

ON THE WRONG SIDE

Political wars and alliances of the Catholic Church

We are witnessing a collision of forces for which there is no appropriate name. It is like a 'civilisation clash' among the ethnic, national and social communities. A combat between the civilisation of the human rights and the forces, which in the name of ideology, are ready to deny these rights. A clash of the modern world built on human scientific acumen and a group of forces, which undermine or reject this world. Most of the damage is made to the medical sciences, where pervading quackery under the guise of pseudo-science is sometimes worse than actual threats of new diseases or a pandemic. However we choose to name this phenomenon, it has been accompanied by the influences of religion and magic on the humanity for thousands of years. No faith is free from causing direct harm to societies, countries and governments. The dominance of the Catholic Church gives its functionaries a particular weight on shaping attitudes towards human rights, medical science and democracy, not just in Poland, but also many other places of the world.

The catalyst in making this institution sink into crisis was a series of sex scandals. It grew monstrously in the Catholic Church not only because of its concentration of sexually repressed men, but also due to the scale of covering up, denial and hiding the truth, seemingly involving the whole of the organisation. Itself consumed by lust, it performed a kind of crusade as a preacher of austere morality, as Frederic Martel described brilliantly in 'In the Closet of The Vatican: Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy', his famous book. The basis of the crusade was 'Humanae Vita', a Pope VI encyclical dated 1968, which under John Paul II and Benedict XVI was turned into a whole se-

ries of encyclicals - evidence of the growing cruelty of the Church and the Church's departure from reality. The first mass victims were African communities affected by HIV. Naturally, it would be wrong to blame the Church for all 35 millions of deaths caused by HIV as some missionaries and local doctors ignored the strict rules of the Church, but an obsessive fight of the Church against the use of condoms, a measure which could successfully limit the spread of the disease, was clearly a factor. In today's Poland, there are crusades too, e.g. against the vaccination for HPV, a virus causing cervical cancer.

The Church's obsession with sex and contraception is directly linked to its opposition to depenalisation of homosexuality and granting equal rights to same sex couples. In many countries where same-sex marriages were legalised, the Church had fought against them using manipulation (e.g. equalling homosexuality with paedophilia), putting backstage diplomatic pressure or calling people to march in the streets together with fascism-sympathising political formations. Such conduct from a scandal-rigged Church wherever it appeared, ultimately failed to deliver the message: it was an outright failure in Spain, France and very painfully, in Italy. Most importantly, the Church's alliance with governments who punish homosexuality by death cannot be forgiven. Similarly, that on the international arena, the Church opposed the calls for depenalisation of homosexuality. After all, it could have chosen to just be silent in this matter, like Russia or China. Let's also mention Vatican's cruel campaign to limit female reproductive rights. This open fight against basic human rights will be an eternal shame of the Vatican.

In many Western countries, the process of the erosion of the Catholic Church was made easier by the collective memory and the Church's old sins. Cooperation with General Franco's fascist regime in Spain, support for bloody juntas in South America or dismissing the French society's attachment to the idea of laicism by being on the side of Marine Le Pen's National Front, led to failure.

What is it like in Poland? I think that in this a way we have become a museum. Our episcopate is a collection of individuals from a past era. They are prepared, for their own benefit, to cooperate with anti-democratic forces who evoke social phobias in order to maintain control. Unrestrained in material gain, they permit hostility, in more or less explicit ways, calling for discrimination of entire social groups (or openly joining in these hostilities). Poland is presently one of the fastest laicising countries but at the same time with a primitive, radical religious trend is growing at a frighteningly fast pace. Fortunately for the Polish Church, it is not marked with odium of collaboration with the regimes. Quite the opposite, there still exists a belief in the legendary power of the Church resisting Communist authorities. One thing is beyond doubt: the overindulgence of the Church with privileges, its involvement in discrimination of minorities, and a stark disregard for the law, all have developed socially demoralising and destructive elements to the Polish national identity. Today, this problem is impossible to be overlooked.

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