

Jerzy Kostorz
The University of Opole, Poland

Project “Euro2012 - in Search of Values”

Sport today is undoubtedly one of the most popular and important spheres of life. From the very beginning people have been improving their reality, also in sport. But only thanks to widespread media it has become universal. Contemporary societies live the life of sport. When sport is based on fundamental humanistic assumptions and on Olympic ideals of ancient Greece, where competition was an integral part of educational system of those days, it can significantly influence the process of forming man's personality¹.

People know, both from historical and everyday experience, what sport is, what role it plays, what its aim is in people's life, how it functions in social consciousness, what positive and negative phenomena accompany it, what ups and downs it is exposed to. Sport can be perceived from many different perspectives: of a sportsman, coach, fan, doctor, psychologist, sociologist, philosopher, ethicist and theologian². The word sport comes from Latin *disporto* or *disporte* and consists of a noun *porta* standing for a gate and a prefix *dis* that means leaving the city to breathe some fresh air and do some exercises. The word *disporte*, that does not have an exact equivalent in Polish and means giving up everyday activities to rest and relax, was created in this way. That is why it can be said that it has a dimension of a holiday or celebrating³.

What seems to be significant in the whole of discussed issues is the classification of sport with regard to motivation criteria that is intentions connected with doing it.

¹ See J. Niewęglowski, *Wiara a sport. Rola wychowania*, in: Z. Dziubiński (ed.), *Wiara a sport*, Warszawa 1999, p. 238.

² See M. Mylik, *Czy sportowiec może zostać świętym?*, in: Z. Dziubiński (ed.), *Wiara a sport*, Warszawa 1999, p. 171.

³ See Z. Dziubiński, *Wstęp*, in: Z. Dziubiński (ed.), *Edukacja poprzez sport*, Warszawa 2004, p. 31.

According to Grabowski the phenomenon of sport can appear as:

- a show - passive sport (supporting that does not constitute a necessary and sufficient condition of taking part in sport),
- the means of accomplishing aims not connected with sport (instrumental sport). In this case sports activity is an instrument in achieving aims and values beyond sport (hedonistic, utilitarian, salubrious and educational),
- autotelic that is having value in itself⁴.

Nowadays sport is a *sacrum*, religion for many people. But also the phrase “sport is murder” is much more often used than “sport is health”. There are many opinions in literature that present more shortcomings than virtues of sport. Z. Krawczyk claims that contemporary professional sport tends to transform in its opposite, not only in its essence but also in its biological, social and cultural function. Nowadays pathological behaviours such as using forbidden pharmaceuticals, manipulating people’s lives, (e.g. pregnancy doping to gain optimal physical efficiency), excessive training, giving priority to commercial aims over personal ones, chauvinism, nationalism, brutalisation of behaviour and others are very common etc.⁵. The bad moral condition of contemporary sport was many times underlined by John Paul II. „There are numerous and visible signs of crisis that threaten fundamental ethical values of sport. Apart from sport that helps a man there is a different one that harms; apart from sport that ennobles the body there is one that degrades and betrays it; apart from sport that serves lofty goals there is one that only looks for profits; apart from sport that unites there is one that separates”⁶.

The European Football Championships that will be held in our country and Ukraine in June and July 2012 is undoubtedly a good occasion to ennoble sport and show values that it contains. Because of countless negatives that accompany sport these days there is a great need for such events favouring positive image of sport.

The aim of the project „Euro 2012 - in Search of Values” implemented by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Opole and the Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy is discovering values attached to sport, which are very often forgotten, ignored, deafened by negative aspects that today are much more often emphasized and presented by the media.

The first part of this project was a meeting with present footballers of Polish National Team - Jakub Błaszczykowski, Łukasz Piszczek, Łukasz Fabiański -

⁴ See H. Grabowski, *Teoria fizycznej edukacji*, Warszawa 1999, p. 41-44.

⁵ See Z. Dziubiński, *Kościół katolicki wobec współczesnego sportu wyczynowego*, in: Z. Dziubiński (ed.), *Sacrum a sport*, Warszawa 1996, p. 58-60.

⁶ Jan Paweł II, *Oblicze i dusza sportu*, “L’Osservatore Romano” 22 (2001) 1, p. 19.

that took place on 10th November 2011, the day before the match between Poland and Italy. In the dialogue with footballers, teenagers and students were trying to elicit the positives that contests such as European Championships can bring. The next stage of the project involved a meeting with children, teenagers and students with one of the biggest footballers in the history of football, a goalkeeper Jerzy Dudek. This meeting concerned not only Dudek's football career but also his commitment to charity such as „Szlachetna paczka” (Precious package). Furthermore, the project comprised of two contests: one for a poster entitled „Values in sport” for primary school children and gymnasium and the second contest of knowledge entitled „Searching values in sport” for secondary schools. These contests were very popular and several hundred participants from Opole district took part in them. However, the most important part of this project was a conference „Euro 2012 - in search of values” that was held on 19th April 2012 in the assembly hall of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Opole. The conference consisted of two parts. The first one contained lectures presenting the phenomenon of sport from the perspective of chosen subjects. The second was a panel discussion with experts such as Jerzy Brzęczek, Grzegorz Mielcarski, Tomasz Rząsa and Dawid Błaszczkowski.

Apart from that, there was a Children's Day organised in Opole with a motto „Euro 2012 for children” and football tournament for the Saint Jacek's Cup for secondary schools in Strzelce Opolskie. During these events the participants drew flags of the countries taking part in Euro 2012.

The final of this project is the publication entitled „Euro 2012 - in Search of Values” that consists of three chapters. The first chapter presents sport from an interdisciplinary point of view. H. Machoń depicts sport from a philosophical perspective. D. Krok describes sport as a value from a psychological perspective of a quality of life. Z. Dziubiński, in turn, shows the issue of socialisation to sport. J. Podzielny makes a comparison of sport with Christian ethos. J. Kochel underlines evangelising and educational dimension of sport. B. Jurczyk pictures the phenomenon of sport from the perspective of moral theology. The chapter is finished with Lubieniecki's essay that elicits the values present in sport from the perspective of chaplain of sport.

The second chapter relates to passive sport and shows the phenomenon of sport from fans' perspective. It contains two essays. In the first one Bohdan attempts to present a contemporary fan in the eyes of the media. Wąsowicz, on the other hand, writes about supporting as a value in an antisocial and religious perspective.

The third chapter is entitled - an autotelic dimension of sport. In this part D. Przybylski sketches the history of European Football Championships, paying particular attention to the place of Polish team in this tournament. R. Stęporowski

reports the meeting with footballers such as J. Błaszczkowski, Ł. Piszczek and Ł. Fabiański. M. Sagan covers the contents of the meeting with J. Dudek. Finally, P. Dobrowolski summarises the panel discussion that took place on 19th April.

At the end of the book there are several photographs presenting the above-mentioned events connected with the project “Euro 2012 - in Search of Values” and acknowledgements to patrons and sponsors since it would not be possible to organise this project without them. The patrons that need mentioning are: Opole Town Hall, Opole Marschal Office, Opole Football Association. The sponsors were: Heating Plant in Opole, Sindbad, Citroen, Fadome, the restaurant “Gościniec pod różą”, Columbex, OTTO, Football World. This event was organized under the patronage of Radio Plus and Radio Opole.

This Project was organised under the media auspices/patronage of radio Opole and radio Plus. During the Mass on the Olympic stadium in Rome the jubilee year, John Paul II while doing “the examination of conscience for sport” stressed that sport is very significant for young people in supporting such important values as loyalty, perseverance, friendship, community. That is why sportsmen and people engaged in sport are responsible for making sport the area of meeting and dialogue and in this way contribute to peaceful understanding among nations and strengthen the new civilisation of love. John Paul II also encourages believers and people of good will to fight all distortions and deviations that may exist in sport to protect visible educational and spiritual potential of sport. Through right education of an individual and showing him/her appropriate hierarchy of values sport can contribute to elevation of a man. It must, however, keep the right place in family, private and social life so that it does not lead to neglect other ways of developing the quality of body, spirit and heart⁷. John Paul II in his teaching many times rehabilitated and ennobled sport giving it a theological sense. It allows to perceive and evaluate it in the perspective of highest Christian values. That is why sportsmen should “drive at the highest aims” to “the Olympics of life call...”⁸. The Project “Euro 2012 - in the Search of Values” seems to combine with words said by blessed John Paul II about care for appropriate shape of sport.

To summarize, I would like to quote Franciszek Smuda, who in one of the commercials said: *great Błaszczkowski, great, but you will not win the match on your own...* Common search for values existing in sport on the occasion of the European Football Championships undoubtedly contributes to the fact that: *we all are a national team!*

⁷ See: Jan Paweł II, *Oblicze i dusza sportu*, „L'Osservatore Romano” 22 (2001) 1, p. 19-22.

⁸ Z. Dziubiński, *Kościół rzymskokatolicki a kultura fizyczna*, in: Z. Dziubiński (ed.), *Drogi i bezdroża sportu i turystyki*, Warszawa 2007, p. 148.