



People on the Move
N° 115 July-December 2011

**POLISH-LANGUAGE PASTORAL CARE
IN COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Fr. Wojciech NECEL, SChr
University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński -Warsaw

Introduction

Migration of people, as one of the essential structural features characterizing humankind at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, is a derivative of the continuously intensifying flow of technology, goods and funds. Globalization and integration find repercussions in the increasing ethnic, cultural, denominational and religious diversity of the Roman-Catholic faithful, as well as of other Christian denominations and non-Christian religions^{1[1]}.

The phenomenon of the migration of Polish people after the 1st of May 2004 in the countries of the European Union^{2[2]} is the subject of research in many disciplines, and it is as such described, analysed and forecast in various aspects. It is also a subject of theological reflection. Theologians attempt to work out appropriate methods of evangelization, pursuant to the teaching of the Catholic Church, especially to the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People^{3[3]},

1 [1] Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter *Caritas in veritate*, no. 21 – 33.

2 [2] In the present study, the term European Union is limited to the countries of Western Europe. Hence, the paper does not discuss Polish-language pastoral work in the so called new countries of the Union, like e. g. in Lithuania.

3 [3] PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE, Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* (further EMCC), Lublin 2008.

binding from the 3rd of May 2004, in order to minister to the wide range of Polish migrants and their families living in diaspora in the EU^{4[4]}.

1. Polish-language pastoral care in Western Europe before the 1st of May 2004

In most of the countries of Western Europe, Polish-language pastoral care is based on its own characteristic structures. Their foundations were laid as far back as the period of interwar Poland by the Episcopate with Cardinal August Hlond, the primate of Poland, as its head^{5[5]}. In order to provide Polish people with permanent care in individual countries, with the approval of the appropriate episcopates, Polish Catholic Missions came into existence. Realizing changes introduced after the Second Vatican Council, today they make up the basic system of Polish-language pastoral work. In those countries in which no missions were established, the Polish-language pastoral care is based on other possibly durable forms, determined every time by bilateral agreements drawn up between separate local ordinaries and representatives of the Polish Episcopate and major superiors of institutes of consecrated life.

The analysis of so developed structures allows to perceive the long-standing efforts of Polish bishops put not so much into creating durable forms of a Polish-language apostolate^{6[6]} as into providing Polish emigrants – living even in small centers – with the most possible systematic care by prepared priests, be they diocesan or from a religious order^{7[7]}. It must be emphasized that along with the gradual introduction of necessary modifications, the model of Polish-language pastoral care developed during the interwar period passed the test. It met pastoral requirements of Polish people in exile during the interwar period, but also during the dramatic years of World War II, in the turbulent post-war time and during the social and political transformations in Europe of the 1970s and 1980s^{8[8]}.

When talking about Polish-language pastoral work in Western Europe and about the pastoral needs of the Polish community abroad, it is necessary – on the basis of a historical outline of Polish Emigration – to point attention to the diversification of this milieu. The number of those who remained in Western Europe due to turbulence of the Second World War is

4 [4] Cf. W. NECEL, *Troska Kościoła o małżeństwo migranta i jego rodzinę w świetle instrukcji Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, *Ius Matrimoniale* 20 (2009), vol. 14, pp. 139-152.

5 [5] Cf. J. BAKALARZ, *Kardynał August Hlond – prekursorem nowoczesnego apostołatu emigracyjnego*, *Studia Towarzystwa Chrystusowego* 2 (1989) booklet 2, pp. 52-75.

6 [6] Cf. SZ. WESOŁY, *Wytyczne odnośnie założeń w duszpasterstwie emigracyjnym*, in: *W służbie emigracji*, London 1994, pp. 117-124.

7 [7] Cf. B. KOŁODZIEJ, *Opieka duszpasterska nad wychodźcami polskimi do roku 1939*, Poznań 2003, pp. 81-94.

8 [8] Cf. R. KARPIŃSKI, *Integracja europejska wyzwaniem dla Kościoła i Europy*, *Studia Towarzystwa Chrystusowego* 5 (2004) booklet 5, pp. 8-18.

naturally decreasing. After 1945 till the beginning of the 1970s, there can be talked about a declining influx of new emigrants. After all, only the few and “reliable” people had an opportunity to travel around European countries behind the Iron Curtain. Hardly anyone chose the fate of an emigrant.

A revival of Polish-language milieus in Western Europe took place in the last decades of the 20th century. Into pastoral centers came new waves of emigrants from Poland. Some of them sought temporary employment with the purpose of going back to Poland and to their families who were left there; others came with an intention to gain political asylum in Europe or in any overseas country. In each case, their presence added new life to Polish-language pastoral care, and the priests were faced with new challenges. In that period, new and very dynamic elements for pastoral care abroad became among other things: religious education of children and young people, care for engaged couples preparing for marriage and the apostolate of young married couples and families, particularly of those parted by migration. People gathering in Polish-language pastoral centers did not only look for religious services in their mother tongue, but they expected all kinds of assistance from the Church staff. Priests often became go-betweens for refugees from Poland and their families remaining in the country; they helped to find and reunify couples and families; they handed over correspondence and served as contact points. Many times, they gave legal advice and explained decisions of local civil authorities. They translated official and private letters; they organized financial help for the refugees themselves as well as together with them – for their families in Poland^{9[9]}.

2. About the term “Polish people in exile”

Taking into consideration the problems of Polish-language pastoral care in the EU, it is necessary to introduce those who are addressees of this kind of apostolate. For the use of the present study, the expression “Polish people in exile” means permanent emigration. It involves at first the so called “old emigration”, then the Solidarity emigration, and finally the modern job emigration of Poles, both seasonal and the so called “shuttle” migration. Today, Polish people, being already citizens of the European Union, travel across the trails blazed by the labour market and growing academic and cultural centers. More and more courageously, they join Polish-language pastoral centers where they benefit from spiritual ministry. For pastoral reasons the designation of the term “Polish people in exile” should be extended to include also all of those who have no Polish origins, but who in some way identify themselves with the specifically Polish spirituality, culture and customs, and that very often have a weak knowledge of or no knowledge of the Polish language^{10[10]}.

3. Ecclesial foundations of Polish-language pastoral care in the European Union

The Church as a Paschal Community that is travelling on a pilgrimage to the House of the Father is a multiethnic and intercultural People of God, organically consisting of different peoples and nations. Pointing to the ecclesial foundations of modern ethnic pastoral work, the

⁹[9] Cf. A. DUCZKOWSKI, *Parafia “w drodze”* in: *Rozbudzić wiarę ojców* (edited by W. Necel), Poznań – Essen 1995, pp. 123-126.

¹⁰[10] Cf. T. TALIK, *Widziane z Niemiec*, in: *Sentire cum Societate* (edited by W. Necel), Poznań 2007, pp. 213-222.

event of Pentecost must be evoked^{11[11]}. In the community of prayer at that time in Jerusalem, the cultural and linguistic diversity did not blur the truth of belonging to one catholic, apostolic and universal Church of the Risen Lord (Acts 2:1-36). Pastoral care of Poles abroad should be constantly set in St. Paul's description of the community of Christ's disciples where "there can be neither Jew nor pagan, there can be neither slave nor freeman, there can be neither male nor female". For all are "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:29), as "there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There is one God and Father of all, over all, through all and within all" (Eph 4:5-6).

The ecclesial foundation of pastoral care has been very strongly emphasized in the directions of the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, which following the Code of Canon Law of 1983 and the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches of 1990, reminds that: "Christ's faithful have the right to be assisted by their pastors with the spiritual riches of the Church, especially by the word of God and the sacraments"^{12[12]} and Christ's faithful have the right "(...) to follow their own form of spiritual life, provided it is in accord with Church teaching" (CIC can. 214; CCEO can. 17). However, because of their specific cultural and religious formation and their own typical identity, Polish people staying abroad "cannot sufficiently make use of the common and ordinary pastoral care" and this is why they deserve special care from local pastors^{13[13]}. This care is mainly entrusted to the local diocesan bishop and the parish priest at the place of arrival (CIC can. 383, § 1 and can. 529, § 1). In collaboration with the Polish Episcopate, the bishop *ad quem*, should organize special pastoral activity for the sake of Polish immigrants which, after all cannot be added to the ordinary pastoral activity as something extra, but it should constitute an integral part (*EMCC* 70 – 72).

4. Factors shaping modern migration of Polish people

Taking into consideration the problems of Polish-language pastoral care in the European Union, it is necessary to pay attention to the contemporary factors shaping the intensity and the direction of the migratory movements of Poles^{14[14]}. They stimulate the development of organizations and the Polish-language structures of pastoral centers and they make them more

11 [11] J. BEYER, *Fondamento ecclesiale della pastorale dell'emigrazione*. in: *Per una pastorale dei migranti*, Roma 1980, pp. 129-148.

12 [12] *The 1983 Code of Canon Law* (further CIC), can. 213; *The 1990 Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* (further CCEO), can. 16.

13 [13] Cf. THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, no. 18.

14 [14] Cf. W. NECEL, *Polacy w państwach Unii Europejskiej wyzwaniem dla Kościoła w Polsce*, Ateneum Kapłańskie 151(2008), booklet 1 (596), pp. 128-131.

dynamic, but sometimes they can also cause shrinkage and possibly, a complete disappearance of their activity^{15[15]}.

Among the many factors which stimulate modern migration, three long-term aspects must be indicated as fundamental. They are: the EU citizenship of every citizen of the Republic of Poland, demographic changes in the country and the transformation from an industrial society into a post-industrial one. It should be kept in mind that apart from long-term factors which are shaping the modern diaspora in Europe, there are also some other aspects with a rather temporary character, like for example the world economic crisis at the turn of the 1st and 2nd decades of the 21st century.

a) Apart from free flow of products, services, capital and enterprises, the Union guarantees the free flow of people. Along with the setting up of the European Union, Article 17 of the Maastricht Treaty of the 7th February 1992, granted European citizenship to all citizens of member states. On these grounds, each of them has the right to free migration and to stay in the territory of all EU countries. In this way, after the 1st May 2004, all citizens of the Republic of Poland, being citizens of the Union, are entitled to their rights and duties. Among them, being the right to travel freely in the territory of all EU member states, and that not only as tourists, but also in order to look for and to take up work or to go to college.

The granting of European citizenship to all citizens of member states caused a situation in which the Church in Europe has been faced with the necessity of intensifying local pastoral activities with special service towards newcomers and solidarity with them. This way, traditional monocultural communities of the faithful have become multi- and intercultural communities of faith, hope and love.

b) For a dozen years, Poland has been affected by an extreme decline in the birth rate. The decrease in population is going to be very soon comparable with human loss during the Second World War. In search for the reasons of this phenomenon, the vast majority of interpretations indicate social and economical transformations initiated in 1989. Generally speaking, Polish people believe that we are a nation of 40 million. However, for a dozen years this number has been continually declining. In the previous 20 years, the birth rate dropped by half. Just a simple replacement/equalization level can be talked about when the total fertility rate amounts to about 2,11. The last time this ratio was exceeded in Poland was in 1988. In 2003 the total fertility rate came to just 1,24, and according to predictions, in 2010 it is not going to be higher than 1,1. The outlined demographic transformations in Poland can additionally grow stronger due to the migratory movements of Polish people, and in future prospects, they can stop today's work migration. It is here worth mentioning that due to the demographic situation, modern Poland is being transformed from an emigrational country into an imigrational one which results in the necessity of the development of appropriate pastoral care activities for immigrants in the Polish Church^{16[16]}.

¹⁵ [15] Cf. W. NECEL, *Udział Polski w procesie integracji Europy wyzwaniem dla duszpasterstwa emigracyjnego*, *Colloquia Theologica Ottoniana* 1 (2002), vol. 1, pp. 78-79.

¹⁶ [16] Cf. W. NECEL, *Duszpasterstwo imigrantów*, *Homo Dei* 76 (2007) no. 2, pp. 47-49.

c) The Polish diaspora in the European Union of the first decade of the 21st century is more and more shaped by processes of economic globalization and cultural informatization that are stimulated by integration understood in many aspects^{17[17]}. The period of the industrial economy in which capital accumulation lay in production plants, is coming to an end. In the now beginning post-industrial period, the accumulation of capital is located in the so called creative sector of economy, based on innovation and communication. The extremely streamlined and technocratic production system, with its bookkeeping uniformity and welfare protectiveness, is slowly driven away by independent projects gathering indispensable intellectual and financial means as well as specialists needed for their timely realization. A permanent work place is being gradually replaced with a system of projects and short-term assignment contracts. The above outlined process of transformations results in a transformation of the entire society. It compels one to look in a different way at migratory movements and the circles of Polish-speaking diasporas and their pastoral expectations in the EU member states.

5. Church integration of a migrant as a *principium* in Polish-language pastoral care in the Union

By entering on his or her European migratory track, a Pole starts a long integration process. Adaptation difficulties typical of the first integration period are often intensified by the strangeness of those on the receiving side of immigration and the failure of social structures to take in these “new ones”. It happens that also the local Church and the host parish are poorly adapted to building an intercultural community of the faithful. A feeling of alienation and isolation as well as primitive living conditions in the initial period of emigration may put an immigrant on the sidelines of society and the Church for long years^{18[18]}.

The integration process of a migrant leads from a full self-respect for his or her cultural and religious identity and is followed by the evolutionary entrance into the new place of living. Due to its complexity, this process is multifaceted, but first of all, it is multigenerational and it does not take place in all fields at the same pace. The cultural and religious differences last the longest. It reaches “the being” of the man, and at the same time, it establishes an invisible, dynamic thread of education for following generations. The social and cultural integration of the migrant, understood as a synergy of values, is also expressed in the integration with the Church and it leads to full participation in the life of the local community *ad quem* and of the host parish (*EMCC* 77).

The basic management principle of Polish-language pastoral care in Europe is to help Polish migrants to find their place in the local Church of the new host country through an unlimited access to the spiritual goods of the Church, especially to the Word of God and the sacraments. This principle forms the basis for all aspects of the Polish-language apostolate in individual EU countries. The duty to preserve one’s own cultural identity and the contribution to the community of faith, hope and love at the new place are in the end two coincidental

¹⁷ [17] JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, no. 101.

¹⁸ [18] Cf. R. DZWONKOWSKI, *Integracja emigrantów w przemówieniach Jana Pawła II do Polonii*, in: *Papież Jan Paweł II a emigracja i Polonia 1978-1987*, (edited by R. Dzwonkowski, S. Kowalczyk, E. Walewander) Lublin 1991, pp. 109-114.

currents in the process of Church integration. The cultural heritage gained in one's home country is an essential element of integration and it does not have any static features, because it is a value that allows entering into the life of the Church *ad quem* in a multifaceted way^{19[19]}.

Multiculturalism in the Church is becoming a guarantee of respect for "otherness" and a barrier to reviving desires for appropriation. As an icon of the Holy Trinity, the Church that proclaims God's Message and shows the final destiny of man, has the task of strengthening the faith. She is not becoming the place of "*appropriation of the stranger*", but the source of "*openness to the stranger and the different one*". Christianity is not an obligation to think about the one only and dominating, exclusive truth. It is instead the fruit of hope addressed to individuals and to societies that prevents the shutting oneself away from the newcomers. The otherness brought by the stranger is not something transitional; something that can achieve perfection only "*in front of us*". It forces the recognizing of complementary identities of separate members in a given community in the Church. A large task of the Church is to show the general public that the identities of particular societies cannot develop by means of a shrinking process, in which "the stranger" is perceived as someone only to be defended, won over or pushed into the background. When accepting the doctrine of the social and religious integration of the stranger as the binding one in Polish-language pastoral care in Europe, it has to be assumed that there are no "strangers" in the Church. Besides, the cultural and linguistic diversity should be put to work for the service of the Gospel so that Polish-language pastoral centers in the EU become more and more "*the home and the school of communion*"^{20[20]}.

The principle of the social and religious integration of the migrant is superior for Polish-language pastoral care both for those who have left Poland permanently and for those who are temporary contract workers or their stay abroad is dictated by seasonal work or studies. In no case can these people be made to form pseudo communities closed to the local Church and the parish.

Special pastoral care of Poles abroad ought to sensitize not only the local Church to the presence of "the stranger", but it should on its part sympathize with people from different cultural and religious circles. The presence of "the stranger" is an important fact not just for politicians, sociologists, historians, border guards, social workers and volunteers of "Caritas", but also for pastoral workers and for Polish-language communities, which they lead. In attempting to comprehensively undertake the topic connected with "the stranger", in the center appears the widely understood issue of their identity/otherness, multiculturalism of the society and its interculturalism both in the territory of the country or region and in the territory of the diocese or host parish^{21[21]}. In none of these societies "*can a human being live*

19 [19] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Message *O zachowanie własnej tożsamości i uznanie tożsamości innych*, in: John Paul II, *Orędzia na Światowy Dzień Migranta i Uchodźcy 1985 – 2005* (edited by W. Necel), Poznań 2009, pp. 140-142.

20 [20] JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Nuovo millennio ineunte*, Poznań 2001, no. 43.

21 [21] Cf. J. R. ARMOGATE, *Szansa dla wierzących*, *Communio* 20 (2000), no. 3 (117), pp. 54-60.

without looking towards the future”^{22[22]}. When underlining the boundaries of strangeness and identity, one unavoidably comes across the term “integration”. It is quite difficult to verify, but it indicates the need for radical dissociation from what the entire problem that “the stranger” represents and limits to the simple assimilation of “the others”. Integration as a social and religious reclassification is pervaded by profound processes of recomposition of the social and religious balance. This social and religious reclassification is connected with all cultural transformations in the host country. It concerns both “old residents” and “newcomers”. In the Polish-language apostolate in the EU, “the newcomers” must not be treated as a subject of integration. Instead, they should themselves actively contribute to the reclassification of the social space in their place of arrival.

The Church integration of a migrant as a management principle of Polish-language pastoral care in the EU can constitute a basis for the realization of several principles which adapt it to the real conditions of pastoral care of Polish people abroad.

a) The goal set by the Church for Polish-language pastoral workers demands that the priests continually adjust method of apostolic action to the spiritual needs of the migrant, which are rooted in the native spirituality of the migrants, and it should correspond to their present situation and it should be modified in accordance with the degree of advancement in the integration process. In no case, should the religious style of the service in Polish-language centers “dogmatize” the native spirituality of immigrants and isolate the Polish-language group from the local Church. The difficulty of this requirement becomes particularly significant in consideration of the fact that Polish-language environments are systematically joined by newcomers with an intention of temporary or permanent settlement. Therefore, a Polish-language pastoral worker should consider in his work schedule essential elements, which are among other things: period of stay in a given place, place of original descent in Poland, causes of migration, specificity of spirituality, the numerical increase etc.

b) “Emigration for bread” along with “emigration for freedom” formed the picture of Polish emigrational centers in the countries of Western Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. Indirectly, they extorted the style of pastoral activity and religious service in Polish-speaking pastoral centers. The structures of Polish ethnic pastoral care were determined by the statute of Polish presence abroad in specific historical and social conditions. In order to follow the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, after the 1st of May 2004, Polish-speaking pastoral workers should meet arising challenges and, like their predecessors, pay heed to the factors shaping modern mobility of Polish people, especially to the so called work mobility and pendular migration within the European Union. What influences modern understanding of the term “Polish people abroad”, is undoubtedly the motive for leaving the country. On Christmas 2007, the Primate of Poland Cardinal Józef Glemp emphasized in his letter to Polish migrant centers that “*in the past, one left the country in order to live, and now, one leaves in order to live better*”.

22 [22] JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, Poznań 2003, no. 11.

c) Fusion of markets, flow of technology, accumulation of capital, the liberation of currency and open borders increase both people's migration within the Union and the inflow of immigrants from outside the EU, which in the end creates the structural, religious and cultural diversity of local Churches and territorial parish communities. This situation must have repercussions in the pastoral activity of the Church. Hence, the local Church, taking care of all the faithful living in a given territory, ought to arrange among other things foreign-language pastoral care, institutionally organized forms of ecumenical dialogue, as well as contact with followers of other religions and with non-believers. It is quite easy to calculate the positive results of capital, technology and currency globalization. Instead, it is more difficult to predict their psychological, social or even pastoral consequences. An anxiety-provoking immersion into anonymity and intransparency as well as the atomization of life almost naturally awaken the need to put down one's cultural and religious roots first in the closest environment, in the family, and then afterwards in the cultural and religious heritage.

d) On account of the integration process experienced individually by separate migrants, one of the more important realization principles is the principle of revision and diversity which takes into consideration the integration degree of the individual community and the pastoral needs arising out of them.

e) Another important realization principle is the principle of progression. It demands that the pastoral worker follow the migrant on his migratory journey, to live with him in the diaspora and to accompany him step by step on all the stages of his formation and development. The Holy Father Benedict XVI emphasized this strongly during his meeting with the clergy in St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Warsaw on the 25th of May 2006: *"Those who leave must be cared for by priests who, in partnership with the local Churches, take on a pastoral ministry among the emigrants."*

6. Cultural pluralism as a consequence of the integration processes

In the special pastoral care of migrants, the cultural and spiritual pluralism of the Church, which is the consequence of the natural diversity of the People of God^{23[23]}, results in the cultivating of the values brought by newcomers. However, the values supported and cultivated in Polish-language pastoral care in the Union must not lead to atomization and disintegration of the Church community. So if on the one hand, it is necessary to avoid the tendency to assimilation, on the other it is important to stress with the same dynamism visible signs of coaffiliation. The Church particular, in which and from which the one and only Catholic Church exists (CIC can. 368), should promote the culture of welcome and solidarity with immigrants (*EMCC* 39 – 43).

The experience of cultural and linguistic pluralism in the Church gained by Polish people living in the diaspora in the Union should not only make them realize the presence of communities of different descent or language, but it should motivate them to the intercultural merging of all faithful into the *communio* of the Church. A sense of identity characteristic to individual national or linguistic groups in the local Church is both the basis and the point of departure for a tolerance full of respect and loyal acceptance of other national groups, as well as appreciation and participation in their spiritual values. Hence, the cultivation of cultural

23 [23] Decree on the mission activity of the Church *Ad gentes*, no. 2.

and religious identity in Polish–language pastoral care should be parallel with the sensitivity to other ethnic communities and finally to the good of the whole multicultural and multilingual parish community. While still keeping in mind particular individual interests, the order of social life demands subordination to the common good, which in the end serves the ethnic communities and the people living there. Through its dynamics, the process of social and religious integration strives toward the merger of diverse elements into a harmonious whole, with retention of the personal freedom of individuals and observance of the binding order. It requires that human values be developed and cultivated in a spirit of unity understood not as tendency for unification, but as a rule of development of individual groups into an organic whole. In the process of the social and religious integration of the migrant, the cultivation of native traditions and one’s spirituality requires a special open attitude and a sense of respect for the host community. This process should be marked by gradual, mutual merging and the enrichment of the values system of the migrant with the values of the host community. Therefore, in the apostolic activity of Polish-language pastoral centers, the integrational effort of the faithful should run parallel to a respect for other ethnic communities and the communities of the local Church, to retain and preserve not only their linguistic, but also religious and cultural identity. We need not only tolerance for “the others”, but – in the spirit of solidarity – also willingness and readiness to take part, depending on local conditions, not only in regularly held liturgy in one’s own native language, but also in common liturgy, in which essential linguistic and spiritual elements of other participating groups would be present^{24[24]}.

7. The chaplain/missionary of Polish-language pastoral centers

Before Poland entered the European Union but still also today, the essential role in Polish-language pastoral care in Europe is played by the pastoral worker, the chaplain/missionary of Polish people abroad. When analyzing the history of Polish emigration and Polish-language pastoral care, it is easy to notice that the model of pastoral activity, developed in the context of the specificity of Polish emigration, is a model of a priest of Polish origin who follows the migrating people. In this way, he himself has become “an emigrant among emigrants”, and his pastoral activity has a chance to become not merely “for migrants”, but “with migrants” and “among migrants”. The chaplain/missionary knows that the aim of a special apostolate for the sake of Polish people living in diaspora in the EU is neither the establishment of Polish cultural and linguistic ghettos nor a simple transplant of Polish pastoral patterns into the territories of other local Churches or territorial parishes (cf. *EMCC* 44 – 48). He is a specific bridge and an intercultural link between the native culture of a migrant and the culture of the host country and between the Church of the migrant’s origin and the Church of arrival. Since his activity has the quality of service towards migrants, a pastoral worker in Polish-speaking centers in Europe guards their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, and at same time he avoids establishment of ghettos. A Polish-language pastoral worker understands his role as a service towards the Poles living abroad. In a spirit of respect for otherness and of dialogue, a pastoral worker leads the faithful entrusted to him into the life of the Church of arrival and into the local culture. So defined, the foundation of multiculturalism issues to local Churches the challenge of a real ecclesial integration of

²⁴ [24] Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Message *Szanować tożsamość kulturową każdej osoby*, in: JOHN PAUL II, *Orędzia na Światowy Dzień Migranta i Uchodźcy 1985 – 2005* (edited by W. Necel), Poznań 2009, pp. 57-62.

immigrants, whom they take in and with whom they constitute one unique Catholic Church (*EMCC* 90 and 93).

8. Family migration as a challenge for themselves

Despite their EU citizenship, a family emigrating to another country within the Union, changes their current natural social, cultural and pastoral context. Since they have settled in a new place, they live in a completely different environment, as “foreign” among “foreigners” with whom they do not have social bonds, at least at the beginning. It is not only a matter of not having a common language, but of a widely understood ethnic and religious otherness as well as of a moral context. Members of a migrant family stand at the beginning of a long process of multifaceted integration. Although this process is experienced in a marital community and in a family, family members are affected by it individually, and the degree of social and religious integration is measured with generations (cf. *EMCC* 77). The diversity, for instance between parents and their children, is emerging already at early stages. Difficulties with adaptation, typical of the first period of integration, are often intensified by alienation and isolation as well as by primitive living conditions and they push the migrant family to the sidelines of society and the Church.

For the pastoral care of married couples and of families in Poland and in the Polish diaspora in the territory of the European Union, it is important to observe that in a host country the migrant family often comes across a different model of life and a different system of values. This observation has a clear effect on diverse transformations in the internal structure of a family and their activity. Very often, under the influence of a family model in the host country, the Polish migrant family undergoes quickened and necessary adaptation processes, which – in the context of integration processes – on the one hand, verify and strengthen marriage bonds and family ties, but on the other, they can shatter the national and cultural identity of a family, religiousness, and sometimes, they irretrievably destroy their community and cause a permanent breakdown.

Exaggerated efforts to improve the material status of a family, characteristic of the first years of emigration have an adverse impact on the lifestyle of the couple and the family and they have a negative influence on the child-rearing process. Children from migrant families become the first victims of the cultural and emotional isolation of their family in the society, as well as of the lack of an appropriate educational climate at home where education is pushed into the background. They experience a specific tragedy in the split between various languages and cultures, which they come across on the one hand in their family and on the other in the new social environment. The fact that they can relatively quickly master the local language and get in touch with their peers makes integration processes more dynamic. This meets with the fear of deprivation of national identity and the natural opposition of their parents who use their mother tongue and cultivate native traditions. Often, parents and children live in two worlds, which bring about spiritual losses to the whole family, and particularly for the children.

Another picture of a migrant family emerges from the more and more common phenomenon of married couples and families split by emigration and the so called pulsating migration. It is necessary to bear in mind the picture of the entire family, not only the migration of one spouse or one parent. The arising divisions are very complicated and traumatic, and they often lead to a long-term separation of parents from their children and to the dramatically increasing phenomenon of so called Euro orphans in Poland. When describing such married

couples and their families as well as their pastoral demands, one needs first of all to take into account three factors: the reason for migration which is most frequently dictated by economic motives, the period of separation and the possibilities of communication between husband and wife separated by migration, and between parents and their children. Such separation of spouses and divisions caused by migration are very painful and contrary to the nature and the tasks of marriage and the family. They contribute to disturbance in family and marital communication, whose basic dimensions are closeness and intimacy. Separation often disturbs or even breaks off intimate marriage bonds and family ties. Spouses themselves are put to the temptation of infidelity, to more or less durable extramarital bonds, and sometimes their lives go in a direction which leads to the degeneration of marital bonds and family ties and to the definitive breakdown of the marriage and the family. In a family parted by migration, emotional bonds and family commitments become weaker. Due to the cultural diversity in which the migrating family or the spouses themselves live, and due to the period of separation, sometimes even the family members become strangers to each other. Communication and dialogue, so necessary and typical to marriage and family, disappear. Even though the cohesion is kept, the mutual giving characteristic to marriage vanishes. Regardless of the causes of migration, those who have left their homeland are subject to wanted or unwanted assimilation processes in the host country, which in the case of a long-lasting separation results in the adaptation of attitudes and behaviors of the new environment and in a dramatic inability to reunify the family and the couple.

Modern migratory movements of Polish people in the EU, characteristic of the first decade of the 21st century, are marked to a great extent by economic conditions. Therefore, the result of migration geared towards attracting a cheap workforce on the one hand and the improving of the standard of living on the other, is the separation of the married couple and the family. The lack of work for husband and wife, lack of dwelling place, travelling costs, the need for the extension of an infrastructure enabling the whole family to stay in a new place, very often it is the legislation of the host country itself that makes it hard or even impossible for entire families to move. Offers of work or jobs only for men or only for women most frequently strike at the deepest bonds of *communio personarum* in a marriage and a family. In the context of the discussed problems, it seems to be legitimate to revise the basic principle of the social teaching of the Church that the leading principium of economical, social and political life should be the human being. Similarly important is John XXIII's recommendation from *Pacem in terris* (1963), an encyclical addressed to "to all men of good will", "that as far as possible employment should seek the worker, not vice versa".

Migration is a circumstance favorable to entering into mixed marriages between emigrants and the permanent residents of a territory as well as between migrants from various ethnic, denominational and religious groups. The essence of the problem of the discussed married couples lies on the one hand in the constriction of the common social and cultural basis, which protects family and married life, and in the broadening of identities on the other, which can give rise to misunderstandings and conflicts, among other things in the field of education of children, including their religious formation. It is generally believed that mixed marriages are not easy and happy ones, and as statistics show, divorce rates are considerably higher than in the case of homogeneous marriages. Of course, from the pastoral point of view the situation is less complicated when spouses differ only in the cultural respect. It is worse when they additionally are of different denominations or religions.

In the context of the migrant family, it seems to be essential to recall the basic tasks and functions of the Christian family; the first one – resulting from the marital consecration – is

the building of a community of life and love. The fundamental aim of marriage and of family is the sanctification of their members, transmission of life and education of children to their full human, social and ecclesial maturity. The above functions and goals need particular verification in emigration. The fundamental task of the Church in regards to migrant families is supporting them with adequate pastoral care aimed at the strengthening of their inner unity and at supporting them in the tasks characteristic to the family. The care ought to be comprehensive, in which the religious and moral services develop parallel to social and cultural help, and even if necessary, to economic help. In each case, the service of the Church for the sake of the migrant family should be an answer to the real situation of a given family. Living abroad in their concrete situations, families themselves should also on their part respond to the dramatic appeal of John Paul II: “*family, become what you are*” (FC 17). Taking into account the situation of a migrant family as presented above, the activity of the Church should be directed at: reunification of the family split by emigration, inner integration of the migrant family as well as social and religious integration of the family in the country of arrival.

Not just a migrant, but their whole family living on emigration, have the right to expect from the pastoral worker help in the process of the long-lasting social and religious integration in the host country. It concerns not only those, who choose their new place of living – frequently determined by work – as the permanent place to stay, but also those who, due to their work conditions, stay in a given country temporarily. Neither the first nor the latter may seclude themselves from the host society, irrespective of whether they have already come with their entire family or they are awaiting the remaining family members or finally, whether they periodically travel home or are going to go back to Poland after having finished their job. None of the mentioned groups may form a ghetto around themselves, but in an active way they should create living cells of the local Church and the lay community by sharing their religious, cultural and professional resources and by contributing to the intercultural community in the place of arrival. The social and religious integration is a spontaneous process and it requires the solidarity of the local community with the newcomers and of the newcomers with the local community.

The basic task of the Church is to help the family in their internal integration, with the development of their values and functions at the same time. In the case of a family, whose members have just begun their migration or have just started living in a new place, this help presupposes a social guarantee and the necessary economical and legal support making it possible for the family to reconstruct their own stable home. The aim of Church pastoral activity for the sake of migrant married couples and families is to support them in discovering and living out their mission in the place of arrival, in the face of concrete problems resulting from migration and life in the conditions of the diaspora (FC 69). In the Church’s pastoral care of the migrant family, a particular place takes both the local host parish and the special pastoral structures for the sake of migrants in a given territory. Local pastoral workers are personally obliged to take care of the religious and moral issues of migrants as well as to give them the help they need. The care of newcomers and ethnic minorities living in the diaspora is simply inscribed in the pastor’s office (CIC can. 529 § 1).

A wide range of tasks, particular in social, economical and legal matters, can be done by lay faithful and ecclesial groups, but first and foremost by host families (*EMCC* 86 – 88). Also the bishop should in his pastoral service pay special attention to migrant families (CIC can. 383 § 1), and the diocesan Church is expected to develop a diocesan-wide program for the

reception of migrants, in which the organization of adequate ethnic pastoral care has a special place.

In the period of enhanced pastoral care of the family, including migrant families also, the Church should strive to develop new forms of her pastoral care, adequate to changing conditions. In order to develop new forms of activity, on the one hand, it should draw on the recommendations of the Holy See, included also in the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, and on the recommendations of individual Episcopal Conferences both *a quo* and *ad quem* of the Polish migrant and separate bishops, but, on the other, it is necessary to appeal to the prudence and the experience of migrant pastoral workers and pastors in local host parishes. In the search for adequate forms of pastoral activities, essential help comes from lay people collaborating with pastoral workers, both engaged individually and organized in groups.

When developing adequate forms of pastoral care for migrant families, it is necessary to speak about their evolutionary adaptation to newcomers and the degree of integration of families subject to migrant pastoral care. By cooperating with multi-specialist family counselling services, migrant pastoral workers should devote much more time to families that have just arrived, to married couples and families on the way of “family reunification”, families experiencing difficulties, broken families, mixed couples, single mothers and fathers in emigration, non-sacramentally joined couples, as well as single people living without their own family. The migrants’ chaplains/missionaries carrying out their ministry towards married couples and families in emigration, should follow them on their migratory paths and accompany them step by step on all the stages of their formation and development (*EMCC 75 – 77*).

9. Some detailed problems of Polish-language pastoral care in the European Union

A significant problem for Polish-speaking pastoral care in Europe is the systematic building of a base for the formation and preparation of diocesan priests and religious to work in migrant pastoral care. Benedict XVI pointed out in his speech to the clergy on the 25th of May 2006 in the Arch cathedral in Warsaw, that in the face of Poles’ migration from their homeland, the Church of Poland cannot be indifferent: “*Those who leave must be cared for by priests who, in partnership with the local Churches, take on a pastoral ministry among the emigrants.*” In the same address, the Holy Father appealed: “*Priests of Poland, do not be afraid to leave your secure and familiar world, to go and serve in places where priests are lacking (...)*”.

For already existing pastoral centers for Polish-speaking communities, the mobility of Polish people within Europe presents multiple challenges. Their presence is dictated by an evangelical necessity to become open to newcomers, to accept them and to share experienced good with them, especially the Word of God and the sacraments. In this process, it is important to care for those who have already for many years made use of that kind of apostolate, for Polish emigrants from the second and earlier generations, but also of those who, after Poland entered the European Union and Schengen Area, more and more frequently and numerous attend Sunday Eucharist and other meetings. This openness often requires a spiritual effort from the “old” faithful of a given center and from their pastoral workers. Being Christ’s disciples, newcomers, regardless of their “immigration status”, ought to find in Polish-speaking pastoral centers their “own” community and support both for themselves and for their marriage and family. These challenges analyzed and responded to by the

chaplains/missionaries of Polish-speaking pastoral centers should take into consideration the degree of ecclesial integration of people making use of the service in a given center, and the ability to tackle new tasks in the changing conditions of time, place and people^{25[25]}, so that Polish immigrants and their families can find everywhere in the Church their homeland^{26[26]}.

In Polish-speaking pastoral care in Europe, a wrong assumption would be the thesis that its structures and organization apparent before the 1st May 2004 fully meet contemporary pastoral needs of Polish diaspora in Europe. The phenomenon of Polish people's mobility as citizens of the European Union has its legal basis, which unquestionably influences its dynamics and trends. It seems that by the applying of the hermeneutics of continuity there is also the need to reflect on the use of the legal-pastoral instruments of the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, on the relative stability of Polish-language pastoral structures, and on a permanent readiness to organize new pastoral points with a simultaneous requirement to close the existing ones, even if they were model centers in the past. It's worth remembering that the pastoral solutions presented in *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* have an exemplificative character. The care of migrants' spiritual good demands of the local bishop and the pastor of the territorial parish that they make use of all kinds of help and even non-canonical solutions, which in concrete situations appear to be pastorally effective (*EMCC* 90 – 91). A challenge for the future is to develop as stable as possible structures of Polish-speaking pastoral care. They should be able to adapt to the changeability and spontaneity of the phenomenon of Polish migration and they should take into account the degree of ecclesial integration of immigrants. They must to be compatible with the pastoral structures of the local Church (*EMCC* 90).

The detailed analysis of problems in Polish-speaking pastoral care in Europe points to the need for real reflection on the issue of the care for the preparation of Polish married couples and families for migration. The common denominator of the proposed reflection ought to be Benedict XVI's message from the 15th of May 2008, directed to the participants of the plenary session of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants:

“The migrant family must be defended with courage and patience” and the words delivered during his pilgrimage to Poland on the 25th of May 2006: “Today the Church in Poland faces an enormous pastoral challenge: how to care for the faithful who have left the country (...). It is a widespread and large-scale phenomenon. When families are divided in this way, when social links are broken, the Church cannot remain indifferent”.

Both the local bishop and the parish priest of the migrant's place of origin play here a particular role. Everybody, even when one is married and has his or her own family, has the right to emigrate. However, spouses have the duty to build a community of life, and “the family has the right to exist and to progress as a family” (Charter of the Rights of the Family no. 6). It is important to prepare oneself for the trip abroad, among other things by getting acquainted with the structure of Polish-speaking pastoral centers in the place of intended

²⁵ [25] Cf. THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church *Christus Dominus*, no. 18.

²⁶ [26] Cf. W. NECEL, *Udział Polski w procesie integracji Europy wyzwanie dla duszpasterstwa emigracyjnego*, p. 78.

arrival. People leaving Poland are supposed to be prepared for an encounter with a widely understood “otherness” of the Church of arrival, which under no circumstances allows to judge one’s own or foreign spirituality (EMCC 39 – 43). They should know that due to their permanent or temporary stay abroad, they are included in the life of the territorial parish and the local Church (CIC can. 107 § 1 – 2), and the necessary condition for ecclesial integration (EMCC 90) is the respect and cultivation of their own cultural and religious identity and the acceptance of the spirituality of the new host Church (EMCC 70 – 71). Within their pastoral duties, the bishop of the local Church and the parish priest are obliged to talk with women who are leaving alone, and to call their attention to the problems they can come across in emigration. They should be aware that they frequently may be deprived of their elementary rights, they may be employed illegally as part of an unqualified workforce, and often they will be victims of the sad practice of “human trafficking”,^{27[27]}. In the pastoral preparation of married couples and families for migration, it is also necessary to consider whether migration of one of the spouses does not include a deliberate intention to abandon a sacramental marriage and the Christian family.

Following pastoral experience and the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, in Polish-speaking pastoral care in Europe we should strongly stress the role of the laity: the migrants themselves and the lay faithful of the host community. Their activity should support the bishop of the local Church, the pastor of the territorial parish and the chaplain/missionary of migrants. For that purpose, the lay faithful seem to need a special sort of formation, preparing them for giving manifold and many-sided help to newcomers, understood equally by both sides first of all as a bearing witness to the authentic form of the Christian life (EMCC 88). The diakonia of the laity towards emigrants who have just arrived from Poland is an essential link in building the evangelical “culture of welcome” of foreigners and openness for their “otherness”,^{28[28]}. The lay faithful of the host community should provide immigrants with a real support for their elementary rights, including the right to work and to fair compensation (EMCC 39). In particular, they should be ready to assist the newcomers in the regulating of matters connected with their first period abroad (EMCC 42) and in the solving of problems in the social and charitable field (EMCC 86). The diakonia of the laity acquires more character when the lay faithful minister to sick Polish immigrants, when they help elderly people and those who cannot manage on their own in the new living conditions, when they inspire migrant family circles or help in the process of reunification of couples and families parted by migration. Prepared representatives of the laity can undertake work in Catholic centers for families and marriage counseling at Polish Missions; they can create and stimulate mutual relations between young immigrants and young residents as well between immigrants and the local parish community (EMCC 87). The activity of the lay faithful towards newcomers can be also helped by lay associations and Catholic movements, prayer groups and charitable parish groups as well as by participation in the work of the parish and diocesan pastoral councils (EMCC 86).

Conclusion

²⁷ [27] Cf. *EMCC 5*; PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE, *Orientamenti per la pastorale della strada [Guidelines for the Pastoral Care of the Road]*, Città del Vaticano [Vatican] 2007, pp. 85-115.

²⁸ [28] JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, no. 101 and 103.

Contemporary Polish-speaking pastoral care in the European Union has its roots in the tradition of Polish pastoral care abroad and it makes use of the structures developed throughout history. After Poland had entered into the EU structures, it had to rise to new challenges, and stimulated by the recommendations of the Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, it tries to respond to the spiritual needs of Polish emigrants. The most vital element in the pastoral care of the Church in Poland is the systematic preparation of migrant pastoral workers and the adaptation of pastoral structures to the continuously changing needs and the degree of integration of people who make use of Polish-speaking pastoral centers. Among the special tasks of the apostolate for the sake of Polish emigrants in Europe there is the widely understood care of married couples and families, and involvement of the laity in the service of the Church. All apostolic ministry for Polish people dispersed in the European Union should be performed “for them”, “with them” and “among them” and within the structures of the territorial Church of the place of arrival so that “no Pole abroad is lost”, as was the wish of the Servant of God Cardinal August Hlond.
