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OUR FATHER OR OUR GOD?

Father. Just like a mother. Nobody knows a nation, culture or language we couldn't find this word in. Even a child knows the ordinary meaning of it. But the phenomenal meaning which Jesus used especially at the Lord's Prayer is still a secret. He called the God Father. Not enough. Jesus taught His disciples to look at Him as the Father. We can't imagine how could it be strange and really unusual for them. We wish we would answer some important questions connected with the using by Jesus *O u r F a t h e r* against *O u r G o d* in this short article. Of course it is not so easy to solve all the problems and answer all the questions. What we want to write about is that the philosophical debate and the conception of God has no place in the Holy Church. And only the Holy Church could name the God Father because He (Church) has got The Word! That's why the Holy Church can pray "*Our Father*" Through Him, with Him, in Him (doxology) the new men singing: "Abba Father (comp. Mk 14, 36; Ga 4, 6; Rz 8, 15)!" So let's start to explain the main reasons for we can pray as new men: *Our Father...*

He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Luk 11, 1). And in another place: "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your *F a t h e r* who is in secret; and your *F a t h e r* who sees in secret will reward you. And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this: O u r F a t h e r who are in heaven, Hallowed be thy name (Mt 6, 5-9).

It's not so difficult to notice that at those two pieces of the Holy Gospel according to Luke and Matthew appears the word: F a t h e r. Both of them used this word a few times and thought about God who had created the heaven and the earth, not about the God who is only in human mind; man's imagination or in his mouth. As christians we used to pray at the private prayers acclamation: *Oh my God...* Rarely: *Oh my Father...* And that's why the main question is just why they (Luke & Matthew) didn't write simply G o d.

The problem why "our" and not "my" has been taken a lot of time to be solved¹ In my opinion it still does as these are still a lot of questions. Saint Augustin asked such a question but didn't answer it² Jesus was born among Jews. He knew the culture and the language of the Jews perfectly. Hebrews were praying to God who was Yahweh. And Jews didn't know God but Yahweh. There was one God only: Yahweh³ Yahweh is the God of the religion. The God of the o l d m a n. Father is the God of Faith. The God of the n e w m a n. And that's why it was terrible for Hebrews to say "Father!"⁴ It could be some kind of destruction or taxing His divine nature⁵ It's true that we can find some phrases containing "Father" in the Book of Isaiah (comp. 63, 16; 64, 7), but the title "Abba" was connected with father of the family not God. The New Testament changed this meaning (comp. Mk 14, 36; Gal 4, 6; Rom 8, 15). The old man knew only the idea of paternity

¹ See for instance T e o d o r z M o p s u e s t i i, *Katecheza XI o Modlitwie Pańskiej*, [w:] *Modlitwa Pańska. Komentarze Greckich Ojców Kościoła IV-V w.*, Kraków 1995 s. 148; T. P a s z k o w s k a, *Medytacje nad literą i duchem Modlitwy Pańskiej*, [w:] *„Abba Ojczy!”*! red. A. J. Nowak OFM, Homo meditans, t. XXI, Lublin 2000, s. 346-347.

² See *Homilie na Ewangelię św. Jana*, [w:] *Modlitwa Pańska. Komentarze Łacińskich Ojców Kościoła IV-V w.*, Kraków 1995, s. 143-144.

³ P o r. t e n ż e, *O kazaniu Pana na górze*, [w:] *Modlitwa Pańska. Komentarze Łacińskich Ojców Kościoła IV-V w.*, Kraków 1995, s. 32.

⁴ Who say Father about God is like a man who forgive the traspases, believe in justice, sacrifice, salvation in Jesus, brotherhood with only Son, gifts of Holy Spirit. Nobody can say like this who didn't receive such goods. P o r. ś w. J a n C h r y z o s t o m, *Homilia XIX na Ew. wg św. Mateusza*, [w:] *Modlitwa Pańska Komentarze Greckich Ojców Kościoła IV-V w.*, Kraków 1995, s. 101.

⁵ P o r. k s. A. F. D z i u b a, *Ojcostwo Boga w duchowości biblijnej*, [w:] *„Abba, Ojczy!”* s. 213.

of the God. This idea was including the God as a Creator of the world⁶ Only children of the Jews could name their own fathers just like that⁷

According to the new man there is the main difference as The God is Father and the Father is God and the Father and the Son are one (comp. J 10, 30). And in the other place: [...] who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say "show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me [...] (J 14, 9-11).

And here we have the solution. Jesus used the word "Father" not because of the "God" existence but because of the relationship with the Father⁸ The relationship of Love. Father is the God of Love. The God of religion is not able to love. He could leave you lonely. Up! March on a nation at its easy living secure, Yahweh declares that has no gates, no bars that lives in a remote place! (Jr 49, 31). In this point of view it's impossible to compare the God of faith and the God of religion. Father can listen to you. Father can talk to you. The God is far away. By your strength your faith is like the mountains standing. (Ps 65, 6). He is absolutely lonely and prefer silence. It is very important to recognize the main idea of using Our Father.

Although the word "God" exists in every religion but Father in the faith of the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and out of the ordinary meaning. Before He had died Jesus cried with a loud voice: My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me? (Mt 27, 46). It was a prayer on a cross. The old man was praying just like that, but Jesus added a prayer of the new man. Jesus was not lonely as the God. He has been talking to the Father all the time. It was the dialogue (comp. Luk 23, 34;46). It's very important because of the Jews. Because of the future. True dialogues could be among persons only. The Father is a person, the Son is a person, the Spirit is a person. The only God is The Holy Trinity. We don't know the other God but Him. And that's why we used to say our Father not our God. The God of religion is the God Who is hidden and invisible and doesn't speak to much. And prefers rather to be in the bush (comp. Ex 3, 2-6), or in the pillar of cloud and in the pillar of fire (comp. Ex 13, 21; 14, 24; Num

⁶ Por. ks. J. M i s i u r e k, „Wierzę w Boga Ojca Wszchemogącego”, [w:] „Abba Ojczy!”, s. 36.

⁷ Tamże, s. 37.

⁸ Por. T y t u s z B o s t r y, *Komentarz do Ewangelii wg Św. Łukasza, rozdz. XI, 1-4*, [w:] *Modlitwa Pańska*, s. 81.

14, 14; Neh 9, 12). The Holy Trinity is the God of the Word (comp. J 1, 1). Three Persons of the Holy Trinity have talked to each other all the time⁹ And only among persons love could be¹⁰ Teodor Mopsuestii added: the grace of the Holy Spirit you received because of me [...] makes you name the God Father (comp. Rom. 8, 15)¹¹. It means nobody who has open his heart could see the Father. If Jesus prayed Our God, He would make the faith just like the religion. Someone could pray Our God. But only the new man can say Our Father.

These are the main reasons why "our Father" and not "our God" Jesus didn't make a mistake when He was using the "Father" not the "God" He did what He wanted. "Our Father" is a prayer of the new man. If Jesus used the word "God", he would pray like the old man. We have written all that Jesus said on the cross. There is also what we talk about. F a t h e r forgive them because they don't know what they are doing (Lk 23, 34) and F a t h e r a t Your hands I give my spirit (Luk 23, 46). It's impossible to see such differences in any kind of speech. That God could be unknown. Jesus using Father showed us the community between Him and His Father. Of course such community doesn't exist at the Hebrews nation. We can't talk about any relationships in the case of Yahweh. On the other side He didn't throw the old man prayer away (comp. Mt 27, 46). But when the disciples asked Him how to pray Jesus told them: O u r F a t h e r who are in heaven... But Jesus didn't pray it with the Apostles. He asked them to pray that way but He needn't. He wasn't guilty.

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⁹ Por. A. J. Nowak OFM, „*Homo novus*” mieszkaniem Ducha Świętego, [w:] „*Niech zstąpi Duch Twój*”, red. ks. J. Misiurek, A. J. Nowak OFM, ks. W. Słomka, Homo meditans, t. XX, Lublin 1999, s. 225.

¹⁰ Por. t e n ż e, *Człowiek wiary nadziei miłości*, Katowice 1988, s. 116.

¹¹ Tamże, s. 147.

- D z i u b a A. F., ks., Ojcostwo Boga w duchowości biblijnej [w:] „Abba Ojczy!” red. A. J. Nowak OFM, Homo meditans, t. XXI, Lublin 2000, s. 211-234.
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OJCZE NASZ CZY BOŻE NASZ?

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Chrystus ucząc apostołów modlitwy, nazwał Boga Ojcem. To, co dla Żydów było do tej pory przekleństwem i bałwochwalstwem, od tej chwili miało być powszednim duchowym pokarmem. Synagoga nie знаła Boga Trójosobowego. Jahwe pozostaje Bogiem Narodu Wybranego. Jest sam i jedyny. Bóg ten jest ojcem Izraela. Bibliści w Starym Przymierzu piszą „ojciec” małą literą, a w Nowym Przymierzu dużą. Dla nowego człowieka jedynym Bogiem jest Trójca Przenajświętsza. Pomiedzy poszczególnymi Jej Osobami toczy się nieustanny dialog. Ten dialog opiera się na miłości. Tylko osoba potrafi kochać. Chrystus nazywa Boga Ojcem, gdyż Bóg Nowego Przymierza jest Bogiem Miłości. On jest Miłością. Religia nie zna Miłości. Rabin nie zna Ojca, który ma Syna. Tylko wiara pozwala mówić: Ojczy nasz. Chrystus nie uczył apostołów modlić się *Boże nasz*. Tak bowiem może modlić się każdy człowiek, niezależnie od wyznania: muzułmanin, żyd czy buddysta. Gdyby Chrystus nauczył swych uczniów Modlitwy Pańskiej rozpoczynającej się od słów *Boże nasz*, wtedy wiara byłaby na równi z jakąkolwiek religią. Tymczasem *Ojczy nasz* to modlitwa nowego człowieka. Człowieka wiary.

Słowa kluczowe: Boże nasz, Ojczy nasz, stary człowiek, nowy człowiek, religia, wiara.

Key words: our God, our Father, the old man, the new man, religion, faith.