

Rev. Michał Drożdż

Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Poland

To discover the project of life with Saint John Paul II

1. Introduction

World Youth Day is not only a great spiritual experience in the religious dimension, meeting with God in a community of young people from around the world, fascinated by the person of Jesus Christ, but also a manifestation of the beauty of youth in the dimension of life, enthusiasm, a model of fascination with pure, unadulterated values, an expression of the courage of life ideals and imitation of real authorities, testimony to the civilization of life and love. That is why it is worth keeping the spirit and atmosphere of this meeting, those relations, this community, and acting in the testimonies of young people. They are an authentic sign of a youthful project of life based on trust in Jesus and His Good News. These testimonies are also a living seal on so many pages of life built up in the community of disciples and friends of Christ.

Youth are always fascinating. Young people on one hand reflect the natural fascination with great, unpolluted values and ideals, and on the other hand, they reflect on their lives all attempts to search for valuable proj-

ects of life in a world of destroyed real authorities and values. Looking at the spiritual and social condition of the young generation, we can better read the quality and state of the spirit of modern civilization. Therefore, care for the development and manifestation of our youth are of concern for the future of civilization. This concern is shared and taken by Pope Francis, who, in his message for XXX World Youth Day 2015, wrote: “in a culture of relativism and the ephemeral, many preach the importance of ‘enjoying’ the moment. They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment, making a definitive decision, ‘forever’, because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries, I ask you to swim against the tide; yes, I am asking you to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility, that believes you are incapable of true love. I have confidence in you and I pray for you. Have the courage to ‘swim against the tide’. And also have the courage to be happy.”¹

Young people’s testimonies fascinate, build, give hope, show that they have the courage to be happy. Youth discover their different paths of vocation to happiness and give witness to it. “Dear young men and women, in Christ you find fulfilled your every desire for goodness and happiness. He alone can satisfy your deepest longings, which are so often clouded by deceptive worldly promises”. As Saint John Paul II said: “He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives.”² These words show not only the foundation of the realization of the human vocation to happiness, but reflect the essence of positive pedagogy, which allows us to see in every person the enormous potential of good, positive values, ideals, to appreciate the effort to search for the meaning of their

1 Pope Francis, *Message of his Holiness pope Francis for the XXX World Youth Day 2015*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco_20150131_messaggio-giovani_2015.html (15.05.2018).

2 Pope Francis, *Message of his Holiness pope Francis for the XXX World Youth Day 2015*, op. cit.

own lives and to discover the project of their lives. Only against a background of good, can one speak about threats, problems, difficulties and lost opportunities for young people. However, one cannot blame young people for these or other forms of lost life, forms of aggression, lack of culture and respect for people, not recognizing the reasons for these attitudes, which should be sought not so much in young people, but rather in adults, who destroy the value and dignity of man, promoting absolute relativism and ethical situationism. Young people are not shielded from the negative influence of these processes and social conditions.

Testimonies of young people after World Youth Day in Krakow 2016 are proof that young people are capable of responding to the challenges of today's world with a testimony of values. The splendor of these values was rediscovered by the Great Pope – Saint John Paul II at the turn of the centuries and millennia and can also be seen in the charisma and testimony of Pope Francis. Reaching for these testimonies and drawing from them the strength and hope to build great projects of life guaranteeing human happiness is worth the effort.

2. John Paul II – a witness of love for young people

The opus of Saint John Paul II's pilgrimages has been a peculiar phenomenon in today's world. World Youth Day has become one of the signs and fruits of this great witness of faith, the pilgrim of hope, and the man who brings good and love to all. In various analyzes of the state of contemporary culture, it is mentioned that we encounter the fall of authorities. The demise of authority is most often associated – and we think it is the right assessment – with a specific moral crisis of modern times. True authority is closely related to morality. Authority is the “personification of the real” man, that is, a good man, living the truth about moral values and testifying about them. The authority therefore naturally belongs to ethos. That's why talking about authority is talking about a good person, a man of hope. The present analyzes are aimed at looking at the authority of Saint John Paul II, the authority seen from the perspective of young people. The basic condition of authority is living in truth. To be

an authority – to be recognized as an authority. The authority is above all a value for others, and this is the essence of moral authority, to be a value for others in good and truth. The moral authority does not identify with being a specialist in some field. Two expressions are often used that depict the existence and value of authority: “have authority” and “be an authority”. The difference between these terms reflects the classic difference between the “have” and “be” spheres. In the field of morality, it is not so important that someone “has authority”, but rather that “it is” one. Saint John Paul II was and still is the authority, from whom we can learn how to be an authority through good.

In his Testament from 1980, Saint John Paul II wrote: “I hope, in already accepting my death now, that Christ will give me the grace I need for the final passover, that is, [my] Pasch. I also hope that He will make it benefit the important cause I seek to serve: the salvation of men and women, the preservation of the human family.”³ Looking back at this event, one can say that His Departure was a passover that took place in the eyes of the world through the media. And in this way, it became useful for the whole world. It became a source of good. The good, which was the fruit of the papal pilgrimages, should be seen through the prism of hope, while hope should be seen as the expectation of good, as the discovery of sense, as crossing borders. In this perspective of good and hope we can encounter the authority of Saint John Paul II, the authority of the pilgrim who became a witness of God’s love for people, and with this love he attracted large numbers of young people to God during World Youth Day.

3. World Youth Day as a phenomenon of the “meeting”

Every single meeting with Saint John Paul II, during his pilgrimages to so many places on the earth, reveals the phenomenology of an “encounter”. Furthermore, we can still participate in these meetings, although somewhat differently – thanks to the records of a vivid papal voice and

³ John Paul II, *Testimony*, 24.02–1.03.1980, Vatican 2005.

image in archival recordings. When we talk about phenomenology, first we mean the very weight and seriousness of the “event” itself, which was every meeting of pilgrims with Saint John Paul II, and then it is about the depth of this meeting, which still moves the minds and hearts of people. At this point, it is worth recalling one of the fundamental ethical truths that Karol Wojtyła has always recalled in various ways, namely the truth about the foundations of being, the actions of the person, and the ways of participating in good and common life.⁴ One of the basic methods of this “participation” is the category of “personal meeting”. The depth of this meeting is evident, for example, in the meeting with Saint John Paul II in Tarnów in 1987. We clearly have reference to it in the firsthand account of Saint John Paul II, when, without a pre-prepared text, the Successor of Saint Peter said: “You probably think why is this Pope here? Why has he climbed up, why does he stand there staring. Well, I came here to watch. How to meet up differently? To meet up, you have to look at each other. Even more, you have to look at yourself. If a man does not stare long enough, then a meeting will not occur. And here we have something to look at, or rather someone to look at.”⁵

An extraordinary phenomenon for Saint John Paul II has become not only a huge crowd of believers, but also the “circumstances of the meeting” were also important. The Holy Father, faithful to people, immediately before the Mass, reminds of the importance of the “meeting” itself and explains that “it was to take place also through the passage between the gathered.”⁶

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- 4 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Elementarz etyczny*, Lublin 1982, p. 42; K. Wojtyła, *Transcendencja osoby w czynie a autoteologia człowieka*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, red. T. Styczeń et al., Lublin 1994, pp. 477–490; K. Wojtyła, *Uczestnictwo czy alienacja?*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, op. cit., pp. 445–461; K. Wojtyła, *Problem konstytuowania się kultury poprzez ludzką „praxis”*, „Roczniki Filozoficzne” (1979) 27, part 1, p. 9–20; K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie wiary w dziełach św. Jana od Krzyża*, Kraków 1990.
- 5 John Paul II, *Słowo do wiernych*, Tarnów 10 czerwca 1987, in: John Paul II, *Pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny. Przemówienia i homilie*, Kraków 2005, p. 418 (in the Warsaw edition – *John Paul II, the Third Pilgrimage to the Homeland June 8–14, 1987*, Warsaw 1987 – this text has not been published, as well as several other low-circulation editions censored by the communist authorities).
- 6 John Paul II, *Słowo do wiernych*, Tarnów 10 czerwca 1987, op. cit.

In the phenomenon of the “meeting,” Saint John Paul II includes “nature” (a huge crowd of gathered believers), culture, and above all “supernatural”, hence the experience of the presence of God and his grace in the gathered People of God. He says that he wants to “look at everything that has grown out of this land. You can see that green, you can see that forest. It’s called Górka, Lisia Górka. It’s not a big mountain yet, but it’s a hill. And there are also mountains. So, you can see the forest, and this green, fresh green after rain. You can also see neighborhoods, but what has grown up here is not only this greenery, not only this forest, not only these neighborhoods – it is a great gathering of the People of God. And that’s what I want to see not only with the eyes of the body, but also with the eyes of the heart, because I grow with you.”⁷

The phenomenology of the “meeting” has its depth in the ecclesiology of “communion.” During the meeting with the faithful in Tarnów, Saint John Paul II put it this way: “Such God’s people are on the whole earth and I still meet him in various places, in different countries, on different continents. Different skin colors, different languages and I have to speak different languages, but here it is the People of God from whom I grew up. So do not be surprised that I have to look. And when I look and think about what is to be done in a moment, about this beatification of a Polish girl, daughter of the Polish people, the word of Jesus about the vine and its branches comes to mind. Well, here, in us all and through us all, is the Son of the Eternal Father who became one of us, like a vine, so that we can grow out of it, like the branches, everyone, and that the Father who grows this vine who cultivates his vineyard, he did not have to cut off and reject, so that all could grow in the unity of this vine plant with Christ, just as God’s handmaid, Karolina, grew up. A great branch of this people on the Tarnów land, a wonderful branch of this vine, which is Jesus Christ.”⁸ These words reveal the depth of “communion” with Christ in the community of the People of God, which is the Church. This community with Christ in the group of young sisters and brothers is the essence of World Youth Day.

7 John Paul II, *Słowo do wiernych*, Tarnów 10 June 1987, op. cit.

8 John Paul II, *Słowo do wiernych*, Tarnów 10 June 1987, op. cit.

The entire papal pilgrimage of Saint John Paul II, His teaching and His personal testimony was a “phenomenon of the preaching” of the Good News. During meetings with people, he spoke a new language, a prophetic language, he did not condemn but reminded and patiently explained, did not order, but he proposed and reopened human minds and hearts. It was a phenomenon of “opening” people to God and other people.⁹ “Meeting” with Him was a spiritual event that the world did not yet know. It was he who “placed” people in the reality of redemption. We can easily find such a “siting” on the spiritual plane in the introductory word of Saint John Paul II in Tarnów, before the beatification of Karolina Kózka: “So I came to see all of you, offspring, how many you are, what a powerful bush it has so many branches. No bush in nature, no finest tree can boast of so many branches, so many branches, so many fruits. So, you see my dears, that you have to look, you have to see through everything that the eyes of the body see and what the eyes of the heart see, you must see what the eyes of faith see. I see all of you here with the eyes of faith and I see in you all who is the vine, I see Christ who lives in you, who wants everyone to have life so that no one is separated. Is this life if everything ends with death and with the grave? The end of a man? There is eternal life in him. He wants this eternal life for all of us, he wants everyone for salvation, wants sanctity. God’s people, people called in Christ for holiness, I come here to celebrate with you the sanctity of your daughter. This is my great joy. Thank you that I could see you.”¹⁰ He spoke these words with his presence. Saint John Paul II, at every place of his pilgrim trail, the “Prophet of our time”, what’s more, everyone felt the closeness of a man who – like his Master Jesus Christ – looked at everyone with love.

4. John Paul II – the pilgrim of hope

The testimony of life and words of Saint John Paul II can certainly be called a testimony of good and hope. John Paul II was and continues to

⁹ Cf. J. Chelini, *Powrót profetyzmu: Jan Paweł II w Polsce*, „Communio” (1988) 8, no. 5, pp. 14–30.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Słowo do wiernych*, Tarnów 10 June 1987, op. cit.

be a clear “Personal Icon of Hope” and a person who showed signs of hope to today’s world. He wrote in *Ecclesia in Europa*: “We sincerely hope that, in creative fidelity to the humanist and Christian traditions of our continent, there will be a guarantee of the primacy of **ethical and spiritual values**.”¹¹ During every pilgrimage of John Paul II there was no doubt that there was a primacy of spiritual values, which was a Christian version of good. Hope is always connected with good, present, actualized here and now, and with future good; hope is the expectation of good. In the pilgrim’s struggle, John Paul II brought love to the world and showed the good that is to be expected and worth pursuing, good in earthly and eschatological dimensions.

Hope gives man spiritual powers in difficult moments and releases man from his fears. John Paul II, in his pilgrim preaching, was a steadfast Witness of the Truth, crying constantly: “Do not be afraid.” I think that no one in the world has ever had such a universal and prophetic view of the world and the civilization tendencies that take place in it, such as John Paul II. Therefore, his call to everyone: “Do not be afraid”, liberated new forces of hope for the world and for every human being. Hope is “real power”, good is the radiation of the spirit. John Paul II made a pilgrimage as a “spiritual man”, a “man of God”, directing the other dimensions of his apostolic ministry to the background. We saw him as a praying man, a man who endured to the end, despite suffering, a man who is not afraid, despite many threats of civilization. Such a testimony about John Paul II is given to us by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, who writes in this way: “In this last moment of earthly wandering, the Holy Father again became who he was always, a man of prayer. A man of God, deeply united with the Lord, for whom prayer was the foundation of existence.”¹²

The last dimension of hope worth mentioning in the context of the “Pilgrim of Hope” is hope in a transcendent and eschatological perspective: crossing the threshold of hope beyond the limits of human death, waiting

11 John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, Vatican 2003, no. 12, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html (20.05.2018).

12 S. Dziwisz, *Świadectwo, w rozmowie z Gian Franco Svidercoschim*, Warszawa 2007, p. 228.

for good beyond the limits of death.¹³ Hope is a value that really belongs to eschatology. When the perspective of transcendent hope is lacking, only the utopia of “finite bliss” and “paradise on earth” will remain, about which people feel that it is insufficient. Hope goes beyond the end to the reality of another life – as Karol Wojtyła wrote in his poem: *Consideration of death*. Hope is crossing borders. Hope reveals “already” and “not yet” human. The pilgrimages showed the “already” of John Paul II – what he did for the world, and at the same time human “not yet”, constituting a peculiar question, what people meeting with him should do in a good life, how they should realize the message of the Good News in their lives. Hope is the expression of the deepest “longings” of people. During the pilgrimages of John Paul II, the deepest human “longings” and expectations of good were revealed. People were discovering – often intuitively and unconsciously – the perspective of the future that John Paul II showed: a perspective expressed by the words of hope: “Do not be afraid.”

John Paul II was a “Witness of hope” that cannot fail. He was a man of “liberation” from all sorts of alienations and crises. The idea of hope is a multi-dimensional concept in which many different meanings and shades can be seen. Hence, it is possible to distinguish the hope of achieving success, as well as – on a deeper level – the state of waiting for the fulfilment of desires. In a more religious sense, hope is a movement of the soul in which we put into question the present and efforts for the meaning of life.¹⁴ This reveals the mystery of human insatiability.¹⁵ In today’s literature, we encounter an expression of the existential need for hope in our lives. Meanwhile, John Paul II came to people with something very different, with a testimony of unending hope in God. People often condemned to constant disappointment, spiritual disaster, surprise and embarrassment – to these people – John Paul gave a sense of dignity and full sense of life. Every papal action, almost every gesture, every word, was a manifestation of human hidden desires for the new times. The words of Saint John Paul II from the first pilgrimage to the Homeland, in his fare-

13 K. Wojtyła, *Poezje i dramaty*, Krakow 1987, pp. 98–100.

14 I. Verhack, *Znaczenie nadziei dla naszych czasów*, „Communio” (1979) 17, no. 3, pp. 3–11.

15 Cf. St. Augustyn, *Objaśnienia Psalmów*. Ps 103–123, Warszawa 1986, p. 397.

well address to Krakow he is quoted as saying: “You must be strong, dear brothers and sisters! You must be strong with the strength that comes from faith! You must be strong in the power of faith! You must be faithful! Today, you need this power more than in any period of history. You must be strong with the power of hope that brings the full joy of life and does not allow you to grieve the Holy Spirit! You must be strong with the power of love that is more powerful than death. [...] You must be strong with love, who is “patient, kind, not jealous, does not look for applause, does not rise in pride, does not remember evil, does not rejoice in injustice, but rejoices with truth that abolishes everything, believes everything He puts all hope in everything and endures this love that never ceases’ (1 Corinthians 13: 4–8). You must be strong, dear brothers and sisters, with the power of this faith, hope and conscious, mature and responsible love that helps us to engage in this great dialogue with man and the world at our stage of history – dialogue with man and the world, rooted in dialogue with God Himself: with the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit – a dialogue of salvation.”¹⁶

5. John Paul II – a man with an open heart

John Paul II began his pontificate with the famous words – “Do not be afraid. Open wide the door to Christ...”. Today we know that all the papal pilgrimages are inscribed in the evangelical imperative: “Do not be restless...” “Do not be afraid”, “Do not give in to fear” (see Luke 12: 22–31). Regardless of the translation which better reflects this recommendation of Jesus, it turns out more than ever adapted to human fate in our time, when the widespread “culture of death” together with its totalitarian pressures, more or less strongly, included modern societies into unknown areas of fear, uncertainty and horror.¹⁷ It must be remembered that Saint John Paul II shaped in the spirit of Western culture, he knew per-

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Homily at Blonia Field in Krakow*, 9 June 1979, no. 4.

¹⁷ J. Servais, *Niepokój i smutek: ku chrześcijańskiemu rozeznaniu*, „Communio” 28 (2009) nr 2, pp. 46–63.

fectly well what fear and terror were. As an expert in philosophy, Karol Wojtyła knew that in pagan antiquity, and again in the Renaissance, anxiety and fear became as if a moral lever of philosophy, the heart of spiritual life. Descartes, and later Pascal, understood him in the etymological sense of astonishment, they regarded him as the basis of all passions, for the original feeling of delight in God – the perfectly perfect and unmatched beauty of His immense light. In our time, at least in our western societies, it is anxiety, or even sadness, that arouses many, and not only a few isolated, existentialist intellectuals, but almost all postmodernists in the mind. The motive for this is undoubtedly the fact that the inability to live in the hope of life has become almost universal.¹⁸ In social sciences, it is often said that, at the first level, anxiety means a state of emotional discomfort or even torment, which can become a purely pathological disorder. At a higher level, it is called metaphysical and moral sadness, and it defines what Lavelle called the consciousness of our personal destiny, which brings us out of nothingness at any moment, opening to us the future where our existence is decided.¹⁹

Karol Wojtyła had a deeply thought-out experience of fear and the opposing “bravery of being.” Such a patriotic vision will be strongly present in his works, especially after the outbreak of World War II and the beginning of the Polish occupation. In totalitarian societies, fear was the most common tool for arousing social terror. Anxiety was a kind of unspecified emotional state that was most often caused by fear, and the impression of imminent danger, suffering or unhappiness towards which a man felt defenseless.²⁰ It turned out, however, that already during the first pilgrimage to the Homeland people showed themselves to the world and they were “not afraid.” People discovered with John Paul II that they are “given to God by themselves and other people in freedom.” John Paul II often spoke about the bravery of being. Here is an example: “I would like

¹⁸ According to Saint Thomas of Aquinas, sadness is the passion of the soul, arising in the face of evil, which one does not know how to avoid: “sadness so overwhelming that one does not know where to run anymore” (st. Thomas, *Suma Teologiczna*, I-II, q. 35, a. 8).

¹⁹ Cf. A. Lalande, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, part 1, Paris 1999, p. 59.

²⁰ Cf. S. Kierkegaard, *Pojęcie lęku. Arcydzieła wielkich myślicieli*, przeł. A. Szwed, Warszawa 2002, p. 135.

to recall in this Appeal of Jasna Góra all my brothers and sisters who suffer from deprivation, who have insufficiency of freedom, difficulties in transferring and receiving the truth, who have no job or work that meets their qualifications, who cannot fulfil their life plans, right aspirations and develop their talents; who in any way suffer from body and soul, carrying with their faith and hope their daily cross. The poet writes about them: ‘Blessed are thunders, They have not lost the balance of the spirit. At the sight of ravages and scrapings, a dear song of deafness is heard from the heart, Who among the night of impassable shadows, They do not lose faith in the light of wounded flames – Blessed!’ (Jan Kasprowicz, *Błogosławieni*).”²¹

6. John Paul II return to the roots

How wonderful the picture of young people who can be together and act in the world of evangelical values, who, united by faith, prayer, youthful idealism and joy, can act selflessly for the good of others. One can and must be built with youthful faith, joy, idealism and youthful enthusiasm. This is the authentic youth of the heart. The youth of the heart he loves, God and people, because youth is not only measured in time, but above all it is measured in love. Every human being has and must have some value that must be defended to the end – a young Saint once said to us. John Paul II, above all, defended human dignity. Everyone must have their own treasure of heart, their own world of values, which they will defend to the end. Each of us, finds in life a certain dimension of tasks that must be undertaken and fulfilled, a just cause, for which we cannot fight, a duty, a duty that cannot be avoided. There are certain values that we can never give up, because the price we pay for it will be the loss of true happiness and the loss of our human dignity, our spiritual beauty, the dignity of God’s image and likeness in us. We are children of God and we can be proud of that. Young people are not always aware of how beautiful they are when they are within the reach of the Word of God and the

²¹ John Paul II, *Jasna Góra Appeal*, 12 June 1987, no. 3.

Eucharist. It is worth discovering this beauty, which is the fruit of fidelity to the beautiful values that we discover in the closeness to Jesus. This is the value of faith in God. God is the foundation of all human growth and all human happiness, God alive, God of life. Christ is the life itself. He has joined every human being with each others. Irrevocably. He confirmed this with the cross and resurrection. He is not a “competitor” of man and human youth. He is simply a Friend. This is the first and basic value, which cannot be for any price at all, because it is the basic measure of human happiness. Because only on such a foundation can a young man discover that human life, on whose threshold it still stands, has meaning, has a rich sense, can discover that human life is a calling, is a project that the Creator asked us.

The second value to be defended is human dignity. The dignity of the person, the dignity of the girl, the dignity of the young man. Years ago (1987) at Błonia in Tarnów Saint John Paul II proclaimed our compatriot Karolina Kózka blessed. He said then that God had chosen what is humble to humiliate the strong to embarrass the wise men. Saints are also there to shame. Sometimes such a shameful thing is necessary to be able to see each other in all truth. It is good if somebody is still ashamed. It is a sign that he has not yet drowned out his conscience, a sign that he still has a sense of his dignity. Is Blessed Karolina is not embarrassing us? How pale in her radiance is the life of many young people marked by the band of recklessness, weakness and sin. Defend your dignity. You cannot be reduced and reduced to the level of use and use. The purpose and importance of human life does not allow it. The courage of faith costs a lot, but man cannot lose love and freedom of spirit. Man cannot let his future be destroyed in the name of the false and apparent patterns of modernity and progress, according to which the ideal is to destroy life and human dignity. A man of beautiful heart and pure love who gives real happiness is progressive and modern. “Be yourself” is indeed Saint John Paul II’s message to youth.

Faithfulness to your vocation. This is another value that must be defended. This is a value that we slowly discover in life as our vocation. It takes effort to find the place God has set for us in life. Young people are looking for role models, they are looking for an ideal that will fill their heart and life. We already have some life choices behind us! How are

they? What or who we choose in life, what values we choose are very important. In *The Letter to the Young* (1985) St. John Paul II suggests that only God is the ultimate support for all values, only he gives the ultimate meaning to human existence. Only His project of life is worth pursuing. Content that is distorted, impoverished and falsified does not match this project. Every man has such a calling, such a path, his own unique path, a unique path on which he can find himself, and his happiness. That's the way the young man was looking for in the Gospel. "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" Jesus answered him, "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." In this young man, we find ourselves. What brought this young man to Jesus? It is important to get closer to Jesus with a pure intention, with a noble motif, because "only He has words of eternal life." The young man constantly asks. The young man does not like when someone tells him what to do. The problem is, are these my own questions, or taken away from someone, because someone told me cleverly, are these my arguments and my search, or just someone else skillfully controls me? Young people are looking for a prescription for life, they ask: what should I do to achieve life? It is important whom you ask and what sources you reach out for. It is worthwhile to consult authentic sources. It is worth undertaking this effort. Saint John Paul II has always led us and leads us to the pure sources of the Gospel, which is always the Good News, and not the muddy water of our human mixing of the Gospel of Jesus with our human needs. He speaks beautifully in the poem *The Source of the Roman Triptych*.

The undulating wood slopes down
to the rhythm of mountain streams...
If you want to find the source,
you have to go up, against the current,
tear through, seek, don't give up,
you know it must be somewhere here.
Where are you, source? Where are you, source?!
Silence...
Stream, stream in the wood,

tell me the secret of your beginning!
 (Silence—why are you silent?
 How carefully you have hidden the secret of your beginning).
 Allow me to wet my lips
 in spring water,
 to feel its freshness,
 reviving freshness.²²

It is worth reaching deep into these thoughts. They are like a mirror in which we can also see ourselves. “If you want to find the source, you have to go up, against the current.”²³ When looking for a source, you need to get up, from the valley of habits and routine, from the valleys of convenience or just beliefs, from the valleys of the closure, where I cannot see much except for the trenches they have created. We know what it means to go up, you have to go against the current sometimes to get to the source, but it’s worth it!

“Tear through, seek, don’t give up, you know it must be somewhere here. Where are you, source? Where are you, source?!”²⁴ And we ask, and it is worth asking, the source of my faith, my trust in God and people, the source from which I can get a new energy of good and love. Do not give up, because it must be somewhere... and it is... it’s my source.

But there may be silence in my life, I cannot hear anything, I do not see anything, I do not experience a stream of grace, I do not feel a touch of God’s presence and human kindness, only an incredible silence. How many times, perhaps with reproach, we turned to God: why do you keep silent when I do not have strength, when unbearable suffering... when the cross is overwhelmed... “Silence—why are you silent? How carefully you have hidden the secret of your beginning.”²⁵

However, you cannot stop searching, make sense, aim, source, and you have to stand modestly, like a customs officer at the doorstep of the tem-

22 John Paul II, *Tryptyk Rzymski*, part I, *Źródło*, https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/inne/tryptyk_rzymski.html (25.05.2018).

23 John Paul II, *Tryptyk Rzymski*, part I, *Źródło*, op. cit.

24 John Paul II, *Tryptyk Rzymski*, part I, *Źródło*, op. cit.

25 John Paul II, *Tryptyk Rzymski*, part I, *Źródło*, op. cit.

ple, and ask for so little, and so much: “Allow me to wet my lips in spring water, to feel its freshness, reviving freshness.”²⁶

7. The phenomenon of gratitude

To sum up, it is worth mentioning that the phenomenon of “meeting” with John Paul II continues through the phenomenon of memory and gratitude. It was visible, especially during his numerous meetings with people, also during World Youth Days. People have experienced this phenomenon of the encounter in the days of His “Transition from Life to Life.” “Meetings” with John Paul II, other than during his lifetime, are today – no doubt – some kind of deep knowledge of God and the knowledge of man. Getting acquainted with God, which is getting to know oneself in God, creates a deeply rooted attitude of gratitude. What is more – the conversion which is born from a meeting with God – through John Paul II – is a conversion in Jesus Christ, has its roots in the experience of grace, in a community created thanks to the free goodness of God. A believer who meets the Living God and accepts Him on the basis of this knowledge, interprets his whole life in the light of the gift of this meeting. That is why he is grateful. By virtue of this gift and living in accordance with this gift, a believer understands that his life can be fulfilled because he is open to the future with all its fullness to which he is called. He lives in thanksgiving for the opportunity to give direction to his own life because he met the Lord – through the ministry of Saint. John Paul II – Pilgrim of hope and witness of love.

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²⁶ John Paul II, *Tryptyk Rzymski*, cz. I, *Źródło*, op. cit.

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