and family life.

The main theme of this issue is dedicated to the document *Amoris laetitia* which questions if its contents can be determined as evolution or revolution in the teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage. In the research on answering this matter is an explanation of especially those contents of the exhortation which appear that they are a departure from the present position of the Catholic Church on marriage, and attempts to show a correct understanding, possibilities of their interpretations and to find the answer to the question of the issue. Nonetheless, this is an important attempt to show the way in which the apostolic exhortation by Francis has been received in different European countries and the status of its reception. The matter is the question if *Amoris laetitia* has been received with fear and anxiety and is considered as a departure from the present teaching of the Catholic Church or as an opportunity and challenge for local Churches and received with relief and calmness as an expression of the constant evolution of the teaching of the Catholic Church which sees what the signs of the time are and is not afraid to meet the complex problems of human life.

The articles in this issues of “Theological-Historical Studies of Opole Silesia” are academic contributions from part of the debates on *Amoris laetitia* which is conducted amongst theologians throughout the world. The papers presented herein are the fruit of an academic project in which specialists participated from different

branches of theology connected with different academic communities across Europe. Some of the articles came into being on the basis of papers delivered during an international academic conference on apostolic exhortation which took place at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2016 in Opole, Poland. Some of the papers are also the fruit of other conferences and debates on the pontifical document.

This bi-annual issue contains twelve academic articles concerned with the main theme which from a different point of view explains the matter expressed in the title question. Since *Amoris laetitia* is a pastoral document all papers are concerned with the pastoral problems of marriage and are taken from different perspective. The first paper shows and justifies a thesis about a change in the paradigm in the theology which brings *Amoris laetitia* and shows new pastoral spaces which follow from the teaching of this document. The following two papers are concerned with questions surrounding the dogmatic. The author of the first of them asserts that the basis of *Amoris laetitia* is to pay stronger consideration towards the variety of meanings of marriage in the context of processes of growth and stronger connections to the idea of mercy with the many complex situations of human life. The specific theological meaning of the sacramental mercy for people in complex situations is the subject of the next article. On the basis of the theological concept of mercy the author justifies the possibility of access to the sacraments for divorced people living in second partnerships. The next paper explains in which way the post-synodal exhortation is a disentanglement of the Gordian knot between different theological disciplines, especially between dogmatics, moral theology, pastoral theology, and canon law which concerns the problem of the statement of Catholic Church towards divorced people living in second partnerships. The author demands a development of the ecclesial teaching on this theme in these disciplines in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

Some articles of this issue are concerned with the specific questions of moral theology which are connected to *Amoris laetitia*. The first of them shows the problem of the tension between the ethos of mercy demanded by post-synodal document and the dilemmas of conscience which can arise in connection to the solutions proposed for divorced people living in non-sacramental partnerships. The subject of the next paper is concerned with the discussions on the indissolubility of marriage and different interpretations of it which are possible on the basis of the formulations of *Amoris laetitia*. The crucial idea to understanding the pontifical document is pastoral discernment which is a topic of the next paper. The author explains it on the basis of ekphrasis using by Pope Francis. On the basis of verbal pictures the author explains in which way the Catholic Church can become “a camp hospital” which

does not hesitate beyond the letter of the law. The next idea important for understanding of the teaching of post-synodal exhortation is the principle of graduality. Its meaning for the interpretation of the content of *Amoris laetitia* is the connection with others principles and new approaches in treating irregular situations are the matter of the next paper. Its author stresses and gives justification to the continuation of the teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage.

The question if *Amoris laetitia* is evolution or resolution in the teaching of the Catholic Church on marriage is concerned with how it has been received and the reception it has been given in different local Churches. This problem is discussed in the next articles. The first of them concerns the reception of post-synodal exhortation in Hungary and the challenges of the Hungarian society connected to gender questions. In a lot of countries *Amoris laetitia* has been received with enthusiasm as well as anxiety. Such reactions have been witnessed in Slovenia after the publication of *Amoris laetitia* as the next paper describes. For people engaged in the pastoral family in Slovenia the pontifical document is an important impulse for the refreshment of pastoral activity in this field. The assertion from *Amoris laetitia* is that it should not expect solutions of the Church Magisterium towards all detailed problems which is a challenge for Christians living in pluralistic societies. Questions can arise in connection with this document in the field of morality and examples of problems in Upper Silesia are presented in the next paper. The pastoral document by Pope Francis contains a lot of pedagogic indications. The last article talks about the pedagogic contents of post-synodal exhortation, especially connected to marriage and family life.

In the column *Reviews – Materials – Reports* can be found other texts on *Amoris laetitia*. There are three reviews on publications which appeared in connection to this pontifical document. Two of them are concerned with books which have been published by the German publishing house *Herder* in Freiburg in Brisgovia and by the French publishing house *Salvator* in Paris. The third review concerns articles on *Amoris laetitia* which have been published in the winter number of Polish quarterly *Wież*. The presented column contains a commentary on the document published by the Conference of German Bishops on the possibility of access to sacraments of divorced people living in second partnerships in January 2017. Last of all there is a report on an international academic conference on *Amoris laetitia* which was organised by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Opole in November 2016.

The editor hopes that the texts in this present issue of “Theological-Historical Studies of Opole Silesia” on *Amoris laetitia* make a valid contributions to explaining the contents of this pontifical document and help towards finding a precise

way of its interpretation. If the published texts will provoke new questions and discussions then they will have fulfilled the next important goal of academic contributions.