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That they be all – together holy in truth (Jn 17,19)

Summary: In a succinct formula, Jn 17,19 describes the foundation of the Church as our sharing in the holiness and truth to which Jesus commits himself. To ponder the depth of this verse the article calls on René Girard's mimetic theory and Jan Patočka's phenomenology. The latter's notion of 'care of the soul' in Socratic sense illustrates what it means to shun any distraction from commitment to the 'wholeness of the world', whereas Girard's theory of the dominant mimesis shows how this openness is constantly pulled into the mechanism of scapegoating and rivalry. Together they portray the immense challenge of humanity, being called to a total truthfulness of integrity, to which the faith of Christ opens the way. For them the truth has a practical dimension: responsibility for oneself and the world (Patočka) and overcoming in oneself sacrificial logic.

Keywords: care of the soul, desire, holiness, imitation, individualism, openness, relativism, rivalry, truth, wholeness.

1. Founding or finding his Church

Ever since Christianity parted from its Jewish stem, ample study has scrutinised how Jesus diligently laid out the Church's foundation. Biblical evidence of his choosing the Twelve and grooming Peter as the leader to represent him on earth has been worked into impressive treatises, not to mention his command to bring all nations (Mt 28,19) into the spiritual pen which he had first prepared in Israel itself (Mt 10,5). The characteristics of this new creation and the moment of its erection have been related to the blood and water flowing from his side on Golgotha (Jn 19,34), as pointers to the sacramental order by which the sacrificial atonement was to be made effective. The gospels' ecclesiology seemed evident and John's text, especially, figured as foundational for the new community[1]. Jesus' farewell words and prayer in Jn 17, in particular, enjoyed

[1] For a recent survey of John's ecclesiology see R. A. Culpepper, *The Quest for the Church in the Gospel of John*. "Interpretation. A Journal of Bible and Theology" 2009, no. 4, p. 341–352.

much reverence in this context, as appears in Pope Benedict's 2010 exhortation *Verbum Domini*. He uses the text to stress the sacerdotal ministry which is mainly bound up with the sacramental order, seen as issuing from the redemptive events at Calvary and the sacrificial ransom to free our souls from the devil's grip and God's wrath.

Pondering the profound wealth of Jesus' farewell words – notably in Jn 17,19 – we however surmise a further ecclesiological dimension as well. John undoubtedly heard Jesus speak about a new community. But was it in terms of the ecclesiology just mentioned? How did he fathom the new construct, given that the rock, Peter, and all other co-pillars of the new Israel were conspicuously absent from the scene when the sacrificial atonement took shape in the flowing of the precious "water and blood" from the Master's side founding the sacramental order? What was on his mind? Clearly not a cup to collect the Lord's blood, as the medieval Grail legend has it. The Church's birth was undoubtedly a revolutionary event to him. But Jn 17,19 suggests that it concerned rather the 'life in holiness and truth' than a construct of organisational novelty. Recent findings about the reigning beliefs in the time and several New Testament testimonies urge a rereading of Jesus' ecclesial vision, as he dubbed his own sanctification the source for the others' holiness in truth. Refraining from an attempt at summarising the literature on religious life in his time, we wish to briefly meditate on this particular text in reference to the Church's origin and its relevance for today.

In his farewell speech, Jesus presents a striking ecclesial vision that is variously translated and which the commentators often fit glibly into the sacrificial theory. Formulated as a prayer, Jn 17 is indisputably meant as a cornerstone for the new community. Its wording , however, does not readily suit the common sacramental understanding of the Church. It is clearly to be aligned with the messianic mission statement in Jn 4, where Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that he envisages a community that ignores disputes about ritual forms and places, so as to 'worship in spirit and truth'. Indeed, John's Revelation stresses that God's holy truth is itself the new city's temple descending from on high. In that context, the Church appears as the Lord's partner or bride, engaged in his saving work among the nations, which makes us ponder what role Jn 17,19 gives to Jesus' final prayer considering that bridal calling. What is this 'holiness in truth', to which believers are to come due to the self-sanctifying act of the *Kyrios* (*Lord*), whose kyrial role as the head of those engaged in his messianic mission defines the Church (*Kirche/Kerk* in German/Dutch, *Kościół* in Polish)? His followers are meant to be made holy through him. But how? And why is offering them some water as people belonging to Christ worth an eternal reward (Mk 9,41)?

John's text provokes to suggest that the perspective of John presents more of an engaging type, and less of 'thank you for joining us'. We may wonder which community of believers Jesus had in mind when he said, 'And for them I make

This issue of Interpretation is devoted to John's ecclesiology and entitled *The Gospel of John as the Church's Book*.

myself holy, so that they may be made truly holy.' (Jn 17,19, BBE-translation in basic English)? The translators clearly have been wrestling with this text, in which the Greek *hagiazoo* appears in a twofold position. The BBE follows the Vulgate. But the French equivalent (in daily French) rather emphasizes the sacrificial aspect: «Je m'offre entièrement à toi pour eux afin qu'eux aussi soient vraiment à toi.» And this seems also to be the view of most other versions, such as: „And for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth". (New Jerusalem Bible). How to understand *hagiazoo* in this context, which clearly is one of the characteristics of what we call the Sancta Ecclesia?

To discern the ecclesiology behind Jn 17,19, we start from the idea that the first Christians lived in the hope of renewing Israel (or the *remnant*), rather than of starting a new construct with a reconstituted priesthood, erected to distribute the treasures of grace earned by Jesus' sacrificial death. While wondering how the latter could have become the dominant view, we wish to analyse the notion of holiness that our text applies to both Jesus and his followers – and which is commonly applied to God in the first place. Reading it in relation to religious perfection advocated by the Second Temple Jewish beliefs and by apocalyptic texts of those days, we fathom how Jesus came to be seen as one with the monotheistic God precisely because of this view on holiness, which allowed the idea of him being of divine nature[2].

That believers via Jesus share in divine holiness might, at first sight, evoke the idea of them benefiting from their high priest self-sacrifice – much in line with the common reading of the Letter to the Hebrews. But that would fail to take note of the anti-sacrificial tenet in that era's apocryphal and deuterocanonical literature, that strongly stressed the Isaiahan refrain: "I do not want sacrifices, but a merciful heart"[3]. Be holy, be perfect, be merciful as your Father in heaven, is the tenet that Jesus, too, associates with the renovated Israel that he seeks to build on the rock of Peter. His use of the word 'holy' (*hagios*) clearly differs from the juridical imagery of a Son sacrificially satisfying the wrath of his sovereign Father, who seeks revenge over Adam's disobedience holding all mankind in the grip of guilt. But how to alter this imagery, so deeply engrained into metaphysical concepts the human's soul indebtedness to the Creator God, and in the sacramental view of salvation with its feudal concepts?

[2] We accept the growing consensus that the high Christology in the Nicean creed was neither an adapted belief in semi-divine figures nor an affront to Jewish monotheism, but rather an intrinsic development of the Second Temple Jewish idea of (monotheist) divine holiness. We refer to R. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel. God Crucified and other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity*, Cambridge 2008.

[3] Is 1,10–17. Concerning the anti-sacrificial tenet in deuterocanonical literature, see Sirach 35,1–6. This and similar texts (like the Letter to the Hebrews), have often been misread and turned as a support of the sacrificial. The accent is here on the virtuous life that is valued on a par with the Temple rituals. For the people in the Diaspora this makes every sense. Jesus' reply to the Samaritan woman in Jn 4,21–24 is fully in line with this.

2. Related against relativism

Pondering what John's view of a holy community may mean in a globalising Western context, rife with a nihilistic animosity against anything metaphysical, we shall turn to two figures who, at both sides of the political divide, fought against the relativism that prevailed during the Cold War. Both saw this attitude as a product of trends that arose amidst Europe's church-dominated constructs. The French-American founder of the mimetic school René Girard may seem an unlikely match for the much underrated Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, who based the Czech Charta-77 movement on what he termed 'caring for the soul of Europe'. Both of them, unaware of each other's work, fought the ravages of relativism – in Western postmodern nihilism and in historical materialism, respectively – by opposing the subjectivism that thrived amidst two diverse forms of centralised State-power. Girard discovered pointers to the basic human quandary in great novelists, but without relating it to politics, unlike Patočka who analyses the bankruptcy of subjectivism with the acute awareness of the political strife in which ecclesiastical models had played a role. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to summarise, let alone analyse their rich work and its indirect links to the ecclesiological issues, their sharp social sense may help us scrutinise the ecclesial perspective of Jn 17,19.

Jan Patočka (1907–1977) stressed the Socratic notion of 'care of the soul' that made him rise above the philosophies of Husserl and Heidegger to define a political problematic aspects. In 1971, he gave his famous Warsaw lecture in which he set out from Husserl's thesis on the crisis in European science to move on to what was to become the brave social movement of Charta 77. He shared Husserl's worries about Europe's intellectual and spiritual crisis stemming from its option for scientific positivism. Next, he also adopted basic tenets of Heidegger's existential concern. But he deemed both of them still indebted to a form of subjectivism that started when Plato bent Socrates into a search for metaphysical absolutes. How this caused the Socratic 'care of the soul' dwindle is pivotal for our grasp of what seems to emerge as the new challenge for Christianity. Although Patočka names Christianity only in broad strokes in relation to the decried ills, it makes sense to extend his criticism of Plato's move to the role theology has played in Western constructs, tending to reduce nature to a basket of utilitarian objects and the human community to a mass of individuals striving for their private felicity[4].

Patočka follows Husserl's complaint that the quest of truth had turned into a hunt of usable entities. The phenomenon that we 'see' an apple and not just

[4] Patočka formulated his fight against this metaphysical turn first in 1955 in: *Negative Platonism: Reflections concerning the Rise, the Scope and the Demise of Metaphysics – and whether Philosophy can survive it*, in: *Jan Patočka: Philosophy and Selected Writings*, ed. E. Kohák, Chicago 1955. His criticism of Christianity stemmed mainly from K. Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*, Chicago 1949.

the side turned towards us proves how the focus on the empirical and utilitarian has truncated our sense of truth. Following Heidegger, Patočka goes further and stresses that this turn to empiricism made the Western mind forgetful of being. He signals that the Christians' stress on a link with transcendence as the base of holiness seems detrimental. He knew of Heidegger's closeness to both Kierkegaard's and Nietzsche's criticism of Christian reductionism. As a Christian thinker, Kierkegaard had lambasted the moral and aesthetic focus that prevailed since the Enlightenment and called for a believer's courage to transcend all certainty in an existential commitment to what seems right beyond any regulations. Nietzsche had insisted that submission to whatever external order was a betrayal of the original (or Dionysian) impetus of life. Heidegger agreed with this but, in Patočka's view, he remained too much focused on what he saw as the subject's calling to be a 'shepherd of being'. Patočka feels that the old Socratic notion of 'care of the soul' is thus inadequately shielded from the onslaught of the metaphysics, because Heidegger remained within the Western focus on the individual that resulted from the metaphysical twist. Patočka seeks to surpass that Western slant by going back to Socrates, although he continues to value the gains made by Husserl and Heidegger.

Central to Patočka's 'care of the soul' is the idea of the 'world as a whole'. Later we shall see how close this notion is to that of the 'holy' in Indo-European languages. First, we consider the phenomenological side of this notion, which he links to Husserlian themes. As mentioned, Husserl had stressed that human knowledge is more inclusive than empirical techniques can catch. Anyone reading a sociological report or a psychological article knows the feeling that graphs and measurements serve to corroborate an insight that is won by intuitions. Empiricists may hate to admit this, yet there is nothing wrong with the idea that mathematics ought to corroborate the insight that originates elsewhere. Patočka stresses the phenomenological idea that insights emerge through intuitive links with reality that escape sensuous perception. The apple's link to the tree is still present at our diner table, even if it cannot be measured. From these views Patočka draws a basic insight that had been formulated earlier by philosophers such as Cusanus, Bruno and Leibniz, namely that all humans have a mental perception of the 'world as a whole', be it ever so blurred.

In this context, he stresses two interrelated, but apparently contradictory aspects. He counters Husserl for limiting insight to ego-centered cognition, although he agrees with his refusal to identify the 'world as a whole' with a metaphysical (say: divine) being. Heidegger's emphasis on acting as a 'shepherd of being' helps him translate his concerns into a holistic (political) struggle for the order of beings, without constantly submitting to transcendental ideas and ideologies, thus joining the postmodern rejection of ideological 'big stories' in his own way. 'Care of being', unlike Heidegger, he sees as a commitment to allow all beings to flourish in full glory, which implies avoiding subjectivist inclinations. He exceeds both these masters in his will to avoid any reference

to transcendental realities that impart laws or revelations and command actions beyond the human kin, as they may cause damage to the integrity of persons. But this is no subjectivist relativism, because he pleads for an asubjectivity that seeks precisely to overcome his masters' risk of solipsism. That means also that he rejects the current notion of the 'soul' to be cared for[5]. Considering Jn 17,19, this may be less anti-Christian than it sounds.

Patočka's critique of the empiricists who identify the real with the measurable does not necessarily imply that he abhors the secularist doubts about all things religious. In fact, as he links religion to the Platonic turn to metaphysics, he feels that its tenets may be related to the roots of empiricism and relativism. In this context, he makes a second valuable contribution by breaking with the egocentric mode that still pervaded existentialism. For him the 'care of the soul' seats in the asubjective focus on the 'world as a whole', rather that in the drive for personal salvation that Christians tend to associate with it. To him the wellbeing of the person coincides with that of 'those out there' (Heidegger's *Dasein*). But even if this may hold a valuable link to the ecclesiology Jn 17,19 intimates, there are two caveats to consider. Patočka's approach is explicitly ecological in tone, as he claims that the human existence should value and politically implicate the entire reality *Dasein* is dealing with. But if this can readily be accommodated in the option of Jn 17,19, there is the second, more polemic dimension, that needs investigating and that will bring in our second fighter against relativism.

Leaving Patočka's dispute on the transcendent till later, we revisit his concept of the 'world as a whole'. This idea needs further scrutiny, as becomes clear when it is linked to the mimetic theory of the French literary critic René Girard, who offers an even less optimistic take on culture and religion. As mentioned before, he is not a philosopher. But applying an insight he won from literary studies, he emphasises that people live in a specific form of interaction because they value reality only through imitation and rivalling desires. Philosophers as well as scientists have pointed out that a newborn child has hardly any instincts to guide its conduct. Compared to young animals, a baby is 'immature' and very dependent on learning by imitation. So, its openness to the world is limitless and hardly hemmed in by any preset codes or instinct. But this leads Girard to a second basic insight, namely that imitation is not a neutral affair. As one might learn from a monkey's violent reaction when presented with their own mirror image, imitating is socially tricky. Thus, although both Girard and Patočka agree that humans have a striking openness to the world as a whole, their perspectives clearly differ. The implications of this difference for a Christian community are quite considerable.

Phenomenological openness to the 'world as a whole' leads to ethical and political demands, as Patočka stressed all along. But this openness is anything

[5] The notion of 'asubjectivity' has been elaborated in his latest years. Several articles on the subject have been linked to his last manuscript discussing "What is Phenomenology" and published in France as *Qu'est-ce que la phenomenology*, Grenoble 1988.

but 'objective knowledge'. Humans always know and act through the eyes of others, because all knowledge and actions are driven by desire. And desires do not well up from a source inside the subject, but are always inspired by the desire of others. Like most mammals, humans learn the desirability of things through the eyes of fellow beings who desire them. This shared desire is prone to lead to rivalries, which humans have learned to control in a 'cultural' manner that differs hugely from animal conduct by giving ample room to sacrificial religion and the practice of 'scapegoating'. While our two authors share an ideal of openness to and care of the world as a whole, Girard rather sees this as the vast terrain of conflicting interests that are dealt with in specific ways, with religion and its transcendent playing a crucial role. Patočka is clearly not ignorant of conflicts. He even uses the same reference as Girard to the Hobbesian and Heraclitan theories of permanent strife. But he fails to analyse in any detail the source of this human condition, and seems to adhere to the Socratean optimism that enlightenment will bring virtue and togetherness. We shall return to this dilemma after considering Girard's take on conflicts.

3. Desire and divisive visions

René Girard arrived at his theory by studying great novelists who proved to him that it is a romantic lie to view society as a conglomeration of subjects with internal motives and desires, steered by knowledge. Great novelists and playwrights like Shakespeare show to which extent mutual imitation (mimesis in Greek) determines both, and how both are affected by rivalries with the imitated models, which leads to scapegoating. Looking at the anthropological literature, Girard then noted that religion originated not so much as an attempt to explain reality theoretically, but rather as rituals to control the social tension that resulted from mimetics. The prime purpose of these rituals, says Girard, is to make people accept their place in society. And sacrifices – that started out as ways to pacify the group –function as pivotal tools to sanction the differences and social roles. Although the gods, in this view, appear to their believers as unpredictable beings that must be appeased by sacrifices, they 'represent' the basic instance of a divine referee within the social domain, who challenges those rivalries.

Girard first elaborated this theory of religion in two famous books: *Violence and the Sacred* (1977) and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1987)[6], in which he also indicated the specific breakthrough that was brought by the Bible and especially by Christ. Indeed, assuming that religion's ultimate interest lies in a harmonious human order – and that it may be called a divine gift, in this derived sense – it imports to look at the very nature of human differences.

[6] *Violence and the Sacred* and *Things Hidden…* were originally published in 1972 and 1978 respectively, in Paris, France, as *Violence et le Sacré* and *Des caches depuis la foundation du monde*.

This will help us to understand the social, and therefore ecclesiological aspect of Jesus' farewell speech.

The idea of the world as a whole which Patočka advanced, has a double side. It speaks of overall unity, but also of differentiation. Many philosophers have argued that all things are interrelated. Each item is linked in myriads of ways to any other. Scholastic philosophy called relations contingent and the weakest form of being. But it has become evident that what links different items must count as 'true being'. In fact, the unity is more real than the differentiation. This, obviously, does not mean that the differences are illusions. Without entering into a philosophical debate, it can be argued that the human concern for differentiation is as basic as the search for unity, because only the differences allow productive bonding. The mimetic theory helps us grasp this process and its religious implications.

Girard notes that imitation is proper to most life. Recent neurological studies have shown that so-called mirror neurons are basic to all complex life forms. These neurons, seated in specific parts of the brain, fire by imitation when a similar animal's action is perceived. Imitation, however, leads to indifferentiation. If all go for the same object chaos may result. It means that differences in roles and rights are to be installed. Animals do this mainly by subordination. But in humans this mechanism proved insufficient, so that the conflicts acerbated. The killing of an alleged culprit brought peace. That victim was ambivalent, because (s)he was deemed guilty of the violent chaos, but with hindsight also as the bringer of peace. This mechanism has become typical for human culture, and led to a universal practice of scapegoating. In that process, the so-called guilty one came to symbolize the ideal by which the group wanted to live. How exactly this process developed cannot be reconstructed with any historical accuracy. But it must be seen as the basis of human culture, of its rules, definitions, myths and deities.

What deserves stressing here is first the fact that social ordering by differentiation is the basic aim of all religious activities, even if it is commonly argued that deities emerged because of the anxieties that nature's unpredictability inspired. There is a growing awareness that the real *raison d'être* of deities and myths is the social coherence, but such that this is camouflaged by myths about divine actions. For, it is clear that something like an open social contract between the group members would never work. That means that religion has a camouflaging role.

The second important point to make is that the gender divide is the most basic of all differentiation. It has even been argued that the very sense of identity (and consequently, the concern about death) has originated when some life forms developed sexual reproduction, where two beings need each other to enact what life is all about: continuity and passing on of life. The role of differentiation between male and female must be seen as the origin of all concern about the self and its role. But what is more, the fact of female fertility and the

male subservience to it has led to elaborate religious codifications in which the superiority of men over women became a form of 'evidence' that could hardly cover up or camouflage its basic lie.

4. The whole world of crucial lies

If Patočka claims that, phenomenologically speaking, everyone 'knows' about the totality of being, the theory of Girard seems to throw him back into nihilist relativism by stressing that lies are a basic part of reality. If the former calls this the very basis of democracy and the great heritage from Greek civilization, Girard notes that it was not only by Plato's and Christianity's turn to the metaphysical discourse about an invisible Absolute that flaws entered into the setting. While agreeing that human openness to all other beings is a basic reality and that focus on the transcendent risks to stifle valuable parts in humans, Girard accepts the biblical insight that questions the idea of a direct access to the world's reality in the story of Fall. Rivalry between people that stress their personal identity and different roles they play makes for a setting in which the Bible speaks of a Deity that disagrees with human affairs and calls for new harmony and for care of the marginalized in a verdict on actual untruth.

People undoubtedly have an infinitely wide interest, but this perspective is blurred by constant rivalries and scapegoating that have their roots in mimesis, the all-pervading need to learn by imitating. Girard is adamant that humans are forever involved in forms of sacrificial violence. But he notes that the biblical call is entirely about breaking this sacrificial mechanism by taking sides with the marginalized and the oppressed. This tradition tells him that the differentiation of roles is essential but should avoid indulging in sacrificing rivalry. The term which the Bible uses for this combination of playing a role of one's own while fully respecting others is holiness: being committed to one's own, while loving the other's being. This holiness is a constant theme of the prophetic tradition. The basic message of the biblical creation story is that God created differences and saw that they were good. This is of crucial significance for the meaning of holiness, which should not be linked too easily with the transcendent, except in the sense that this is the wholly other, whose 'thoughts are not our thoughts'.

Patočka (after Heidegger) reproaches Western thought for the metaphysical idea of a being that exceeds the visible and to which the latter has a link that is more important than the mutual earthly links. The notion of holiness thus came to mean being set apart and alienated from the earthly to the point that loving the heavenly more than the earthly counted as the apex of religiosity. Girard would formulate this in other ways by pointing out that any human act is affected by mimetic desires and a will to get the better of others by scapegoating and distorting the truth. This means that falsehood pervades all earthly reality, but the call to transcend this is not a plea to flee toward a heavenly domain. His

choice to take the Bible seriously should not be read thus, for he does not take Christ's words to mean a flight from earthly involvement. On the contrary. What counts is the type of care for the wholeness of the world in which rivalries no longer cause sacrificial violence and scapegoating. Holiness may involve shying away from the logic of mimetic struggles, but not a flight into a dream world[7].

Western spirituality has been dominated by an ideal of vertical relations in search of bliss beyond the ugly earthly valley of tears, which – negative aspects apart – also contained precious biblical values, such as declaring all people of equal worth in God's eyes. Paul confirmed discriminating on whatever grounds as inimical to the cross of Christ, after having first tackled Jesus precisely on this point, as he thought the egalitarian ideal to contradict God's election. Paul's shift towards the idea of equality of all before God, however, was soon translated back into a view of holiness that favored subjecting earthly bonds to the vertical interests. Monastic ideals moved ever further in that direction. In matters of sexual bonding this led to the view that marital life is second to the soul's union with the heavenly Bridegroom. The most basic of all differences, thus, came to be placed under the sign of (formal) equality of the spouses in God's eye. However, this sublimely ecclesiological image of union with the Lord also became an ambiguous symbol of metaphysical detachment.

In terms of holiness, the sexual bond, because of its basic role in the rise of consciousness and rivalry, is critical in our understanding of openness to the world as a whole. Codes and rituals about gender roles are the foundation of all culture, but the Bible gives them a revolutionary twist. By using marriage as an ecclesiological image, the Bible – in the virgin birth and John's prologue (Jn 1,13) – neutralizes the apex of all rivalries which is the question of who owns the bodily offspring. This will enable Paul to voice the principle of gender equality by adherence to Christ. However, when this was spiritually encoded as a vow of chastity, the ideal of Christian holiness turned the marital bond into second best. Recent studies on gender relations have, therefore, rightly carped the hardships thus caused in the marital life, due to quite spurious notions of holiness as a vertical link between each soul and its metaphysical Source and Lord. It is worth studying if Girard's and Patočka's call to care for the soul can help reframe the idea of holiness which Jn 17,19 made so central.

5. Holy and wholly related

When the Church is called holy and Jesus claims that he makes himself holy so that we be holy, there can be no doubt that 'holy' conveys the same sense in each case. Whatever its context, holiness is one and its dazzling acclaim erases all differences to make all the same in a bright similitude. This image, however,

[7] Girard's clearest analysis of the Gospel message as he understands it can be found in his *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, Maryknoll 2001.

appears to contradict that of a wedding, since the latter implies unsurpassable differences[8]. Here, we face a semantic enigma. Girard follows philosophers that signal a curious paradox in human culture. Indeed, by naming things and by symbolizing, we divide for the purpose of binding, and oppose for reconciling. When two clans in Central Africa were asked why they had a separate identities even though they always moved together, they replied that it allowed them to intermarry. Divide for uniting. In this context it is worth looking at the biblical notion of holiness which is often translated as 'set apart'. The official Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, throughout uses *hagios* for 'holy', rather than *hieros* which is proper to the sacrificial priestly cult[9]. Girard explains that sacrificial rites originated as violent eviction (and killing) of someone presumed to be the cause of social chaos. When people came to appreciate the peace that sprang from this murder and turned it into rituals, it created a frame of mind which we call 'scapegoating'. The latter is as much beyond questioning as the sacrificial order itself that was deemed sacred. Yet, the Bible gradually modified and challenged this notion of holiness.

The Septuagint translated the Hebrew word *kadosh* consistently as *hagios*, which was rarely linked with such rituals. So, we wonder what was the dominant idea of holiness that Jesus used in his time as he applied it to the God he called Abba, Father. The exegetical work on this question is not yet conclusive. However, it is worth our while to briefly study this notion in languages of the Indo-European linguistic family. Let us first look at the Germanic area. Words like *holy* (English) and *heilig* (German, Dutch) occur also in various forms in Scandinavian languages and are linked to verbs and nouns that indicate healing, salvation and savior (*Heil*, *Heilung*, *Heiland* in German) and with a notion of making whole (*heel*, *helen* in Dutch). This relates to two interesting clusters of words. In the Latinized area, the link to words like *salus* (salvation, savior, etc.) is well-established, since the 'h' of *holy*, *healing* and even the Greek *hagios* is akin to the initial 's'. This becomes more interesting when the second link is brought in, namely to the Slavonic words related to the term which Patočka uses to indicate the world's wholeness *celem*. These imply integrity in most Slavonic languages and are akin to the words for salvation (*ocalenie* in Polish). A third link may be in which is of semantic interest, even if etymologically debatable, since it leaves the Indo-European for the Semitic, where the word for peace (*shalom*, *islam*, etc.) derives from a root that means integrity (*shaleem*).

[8] A homosexual wedding is doubly contradictory. Homo (meaning the same) is the opposite of sexual which derives from: separating by section. A wedding that seeks to unite something that denies being separate is nonsensical.

[9] The linguistic aspects of soteriological categories have been elaborated by A. Burakowska, *Zbawienie bez przemocy. Mimetyczno-ofiarnicza interpretacja doktryny zadośćuczynienia w amerykańskiej i brytyjskiej soteriologii* (*Salvation beyond violence: Mimetic reading of the sacrificial atonement in American and British soteriology*), Warszawa (forthcoming).

We understand that the 'holiness' and 'salvation' have strong linguistic links with a large range of terms for social, personal and even ecological harmony. If this suits Patočka's call for a political commitment to universal openness, we must admit that Christianity tends to present salvation rather as a spiritual bond with the transcendent. Girard's mimetic theory can help us understand and also overcome this chasm. He explains how rituals form the religious base of culture, using the mechanism of scapegoating. While the Bible militates against this sacrificial scapegoating, people sought the solution time and again in a vertical link to God rather than in horizontal bonding. Love of the neighbor is preached as derived from the vertical love. This implies a risk of corroborating instead of weakening mutual scapegoating, which means slipping back from holiness as *hagios* to the sacrificial *hieros*. Whereas Patočka praises religion for opening people's minds while finding it ultimately defective, he seems to refer to this process in which a metaphysical wording of the sanctifying grace leads to an isolating focus on the transcendent. This spirituality has contributed to the 'discovery of the individual', but at the price of an acerbated sense of competition[10]. The idea of Church as a collection of individuals bonded to the totally Holy One through Christ's saving grace needs revising. For this Girard's insight in the mimetic processes is most helpful by explaining that danger of slipping back into a sacrificial view of holiness.

The semantic cluster linking the notions of holiness, salvation, healing and wholeness may help us grasp the type of community Christ envisages when, in Jn 17,19, he speaks of a causal link between his self-sanctifying act and the holiness of his followers, provided we give full weight to the word 'truth'. This can overcome the quandary which appears in the difference between Patočka and Girard. The former's 'care of the soul' in Socratic sense calls for a commitment to the 'world as a whole' which, however, presupposes a free and self-centered individual able to answer that call. Girard points to a pervading mimetic force that pulls persons irresistibly into rivaling scapegoating. Patočka too perceives negative forces that could be read in mimetic terms, even though he tends to blame the metaphysical focus for it. Indeed, the idea that people are directed by a transcendent source of truth upsets him as a remnant of mythical thinking.[11] Both Patočka and Girard argue that people seek their being in rivalry and isolation. The former claims that a person may get free from external pressures through philosophical clarity, but Girard deems this idealistic, even when it pleads a truthful living in openness to the world as a whole. The notion of truth is dear to both, but for Girard it concerns primarily the will to recognize that

[10] See C. Morris, *The discovery of the individual: 1050–1200*, London 1972. Morris stresses the role of religion and notably the atoning passion of Christ in the 11th-century emergence of the individual, as people stood increasingly in a self-conscious relationship to the divine transcendence, marking their private path to holiness.

[11] See J. Patočka, *Plato and Europe*, Stanford 2002, p. 54–55. Cf. also the Glosses that are added to his final work, *Heretical essays in the Philosophy of History*, Peru (USA) 1996.

all our external links are infested with a drive to rival with our model, turning mimesis into blocking animosity. If both deplore relativism in matters of 'truth' and blame it on the urge to assert the self in opposition to 'world as a whole', the community of truth Jesus prays for in Jn 17,19 seems to answer their ideal.

6. A community of truth beyond 'war'

For both our authors 'subjectivism' is the main obstacle for people's dealing with the world. Although they put different tags on it, in their fight against nihilism they tackle this attitude in which people deceptively see the self as the source of meaning and stress the idea of 'donation', to the effect that a person receives meaning from outside. Patocka's being-in-the-world (adopted from Heidegger) and Girard's 's mimetic-being alert the individual of the *ego*'s prime source in the as *non-ego*. If this is rejected through rivalry, it counts, in religious terms, as un-holy un-belief. We take these negative terms in their etymological sense. 'Belief' derives from the same root as 'love'; and we saw, 'holy' is part of a huge cluster of Indo-European words expressing wholeness and integrity. The cluster is as important as the root **leubh* that links love – belief – fidelity – libido. Together they define the space in which Jesus formulates his new vision of a truthful community, which we care to relate also to the notion of 'religion', taken in the etymology that Cicero proposed, deriving it from *legere* rather than *ligare*: holy religion is assembling in truth (*legere*) rather than binding (*ligare*) to an Absolute. Religion is primarily truthfully 'gather' (*legere*) what is donated and answer to it.

Holiness is often defined in terms of obedience to the truth of revealed rules. Given the relativists' rancor against any rule imposed from outside, a reformulation of truth as society's basis is what our authors aim for. Patocka deplores that Western thought by stressing the subject's *ego* lost a valuable asset. The idea of the Platonic soul understood as object of Christ's saving atonement brought a derailment. However, strong as this effect may have been, the search for a new perspective should note that the interest in how the subject deserves all care stems less from the biblical than from the Greek tradition. It is often claimed that Genesis' creation story preached the focus on man by telling him to subdue every other creature. This idea of man's superiority over anything 'subhuman', however, making the latter raw-material for his subjective use, stems from Greek (Stoic) philosophy and dualistic thinking from the East. With this in mind we listen to Patocka's idea of truth within his framework of asubjective thinking, where Socratic care for all beings prevails over the *ego's* clamor for certainty and relate this to Girard's reading of the Gospel and notably to Jn 17,19.

Can anyone ignore Descartes' urge to place the *ego* number one when he speaks of being: *sum*? Patocka deems this focus dispensable, but how? Not in terms of the Lithuanian-French philosopher Levinas who places the

'face-of-the-other' first. That option is often hailed by those in search for a new 'holiness'. What counts, however, is not the choice between the self and the other. With the help of Girard's theory and linguistic data we may grasp what his final thoughts about 'war', 'donation', and 'care' express in terms that might be akin to the ecclesial community 'holy' in 'truth' announced by Jn 17,19. Above we mentioned how mirror neurons make imitation a basic fact in all our acting and knowing. Imitation means being equally related to one reality via 'donation'. Both human and animal life, however, let strife (war) in from the beginning, since the subject's autonomy is challenged by this triangular setting (A and B relating to the same C). Curiously, in both Latin-related and most Germanic languages the notion of 'truth' appears as close to the idea of 'war', The subject affirms 'truth' as a distinctive take on reality and engages the rivaling identity in affirming this view. When phenomenology says that perceiving is being with the perceived, we note with Girard that the rivaling *ego* steps in to turn perception into a 'verity', introducing 'war'. The English 'war' (from an Indo-Germanic root **were*, 'wrangling') is close to the root **wero* (for 'verity', German 'wah'). This closeness of 'war' and 'verity' is a basic reality of life, and Patocka seeks to surmount its harsh paradox, by pointing to the Greek Heraclitus who makes the 'wrangling' the source of all commonality of being. Overcoming the mimetic rivalry, the human is called to the original openness to the whole of reality and to engage in a struggle to undo all the forces that threaten it[12]. That is what the English 'truth' expresses by being related not to 'war' (**were*), but to 'trust' and the German 'treu' ('truthful', from root **deru*). The fidelity in a common struggle to become entirely open (Greek 'un-closed', *a-letheia*) to the 'donation' that is that prime reality of any phenomenon. The divine call is to fight any force blocking this and causing enmity. That is what Jesus formulates as his project of holiness in which he wants to engage all in ecclesial solidarity united to him as his partner and bride (Rev 21). As Leon Bloy once stated, in truth, there is only one sadness: not to be holy.

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[12] See J. Patočka, *Heretical Essays*, ch. 6 on the wars of the 20th century, and on the 20th century as 'war'. We may point out that most authors tend to read 'the truth' even though there is no particle in Greek. Cf. S. Hauerwas, *Sanctify them in the Truth. Holiness Exemplified*, Nashville 1998.

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Aby wszyscy byli razem – uświęceni w prawdzie (J 17,19)

Streszczenie

Interpretacja J 17,19 przy pomocy fenomenologii Jana Patočki oraz teorii mimetycznej René Girarda przedstawia ustanowienie Kościoła jako nasz udział w świętości i prawdzie, dla których Jezus oddaje siebie. Patočka nazywa prawdę oddaniem się dla świata, do czego skłania człowieka 'troska o duszę', a francuski antropolog kładzie nacisk na prawdę o mimetycznej rywalizacji, jednak ich myśl jest zbieżna. Obaj uczeni odwołują się do idei etycznego powołania ludzi i dopominają się o prawdę w sensie uczynienia jej imperatywem relacyjności i integralności. Prawda ma dla nich wymiar praktyczny: odpowiedzialność za siebie i świat (Patočka) oraz pokonanie w sobie tendencji do prześladowania (Girard).

Słowa kluczowe: integralność, indywidualizm, naśladownictwo, otwartość, pożądanie, prawda, relatywizm, rywalizacja, świętość, troska o duszę.