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„Polish” theology of the icon (sacred image)

The historical and pastoral importance of the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa from Jasna Góra for the Church in Poland makes it become „the image” *par excellence*. In many expressions in the language of Church the picture from Jasna Góra is merely „the image” which becomes the theological point of reference for other „sacred images” as well. As widely perceived, the image being miraculous is the result of its content (the image itself), sanctity understood in connection with the matter of the image and sanctity of the place – sanctuary understood as the place favoured by God. The „presence” of the depicted person is a fundamental problem for the theology of the image. It acquires an extra dimension if you consider the fact that it was not only the miraculous picture which peregrinated but also its copy or – after the picture was „arrested” – Evangeliary or a candle, in the original picture frame or in other surrogate. Such a peregrination took place for the first time in 1957-1980. In 1985 the second peregrination of Our Lady of Częstochowa’s copy was initiated¹.

As S. C. Napiórkowski mentions, expressions like „Mary present among us, present in the picture, present in its copy, present in the picture frame, in the candle, in Evangeliary,”² were common those days. This presence was described by terms „Mother of God in the picture”, „Mother of God in the copy of the picture”, „Mother of God in empty picture frame”, „Mother of God in the sign of a candle”, „Mother of God in the sign of Evangeliary book”³. The theology of

¹ See S. C. Napiórkowski, *Matka naszego Pana (problemy-perspektywy-poszukiwania)*, Tarnów 1992, p. 120. Visitations of the Virgin Mary images took place in many countries in XX century. On the occasion of 300 anniversary of dedicating France to the Mother of God so called „Grand Retour” (Great Return) began in this country in the interwar period. In 1947, on the occasion of 30th anniversary of Fatima’s Apparitions several statues of Our Lady of Fatima began peregrinations in many countries in the world. See L. Balter, *Podstawy teologiczno-duszpasterskie maryjnego nawiedzenia*, „Collectanea Theologica” 52(1982), fasc. III, p. 19. See also B. Pylak, *Teologiczno-duszpasterskie założenia peregrynacji obrazu Matki Bożej Jasnogórskiej*, „Homo Dei” 1 (1972), p. 13-14; W. Szetelnicki, *Nawiedzenie obrazu Matki Boskiej Częstochowskiej w archidiecezji wrocławskiej*, Rzym 1971, p. 19-30.

² See S. C. *Matka naszego Pana (problemy-perspektywy-poszukiwania)*, p. 122.

³ See *ibid.*

Mary's „presence” through the original picture is a subject to criteria developed by theology based on the rules of Second Council of Nice (787), but combining „presence” with the copy of the picture or with secondary signs (a picture frame, a candle) raises objections of theological nature. Can we identify these two different forms of „presence” if we have to deal with very different signs: sacred image, peregrination copy, a picture frame, a candle? These questions raise other questions: what sources should theology of Mary's „presence” in the relation to the picture be based on? Is it possible to justify all these ways of presence by the same theological criteria? Shouldn't we use some other way of theological argumentation apart from theology of the image? If so, then what argumentation should we use?

1. Theology of „presence” according to cardinal St. Wyszyński and cardinal K. Wojtyła

There are three groups of statements in the theology of Primate Wyszyński. The first group consists of texts which tell rather formally about Mary's presence in the picture or in its copy⁴. The Primate talks about the picture and its copy interchangeably and about the depicted person as the reality present *hic et nunc*, here and now. It happens when statements of adjudicating or instructive character pass smoothly into prayer „where usually personal interpretation [of Mary's presence] appears”⁵. Such an interpretation seems to be correct in the statements of prayerful character „because we are not used to pray to the picture as a picture but we pray before the picture to the person it depicts, what does not however prejudice this or other stand toward the presence of a saint in his image, before which we hold our hands to say a prayer. Physically turned to the picture, we talk with our hearts to the person.”⁶ According to Napiórkowski, on the basis of these sentences of Wyszyński we cannot state that „praying Primate places the Addressee of his prayers [Mary] in the picture”⁷. According to him such a manner of calling Mary „can be understood as an accepted religious convention in our cultural circle”⁸. It seems however that it is not only about linguistic or cultural convention, but such Primate's statements are based on particular theological vision. This interpretation of „presence” and prayer to the person through the image is compatible with theology developed during Second Council of Nice, where it

⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 123.

⁵ See *ibid.*

⁶ See *ibid.*

⁷ See *ibid.*

⁸ See *ibid.*

was stated that „who makes an obeisance to a picture, makes it to a Person who is depicted”. This statement is based on the teaching of saint Basil the Great, according to whom „worship given to the image passes to the prototype”⁹.

Another group of statements by the Primate consists of utterances which express the conviction „about some intensive, strong, condensed, unique, active, dynamic presence of Mary in Jasna Góra’s picture and its copy”¹⁰. We can also find smooth transition from „material” to „personal” language here. The Primate says about „God’s Mother visitation” but immediately in the next sentence he says that „the picture will travel”. Once he says that „priests carried the accurate image of Jasna Góra’s Mother around Wały”, and immediately afterwards he says about „the Mother, carried by priests and God’s people [...], who is to save by Her Visitation our whole motherland and all of you”¹¹. In the letter to families Wyszynski spoke about „visitation of the picture’s copy” as well as about „receiving the Mother of Christ in the copy” and about arriving of „God’s Mother in the sign of Jasna Góra Picture”. On one hand he wrote to families: „you receive the picture of God’s Mother”, on the other hand: „Blessed Mother is coming to you” or: „Mary is arriving”¹². The analysis of all utterances (printed and in typescript) allows us to state that the Primate used the direct expression about Mary: „present in Jasna Góra’s image”¹³ only once (in the sermon of 9. V. 1961).

Third group of statements consists of these public appearances of the Primate in which he takes the issue of Mary’s presence itself. He explains it in broad historico-redemptive and ecclesiological context without referring to Jasna Góra’s image. In his argumentation he refers to his personal experience of Mary’s presence and Christ’s acting through Mary as well as to objective Biblical (Cana of Galilee, Kalwaria) and theological arguments. The Primate expresses it through the idea of widely understood presence of Mary as the Mother, the Mediatrix, the Helper¹⁴.

⁹ Second Council of Nice, [*Dekret wiary*], in: *Dokumenty soborów*, volume 1, p. 338-339; compare: Basil the Great, *O Duchu Świętym*, 18, 45 (PG 32, 149; SC 17, 194). *Catechism of the Catholic Church* justifies worship of images referring to the same statements of Basil the Great and Second Council of Nice (see KKK 2132).

¹⁰ S. C. Napiórkowski, *Matka naszego Pana (problemy-perspektywy-poszukiwania)*, p. 122

¹¹ See S. Wyszynski, *Wszystko postawiłem na Maryję*, Paris 1980, p. 172-177.

¹² The Primate’s letter to Polish families preparing for visitation of the copy of Our Lady of Jasna Góra’s picture, Gniezno, 15. 08. 1978 r., [in:] *Nawiedzenie rodzin przed Jubileuszem 600-lecia*, bmrw., p. 2-6.

¹³ See J. Pach, *Jasnogórski Obraz i Sanktuarium w nauczaniu kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego*, „*Studia Claromontana*” 5 (1984), p. 90-91.

¹⁴ See *ibid*, p. 125-127. „This readiness and awareness that God acts, through Mary, determines the success of the Saint Church in Poland [...]. God acts in Poland through the Mother of Christ. Let theologians puzzle over it... I myself was hesitating whether I should say: *Per Mariam – Soli Deo*, but I say it now, because I believe it... I have many reasons to prove that it is Mother of

2. Theology of „presence” according to K. Wojtyła

According to S. C. Napiórkowski, Wojtyła’s utterances reveal greater awareness both of the language he uses when talking about Mary’s presence and of the problem of this presence itself¹⁵. In Trybsz, where empty picture frame was welcomed (7.VII.1968), Wojtyła expressed his doubts: „I say that She is coming, She is visiting. What right do I have to say so? Dear Brothers and Sisters, not even Her image has come to you – it has been imprisoned for two years in Jasna Góra”¹⁶. Wojtyła expressed the same doubt few days later saying: „She is coming, She is visiting [...]. It is such a great Guest, great presence. I say it and I know that you understand me. Maybe someone from the outside would not understand me. What is he actually talking about? What presence? Who has come?”¹⁷ Wojtyła’s utterances allow us to state that he did not concentrate on Mary’s presence through concrete material thing like a copy, a picture frame, a candle or Evangelary. It was more about the presence through experiencing events connected with visitation. Many of these utterances – as S.C. Napiórkowski reckons - can be interpreted in the category of moral presence, i.e. in such a sense that Mary gives proves of her maternal love to the gathered¹⁸.

Other Wojtyła’s utterances suggest the more concrete and palpable presence – personal presence. In one of his sermons Wojtyła said: „[...] She is visiting us despite empty picture frame, against all arguments and rules we refer to”¹⁹. We know other utterances in which Wojtyła says directly about visitation as presence of „Somebody”. „Spontaneous revelation of arrival, visitation, presence, which is the expression of living, strong faith penetrating beyond this empty picture frame, is being released. As if the picture became »unimportant«. The important is that Somebody has arrived, as to the house of Zachariah and Elizabeth once. I have to tell you, my dear, that in your welcome I sensed deeply that you are authentically welcoming Somebody”²⁰. It is clear that Wojtyła did not connect category of „Mary’s presence” exclusively and directly with the picture. This presence is implemented and accomplished even „despite” the picture or „without” the picture. Referring to the fact that the peregrination picture was „arrested”, Wojtyła

Christ who is the Messenger of the Father’s Might, who loves His children who believe His Son in Poland”. S. Wszyński, *Wszystko postawiłem na Maryję*, Paris 1980, p. 20-22.

¹⁵ About Mariology of K. Wojtyła see: R. J. Abramek, „Jasnogórska” mariologia kardynała Karola Wojtyły papieża Jana Pawła II, „Studia Cloromontana” 1 (1981), p. 7-39.

¹⁶ K. Wojtyła, *Oto Matka Twoja*, Jasna Góra – Rzym 1979, p. 119.

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, p. 121-122.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 128.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, p. 116.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 155. „We welcome Her incessantly as Somebody who really, although very mysteriously, invisibly, arrives to us, visits us and associates with us”. See *ibid.*, p. 161-162.

said: „The dismissal of the Image does not mean your absence [...]. The empty picture frame hurts but it does not take you away from us.”²¹ Similar words could be heard in the sermon to priests of archdiocese of Krakow: „But this image, this portrait of Our Lady of Jasna Góra is so deeply engraved in the soul of each Polish man and woman that even without physical presence of the image – the visitation of the Mother of God, from Jasna Góra – was for us the most real reality”²²

Mary’s presence is especially associated with the experience of peregrination itself. However, it has to be noted that Wojtyła was aware of the fact that all utterances „defining” Mary’s presence were very blurred and ambiguous. He admitted in the speech on the occasion of handing the picture to diocese of Tarnów: „[...] we hand this priceless treasure over. We hand it over with all our experience of the visitation [...] the presence we do not know of what kind, but the presence that was active, discreet, but at the same time, which reached everywhere, maternal presence [...]”²³.

3. Theology of the image or the theology of the Marian shrine?

On the basis of the analysis presented above S. C. Napiórkowski proposes formulating so-called „Polish theology of the icon”²⁴. According to him, Polish theology, based on the experience of peregrination, is similar to orthodox one, which grows directly from Nice theology. It has to be mentioned though, that S. Wyszyński himself never used the term „icon”, nor does it appear in any of K. Wojtyła’s studies. This theology is based on the conviction that „Mary is present not only in the picture from Jasna Góra but also in its peregrination copies and symbols (the empty picture frame, the candle, Evangeliary)”²⁵. Utterances which he analysed allow S. C. Napiórkowski to formulate a thesis that it is possible to speak „about some strong personal presence, here and now, *hic and nunc*, not only about moral presence through benevolent acting”²⁶.

The statement saying that this theology does not narrow the issue of presence only to „the presence in the picture”, in its copies and other „weaker” signs, but it also says about Mary being present „among us”, is important methodological guidance. This indication of other forms of presence – as S. C. Napiórkowski admits – loosens a little theologically important connection between Mary and

²¹ See *ibid.*, p. 67-58.

²² See *ibid.*, p. 87-88.

²³ See *ibid.*, p. 169.

²⁴ S. C. Napiórkowski, *Matka naszego Pana (problemy-perspektywy-poszukiwania)*, p. 132-136.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 133.

²⁶ See *ibid.*

her image, pointing to other than iconological arguments for „Mary’s presence”. These arguments seem to be necessary because the theology of the picture itself is insufficient. Wojtyła himself points to biblical foundations, recalling Evangelical events from Cana of Galilee and the Cenacle. Iconological argument becomes strengthened indeed, if not replaced, by strictly dogmatic (mariological) argument which says about conviction „about the involvement of Lord’s Mother, important to salvation, continuing in history, i.e. about the continuation of the Cenacle in history (some *continuum* of the Cenacle’s situation)”²⁷.

You can notice this theological vision in other Wojtyła’s statements which he made in Jasna Góra already as the pope. In 1979 John Paul II said that Polish people get used to coming to „Her, who has not only her Picture, her Image – one of the best known and most worshipped around the world – here, but who is here in some special way. Who is present. Who is present in the mystery of Christ and the Church – as the Council teaches. She is present for everybody and for all who pilgrimage to Her... even if only with their soul and heart, even if only with the last breath of their life, if they cannot otherwise”²⁸. In the homily delivered during the 600 anniversary in 1983 he says that „The Picture from Jasna Góra brings new sign of Jesus’ Mother’s presence”. However, he sees this presence in broader perspective, associating it with Baptism of Poland and Christ’s presence in Polish history: „Through this event of 996, through baptism, at the beginning of our history, Jesus Christ was invited to our motherland, as to Cana of Galilee. His Mother, invited also with Him, came immediately. She came and was present together with her Son, as we can read in many testimonies of first ages of Christianity in Poland, especially in *Bogurodzica* song”. Biblical „model” of this presence is the event in Cana of Galilee and Częstochowa is seen as „Polish Cana” where „the word of Good News gains [...] some exceptional clarity, at the same time seems to be mediated by the Mother”²⁹.

It must be noted thus, that the theology of Jasna Góra’s picture according to Wojtyła – John Paul II refers to mariology of the council much more than to Nice theology of the image. The image is not a causative tool of presence for him but it is only a sign of objective presence which is in fact independent of the picture. Because of that the theology of the picture is strongly connected with the theology of the sanctuary which grew from ecclesiology. Mary’s presence in the sanctuary is seen by the Pope in the context of the mystery of Christ and the Church, i.e. in the context of living, maternal presence of Mary in the Church. He also expressed this connection – as the bishop of Kraków - in one of his speeches during peregrination when he spoke about „the presence which is alive, discreet,

²⁷ See *ibid*, p. 134.

²⁸ Jan Paweł II, *The homily delivered 4 June 1979 r. during Holy Mass in Jasna Góra*.

²⁹ Jan Paweł II, *The homily delivered 19 June 1983 r. during Holy Mass in Jasna Góra*.

but which reaches everywhere, maternal presence, which was expressed by the Council in chapter VIII of »Dogmatic Constitution on the Church«³⁰. We have to agree with S. C. Napiórkowski that it is more about „Polish theology of the icon” or „Polish theology of Mary among us”³¹.

T. D. Łukaszuk provides guidance in finding answers to this question. He admits that catholic worship of images, which is similar to orthodox one („this attitude does not show significant differences”) concerns „sacred images, mostly of Mary”³².

As a starting point Łukaszuk takes pictures of Marian themes (and the picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa) and the fact of them being worshipped in „the attitude of people of God”. „[...] My comments will focus on Marian sacred picture, i. e. on Marian icon as the most common image being worshipped in west Church. Besides, I think that for relatively complete description of west thought about Marian icon and about her »sacramental« function, it would be better to leave overall statements about Mary’s presence in Church generally. West theology has never doubted that Mary, who was taken up to heaven and is full of glory, is always in real connection with the Church, towards which she performs many maternal and caring functions” – as T.D. Łukaszuk points³³. It seems that „Polish theology of the icon”, or rather of „sacred image”, presented here should be seen more in mariological perspective, including specifically Polish mariology, especially in the context of Mary’s presence in the Church, rather than in iconology rooted in Christology (concerning incarnation). We do not get any new argument concerning theological justification of an image but only theological justification of Marian image understood as „a sign” of Mary’s living presence in the Church. In this perspective it is clear to use a copy of the picture, a picture frame or other signs as „signals” of Mary’s presence. Images of the saints should be seen in similar way. More than in theology of image, they find their justification in dogmatic truth about the communion of saints (*communio sanctorum*).

T. D. Łukaszuk does not confide to Nice theology but also points to the teachings of two councils as to theological argument for catholic theology of image. The first premise is the teaching of Nice fathers about convergence in tasks and functions and equality in dignity of both Gospel and icon. The second premise is the expression of *Vaticanum Secundum*, „which is proclaimed and repeated by the

³⁰ K. Wojtyła, *Oto Matka Twoja*, p. 169.

³¹ See *ibid.*, p. 136.

³² T. D. Łukaszuk, *Obraz święty – ikona – sacramentale obecności*, [in:] Siwak W. [ed.], *Kościół czci Matkę swego Pana*, Przemyśl 2003, p. 49. This author also uses orthodox theology for worship of Our Lady of Częstochowa image. T. D. Łukaszuk, *Teologia świętego obrazu – ikony. Studium z dziedziny teologii ekumenicznej*, „Studia Claromontana” 1 (1981), p. 40-57.

³³ T. D. Łukaszuk, *Obraz święty – ikona – sacramentale obecności*, p. 53.

Church today, that Christ is truly present in the words of Gospel” (compare KL 7). Thus – as it says – „an irresistible conclusion follows that sacred image, equal to the Book of Gospel, has the right to enjoy similar presence”³⁴. It must be noted thus that the concept of T. D. Łukaszuk – as the author himself mentions – is not consistently completed. The author says first about „similar presence”, not about identical or the same presence, indicating that there is some difference between the presence in the words of Gospel and the presence in image. It seems that the author treats interchangeably the presence „in the words of Gospel” and „in the book of Gospel”, what can lead to some materialization of God’s word through recognizing the book itself as a sacred thing. This concept seems to deny Nice theology of the icon which is not based on faith in material sacredness of the icon but in sacredness as a subject to relation of the image to the prototype³⁵.

Therefore T. D. Łukaszuk addresses a question about the way to understand the presence in the icon: „How can we or should we comprehend – or even imagine – the presence of Christ or His Mother in sacred image? Do we deal with real presence or with purely metaphorical expression in this case?”³⁶ – T. D. Łukaszuk asks, opting also for real presence, similar to the one in God’s words, celebration of the sacraments or practicing works of mercy. He forgets, however, that these „realities” are not of the same type. It is enough to remind the differences between the presence in the Eucharist – real and substantial, and in God’s words – real but not substantial. Eventually the author postulates that the presence in the image or through image is indescribable. Mentioning the concept of establishing the theology of Marian icon on the fact of peregrination, T. D. Łukaszuk relates critically to theological „anchoring” of the theology of the icon in the event of peregrination: „It seems more correct to say that the awareness of the presence gave rise to peregrination, not the opposite – that peregrination evoked the awareness”³⁷.

³⁴ T. D. Łukaszuk, *Obraz święty – ikona w roli sacramentale obecności*, [in:] A. A. Napiórkowski [red.], *Chrystus wybawiający. Teologia świętych obrazów*, Kraków 2003, s. 72. „Such a conclusion should be drawn by western theology from teaching of councils – ancient and last one – as this theology’s own conclusion, which has equal rights with eastern theology, to use the findings of ecumenical councils of the first millenium, completed authoritatively by today’s Magisterium”. See *ibid*.

³⁵ T. D. Łukaszuk proposes more „material” interpretation of the icon: „For the Orthodox the icon, as a sign of transcendental presence and place of tangible feeling of it becomes sacred also in its dimension as a material object. [...] The materia in the icon, without change in itself, receives some functions of the order of salvation and acquires new quality which is the basis of worship of the object itself”. T. D. Łukaszuk, *Teologia świętego obrazu*, p. 55.

³⁶ T. D. Łukaszuk, *Obraz święty – ikona w roli sacramentale obecności*, p. 72.

³⁷ T. D. Łukaszuk, *Obraz święty – ikona – sacramentale obecności*, p. 62.

4. The icon or Marian picture?

Contemporary theology of visitation is based on conciliar Mariology which formulates the truth about Mary's maternal presence in the life of the Church. Sanctuaries are the expressions of this presence, images are its signs. In the theological justifications of visitation, some theologians have resorted to the Orthodox (Eastern) theology of the icon. An important question arises that original images or figures usually (never?) do not participate in visitation, but their copies (including multiple copies)³⁸, and even some form of substitution, as a picture frame or a candle. Such methods of visitation cannot be maintained in view of Eastern theology of the image.

We should recall that the icon being „the object of worship” is based on objective participation in the economy of salvation, and in ontological relation with supernatural reality through the relation of similarity between the image and the original (prototype). The task of the icon is „to enter into the experience of theophany”³⁹. Consequently, the icon serves a strictly epiphanic (theophanic) role, and thus it is an important part of the liturgy, because it is the liturgy itself, similarly to the spoken texts of the liturgy. Although the Orthodox theology is also familiar with „miraculous icons”, each icon made in accordance with the canons „is” sacred in nature, as the prayer of dedication of the icon is the actual establishment of ties between the person and the image. The icon is a quasi-sacrament place of God's presence⁴⁰.

The sacredness of the image viewed in the western theology is much more complicated. We are dealing with theology far more unstable, where the concepts close to the Orthodox (Eastern) will clash with concepts based on an entirely different dogmatic paradigm. R. Guardini distinguishes between two kinds of images: cult (Kultbild) and devotional (Andachtbild). The basis of the classification is the ontological diversity of the work. The cult image is a derivative of the objective existence of God, the body of the economy of salvation. The cult image has a „human” nature and results from external religiosity of man. In the

³⁸ The copy of the picture of Our Lady of Częstochowa, called „Picture of the Visitation”, which was consecrated by Pope Pius XII on May 13, 1957, has taken on special significance in Poland. In addition, an extra act of „sanctification „of the copy was „rapprochement between the copy and the image”, which was made by Cardinal Wyszyński, August 26, 1957 in the chancel of the Basilica of Jasna Góra. See S. C. Napiórkowski, *Matka naszego Pana (problemy-perspektywy-poszukiwania)*, p. 119. Primate himself called the act „a holy kiss” as a sign that the „Picture of the Visitation” will travel across Polish land blessed with might of the Miraculous Picture, that Queen of Jasna Góra herself, setting aside the crowns and diamonds, comes from her throne to visit the faithful people”. S. Wyszyński, *Gody w Kanie*, Paryż 1962, p. 67-68.

³⁹ B. Nadolski, *Leksykon*, Poznań 2006, [in:] *Ikona (w liturgii)*, p. 531.

⁴⁰ See T. D. Łukaszuk, *Teologia świętego obrazu*, p. 54.

strict sense, the cult image could only be an image of the canonical, unchanging form, and thus suitable for public worship⁴¹. However, it seems that such a suggestion of distinction would make the division too fundamental. Only the icon is made a cult image, „pushing” all others in the area of private piety. History shows that the Church of the West knows the iconic images that are however not based on the iconological model. As J. Salij writes: „Even though the Catholic spirituality is not foreign to the icon, it also knows a different type of prayer picture, where the sacred person is rather only presented than made present”⁴². It seems that this is the case for images of Mary. They are „agents, available for the eyes, of remembrance, recall and retention”⁴³ of the visual form of Mary, using memoria, not anamnesis, recalling, rather than making present.

Western „sacred image” is a theological inverse of the icon. While the icon is a spoken and painted prayer, so much for the cult image „it seems to be the inverse”, it provokes prayer. At the same time it should be recalled that the picture understood in the perspective of western theology „becomes” sacred due to the specific circumstances that „render” the given image saint. This can be an extraordinary tradition, the themes, the wonder, the popularity of worship which expresses itself in numerous acts of piety connected directly with the image, as well as the formal establishment (images of beatification). As a result, the image in the strict sense, although it is sometimes used in the liturgy – unlike the icon - is not the liturgy, and moves in the direction of beyond liturgy piety⁴⁴. In conclusion, it must be stated that T. Wilk is right when he writes: „Picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa has Byzantine icon features and is worshipped in Poland so commonly that it has become one of the main symbols of religiosity in that country. Like the Polish history, so does the image contain the mystery of coexistence of elements of Christianity from East and West”⁴⁵. It seems that this frontier theology of Jasna Gora’s image projects on Polish theology of the holy image, and especially on Polish iconic piety.

⁴¹ R. Guardini, *Kultbild und Andachtsbild. Brief an einem Kunsthistoriker*, Würzburg 1939, s. 8; see also: M. Kapustka, *Figura i hostia. O obrazowym przywoływaniu obecności w późnym średniowieczu*, Wrocław 2008, p 10-12.

⁴² J. Salij, *Teologia obrazu Pana Jezusa Miłosiernego*, [in:] L. Balter [red.], *Powołanie człowieka*, vol. 8, Poznań 1991, p. 217.

⁴³ M. Kapustka, *Figura i hostia*, s. 31.

⁴⁴ Compare: comparing eastern icon and western image, [in:] B. Pylak, *Teologiczno-duszpasterskie założenia peregrynacji obrazu Matki Bożej Jasnogórskiej*, p. 18.

⁴⁵ T. Wilk, *Tajemnica ikony jasnogórskiej*, http://www.mati.com.pl/jasnagora/?strona,menu,pol,obraz,0,0,1379,tajemnica_ikony,ant.html

Summary

The historical and pastoral importance of the image of Our Lady of Częstochowa from Jasna Góra for the Church in Poland makes it become „the image” *par excellence*. In many expressions in the language of Church the picture from Jasna Góra is merely „the image” which becomes the theological point of reference for other „sacred images” as well. Polish theology, based on the experience of peregrination, is similar to orthodox one, which grows directly from Nice theology. It has to be mentioned though, that S. Wyszyński himself never used the term „icon”, nor does it appear in any of K. Wojtyła’s studies. It must be noted thus, that the theology of Jasna Góra’s picture according to Wojtyła – John Paul II refers to mariology of the council much more than to Nice theology of the image. According to this theology, the image is not a causative tool of presence for him but it is only a sign of objective presence which is in fact independent of the picture. It seems that western „sacred image” is a theological inverse of the icon. The frontier theology of Jasna Góra’s image projects on Polish theology of the holy image, and especially on Polish iconic piety.