

УДК 316.44

Jan Mazur, OSPPE, Associate Professor
The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Cracow

CONTROVERSY AROUND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The concept of social justice is not a simple narrowing of the concept of justice itself. Many researchers see it as having a new quality of its own. For example, some radical liberals question the idea of social justice to the point that when comparing it to "ordinary" justice, they bring up an analogy between a normal chair and the electric chair. They are referring, of course, to the electric chair in the strict sense, i.e.: those that are used for capital punishment. It is not difficult to note that, in this view, the use of this kind of justice is socially harmful, as deadly for social and economic life, as is plugging in the electric chair.

That approach is, in fact, not entirely devoid of valid arguments. However, it raises the question of whether these arguments are sufficient in the context of genuine concern for justice in public, national, social, and economic life, which most people associate with social justice.

Keywords: justice, Gods' law, social justice, community, legitimacy.

Lit. 15.

Ян Мазур, член Ордену Отців Паулінів, доцент
Папський університет Івана Павла II, Краків

СУПЕРЕЧКИ ЩОДО ПОНЯТТЯ "СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТІ"

Поняття "соціальної справедливості" не являється звуженим поняттям "справедливості" як такої. Багато дослідників розглядають в ньому нову ознаку, притаманну лише даній концепції. Наприклад, деякі радикальні ліберали ставлять під сумнів ідею соціальної справедливості, порівнюючи її зі "звичайною" справедливістю, проводять аналогію між простим стільцем та електричним стільцем. При цьому, мається на увазі, звичайно ж, електричний стілець в строгому сенсі слова, що використовується для страти. Не важко помітити, що згідно з цією точкою зору, використання такого роду справедливості є соціально шкідливим, оскільки являється настільки смертельно небезпечним для соціально-економічного життя, наскільки небезпечним є "вмикання" електричного стільця.

Такий підхід, насправді, не є позбавлений підґрунтя та аргументів. Проте, виникає питання, чи є ці аргументи достатніми в контексті справжнього розуміння справедливості у громадському, національному, соціальному та економічному житті, яке у більшості людей асоціюється зі соціальною справедливістю.

Ключові слова: справедливість, закон Божий, соціальна справедливість, суспільство, правосуддя.

Ян Мазур, член Пауліни, доцент
Папський університет Івана Павла II, Краков

СПОРЫ ПО ПОНЯТИЕ "СОЦИАЛЬНОЙ СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТИ"

Понятие "социальной справедливости" не является суженным понятием "справедливости" как таковой. Многие исследователи рассматривают в нем новый признак, присущую только данной концепции. Например, некоторые радикальные либералы ставят под сомнение идею социальной справедливости, сравнивая ее с "обычной" справедливостью, проводят аналогию между простым стулом и электрическим стулом. При этом, имеется в виду, конечно же, электрический стул в строгом смысле слова, используется для казни. Нетрудно заметить, что согласно этой точке зрения, использование такого рода справедливости является социально вредным, поскольку является настолько смертельно опасным для социально-экономической жизни, насколько опасно "включения" электрического стула.

Такой подход, по сути, не является лишен основания и аргументов. Однако, возникает вопрос, являются ли эти аргументы достаточными в контексте настоящего понимания справедливости в общественном, национальном, социальной и экономической жизни, которое у большинства людей ассоциируется с социальной справедливостью.

Ключевые слова: справедливость, закон Божий, социальная справедливость, общество, правосудие.

Problem setting. What is justice? Justice (lat. *iustitia*) is one of the basic ethical concepts that have defined meanings. It expresses the trait attributed to both actions (justice) and people (a just person) or social institutions (just laws, a just system, a just decision). Justice means moral competence, and therefore an appropriate disposition of human will and attitude.

According St. Thomas Aquinas justice is *constans et perpetua voluntas ius suum cuique tribuendi*¹. One may therefore define it as a constant and permanent willingness to give to each man what he deserves. This is an approach that generally corresponds to the prevailing view. People seem have this view of justice, assuming that this disposition refers to “everyone”. In the Christian understanding “everyone” refers not only to one’s neighbour, individuals and entire communities, but also to God himself².

In addition, a clear account of justice also implies adequate understanding of the question of “what belongs to someone”. It is primarily about the objective good (not just moral) and the associated respect for a person’s rights in the context of that good³.

In society, justice is associated with the distribution of material goods by rules and criteria and is associated with equal opportunities and rights of various entities with regard to the law. Aristotle, guided by this kind of intuition, distinguished two types of justice: commutative (related to equalization) and distributive (related to distribution). The first of these demands that the price of goods is not lower than the cost of production. The second kind of justice assumes that anyone who participated in the production of the goods, should obtain a part of the profit which is proportional to their share of the work. In general, however, three specific forms of justice are distinguished: justice of exchange (lat. *iustitia commutativa*), legal justice (lat. *iustitia legalis*) and distributive justice (lat. *iustitia distributiva*)⁴.

The justice of exchange means equality of benefits on the basis of reciprocity. It is based on the principle of equivalence: a task performed should have its equivalent, a commodity its price, a job its pay, those who are equal should be treated equally and those who are unequal in accordance with their degree of inequality⁵. The integrity of contract justice is safeguarded by the well-known golden rule: *Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you or Treat others as you would have them treat you!* Its

violation undermines the principle of reciprocity and, consequently, a sense of justice.

Distributive justice is based on the proportionality of provision. It is based on justice for all, which in practice can be reduced to the fair distribution of national income. This kind of distribution must be accompanied by an appropriate attitude in those who are responsible for its implementation. Transparency, openness and truthfulness are important here⁶.

Legal justice organises the relations of individuals to the community. In practice, this mainly deals with the relations between citizen to and state. Loyalty and obedience to the law constituted by the State⁷ are associated with the implementation of legal justice. It should be immediately noted that although this kind of justice can be and in practice is enforced by the state, its implementation does not mean that one should not follow one’s conscience. In essence, it does apply to one’s conscience, but there may be situations which, for moral reasons lead to “civil disobedience”.

The three-dimensionality of justice implies a certain harmony in its functioning. Distributive justice, implemented in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, should contribute to increase the common good, so that the justice of exchange (or contract justice) occupies the most space possible, and legal justice does not have to be carried out beyond essential measures⁸. Whatever the case, it must be emphasised once again that justice is about “what is due” and not, for example, about what feels good, is desired or required by common courtesy.

The implementation of justice is usually accompanied by a problem in the discernment of “what is due”. Generally, one needs to accept the tacit assumption that the question is “what is legitimately due”. What does that mean? Legitimacy means compliance with all applicable laws, which can be assumed to be authentic laws, deserving to be called a law. On the basis of Catholic social teaching, this issue does not present much difficulty. If we accept the Thomistic understanding of the law, or the almost universal understanding of the meaning of law, this issue could be summarized as follows:

¹ This view refers to the thinking of classical authors, showing particular resemblance to the definition of righteousness given by Domitius Ulpian (d. 223), the Roman jurist and writer of the Empire era. See St. Thomas Aquinas, STh II – II, q. 50, a. 2c, cit. after: Cz. Strzeszewski, *Katolicka nauka społeczna*, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2003, p. 395.

² Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1993, No. 1807.

³ Cf. J. Höffner, *Chrześcijańska nauka społeczna*, trans. S. Pyszka, Wydawnictwo Apostolstwa Modlitwy (Księży Jezuici), Kraków [1999], pp. 55 – 56.

⁴ Cf. J. Majka, *Filozofia społeczna*, Wrocławskie Księgarnia Archidiecezjalna, Wrocław 1982, pp. 175 – 176.

⁵ J. Mazur, *Ad bonum per politicam*. Wybrane zagadnienia z etyki życia politycznego, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2011, p. 88.

⁶ Cf. S. Kowalczyk, *Idea sprawiedliwości społecznej a myśl chrześcijańska*, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1998, pp. 139 – 146.

⁷ Cf. i bid., pp. 124 – 131.

⁸ J. Mazur, *Ad bonum per politicam*. Wybrane zagadnienia z etyki życia politycznego, p. 91.

Law is defined as a reasonable regulation which aims to achieve some good. If it is a regulation made by God, then we are dealing with God's law. This law has been definitively revealed or is a consequence of nature, created by God. In the latter case we are dealing with natural law. If the law is regulation made by humans, then we are dealing with human law, or the written laws of man. Its legitimacy will depend on whether it is consistent with the law of God or if it does not conflict with anything in God's law. It must meet the same condition in relation to natural law. If there is a mismatch or overt contradiction, then human law becomes lawless. It simply does not deserve to be called a law. It is an "illegitimate" law. It is in this perspective that "what is due" as the subject of justice means "what is due according to the law" which does not in any way oppose the God's law.

Justice is of course the subject of lively debate outside the field of Catholic social teaching⁹. It turns out, however, that reflection on justice, including that undertaken outside of Catholic social teaching, shows surprising similarities, regardless of its ideological basis. In the literature of sociology or political science, which is mostly based on the positivist paradigm of ethics and law, justice is usually understood as an element of purely external relations in the mutual co-existence of individuals and social groups. An example of this type of view is the theory of justice created by the American political philosopher John Rawls. His concept of *justice as fairness* is interesting, an attempt to overcome utilitarianism, which was dominant in the second half of the twentieth century¹⁰.

In this paper, however, we are interested in a particular type of justice which is designated by the term social justice.

Attempting to define social justice. It should be immediately noted that the idea of social justice, which has been talked about in almost all arenas since the mid-nineteenth century, still raises a lot of controversy. The concept of social justice itself is certainly close to distributive justice, which was known to Aristotle. It also has a certain connection to criminal justice, which in principle concerns the justification of punishment and proportionality of the penalty to the offense committed.

Social justice is generally defined as granting a man

that which, by virtue of his share of the work or merit, is justly his due. In the legal sense, social justice is giving every individual the rights he is due under the rules of democracy. In terms of morality, it is primarily justice related to the common good¹¹.

Essentially, we are concerned with a just society or state. A postulate of this kind of justice appeared when the main institutions of social and economic life began to decide on the distribution of burdens and benefits in society. The proponents of social justice seem to take the view that the role of these institutions, especially the state, is to provide a specific result in the distribution of goods (the most desirable in society), which in turn assumes interference with the freedom of individuals and regulation of the market economy by the political community.

However, even at the outset, doubt arises regarding what makes a society or state fair. Only individuals, human persons can act fairly or unfairly. Does it make sense to talk about just or unjust institutions? It is clear that it is not institutions who sin, but individual people, even if their iniquities are carried out within the framework of institutions or through them. However, institutions may be sinful or evil organisations. Of course, they may also be, and indeed should be, good organisations. Both the evil and the good done in them are the work of specific people. It seems that the point of social justice should be seen from this perspective. It is simply justice that is attributed to individuals and, as such, calls for implementation in society, in its structures and institutions in the state, which, thanks to this justice, can be seen as fair¹².

With regard to social justice in general, it is postulated that it would mean an economic system in a given country which would create the opportunity for equal access for all to basic material goods, allowing each person to live in dignity. Equality of this access should mainly take the form of equal opportunities to attain it. In addition, social justice also means consistently aiming to put an end to the existence of social groups living in marginalized poverty and deprived of real opportunities to improve their situation¹³.

Social justice is closely linked to political justice, which focuses on the common good in such a way that it demands political commitment to the creation, protection and expansion of it. It is dynamic due to

⁹ See for example: A. Klose, *Odpowiedzialność społeczna dzisiaj*, trans. Z. Kowalska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PAT, Kraków 1999, pp. 35 – 37.

¹⁰ J. Rawls, *Teoria sprawiedliwości*, trans. Panufnik, J. Pasek, A. Romaniuk, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1994, pp. 23 – 28.

¹¹ J. Höffner, *Chrześcijańska nauka społeczna*, p. 60.

¹² Cf. A. Swift, *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians*, p. 19.

¹³ J. Mazur, *Ad bonum per politicam. Wybrane zagadnienia z etyki życia politycznego*, p. 95.

the variability of living conditions in relation to politics. It can be seen as a specific form of legal justice, as well as a manifestation of distributive justice. The virtue of prudence is essential in putting it into practice¹⁴.

Throughout the modern and post-modern eras, the otherwise clear concept of social justice has been the subject of various forms of ideological manipulation. For example, according to the Communist ideology, social justice is almost synonymous with equality, while liberal ideologies combine the idea of justice with freedom.

At this point, it should be noted that many liberal thinkers entirely reject the notion of social justice as impossible to define. In their view, such attempts usually lead to its over-interpretation that favour the realization of a particular interest only¹⁵. Others distinguish certain kinds of justice that are difficult to define.

For example, Chaim Perelman (d. 1984), the Belgian philosopher of law, when analyzing the interpretations of social justice in political science, identified the following criteria: 1. To each the same; 2. To each according to his merits; 3. To each according to his works; 4. To each according to needs; 5. To each according to his position and 6. To each according to the law¹⁶. It is clear that some of the criteria are almost utopian in nature, while others are too subjective or are a kind of tautology¹⁷.

The ideologisation of social justice can lead to justice as such becoming a caricature. The criticism of social justice made by the liberal thinker Friedrich von Hayek (d. 1992) is interesting in this respect.

Controversial issues. The Austrian thinker Friedrich von Hayek, an economist and political philosopher, and a strong supporter of the principles of the free market, was skeptical of any ideas of social justice. In his opinion, the notion of social justice is an artificial structure which has no bearing in the reality of social life. It is simply a mirage, an illusion, and he did not hesitate to call it a categorical mistake. Any attempt to define social justice must lead to the so-called. categorical shift, the result of philosophical errors¹⁸.

According to Hayek, in these kind of attempts,

the essence of justice is shifted from the category of actions to the category of the community. There is no such thing as a just or unjust society. The attribute of justice applies only to the behaviour of the individual. Only the individual may be fair or unfair, if he acts in a way that is accordingly just or unjust. This feature can not be attributed to society. Why? In a community of free individuals, a situation is always the unintended result of combined actions undertaken by these entities within a game of free social forces. For this reason, one cannot say whether the situation, the distribution of free, often unintended forces, is fair or unfair. Society is not an individual entity capable of action. Only members of the society have this ability. Therefore, it cannot be assessed in terms of justice or injustice, and thus the very idea of justice associated with a just society loses its meaning, and becomes a mirage and a delusion¹⁹.

It is not difficult to see in Hayek's reasoning an obvious issue that raises questions, namely: is the distribution of social forces – usually this is about the distribution of potential within the framework of the free market – really something that is unintended by anyone? Even if this was true, then is nobody is responsible for this distribution? Moreover, if indeed no-one bears responsibility for this distribution of individual potential, can it really be said that no one is responsible for the results of actions that were unintended?

Hayek was convinced that it is impossible to identify any operable social entity that would be responsible for the distribution of potential. He simply believed in the power of the “invisible hand” of the free market. In this regard, it is difficult to talk about a distribution of potential (resources) that could be associated with justice or social injustice. However – as experience tells us – individuals can have a real impact on the distribution of this potential. Moreover, they may jointly decide that they accept or do not accept the results of a particular distribution of goods. Such a decision is about justice, it is somehow part of the problem of justice. In it you can see a manifestation of social justice.

An example might be a government policy that leads to such an increase in unemployment, that it becomes a social issue. The government should

¹⁴ J. Höffner, *Chrześcijańska nauka społeczna*, p. 60; cf. J. Mazur, *Ad bonum per politicam. Wybrane zagadnienia z etyki życia politycznego*, p. 97.

¹⁵ Cf. R. Szarfenberg, *Krytyka i afirmacja polityki społecznej*, Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2006, pp. 81 – 85.

¹⁶ Ch. Perelman, *O sprawiedliwości*, trans. W. Bieńkowska, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1959; The same, *Éthique et droit*, Université de Bruxelles, Bruxelles 1990.

¹⁷ Cf. S. Kowalczyk, *Idea sprawiedliwości społecznej a myśl chrześcijańska*, pp. 88 – 112.

¹⁸ Cf. A. Swift, *Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians*, pp. 28 – 29.

¹⁹ See F. von Hayek, *The Mirage of Social Justice*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1976.

foresee the social consequences of its policies. Unemployment is obviously associated with the deepening of social inequality, and the impoverishment of a large part of society, which is an injustice, because usually, the unemployed do not receive what they rightfully deserve by virtue of participation in the common good. The responsibility for this situation lies not only with the government but also with the MPs who voted for the adoption of laws supporting government policy, and the voters, who of course have an impact on the balance of power in parliament. Therefore, contrary to what Hayek said, there is a relationship between the distribution of wealth in society and individual actions (decisions) that are taken jointly in the social and political sphere. These actions should be fair and, as such, constitute the image of social justice.

Although Hayek's argument is not difficult to challenge, objections to the principle of social justice as it is understood now are not easy to remove. The basic problem lies in the distinction between ordinary justice and social justice. In this difference liberal critics see probably a little perversely an opportunity to associate social justice with a kind of injustice (if social justice is not usual justice, it could be the opposite, that is, injustice, after all, there is only one kind of justice).

It is worth briefly looking at the difference. If justice is defined as the will to "give to each what he deserves", then social justice is the will to give social groups what they deserve. Social justice is concerned with addressing the needs of groups rather than individuals. This idea enforces a collectivist approach to reality. At this point, there is a danger that in the framework of collectivist thinking, a person may not be regarded as an independent entity, a person, but instead will play the role of a component of a group that is trying to undertake "justice-related" actions.

What might these justice-related actions be? In practice, they amount to exerting pressure on public authorities by certain social groups to settle their own interests at the expense of other groups or society as a whole. The problem is that the claims of groups that lobby are such that their implementation by public authorities has a considerable resemblance to what might be described as a robbery of their fellow citizens. It differs from an ordinary robbery only that in it is legal, because it is carried out in the majesty of the law.

It is easy to see this in a specific example. Consider the situation of a man addicted to alcohol. Not having the means to live, because everything has been allocated for the purchase of alcohol, driven by hunger he breaks into a private shop to get something to eat. Even if account is taken of all the extenuating

circumstances, namely the fact that this man was in dire need and that he became an alcoholic for reasons attributable partly to his environment, it has the hallmarks of an act of theft, robbery of someone's property. Depending on the value of the food taken, law enforcement bodies qualify this act as a misdemeanor or a felony.

Some liberals note a paradox here. It is known that people with alcohol problems are provided with social care. The state spends money generated from taxes, which are compulsory, paid by citizens under threat of a fine. In this example, the robbed store owner also pays taxes and does so under the threat of criminal sanction. Now, the paradox lies in the fact that if the state takes the grocer's money (in the form of tax) to spend partly on benefits for the alcoholic, it is an act of charity, social equalisation. It is the practical implementation of social justice. But when the alcoholic takes the equivalent of the shopkeeper's money in the form of food, it is no longer a manifestation of social justice, but simply robbery, theft of another's property. In other words, if this man, in a life and death situation, takes what he needs from a wealthier person, it is seen as stealing, but if the state takes these means and gives them to those in need, then it is seen as social justice.

This liberal observation of course has its weaknesses. It does not include, for example, the fact that the wealth of some is often achieved at the expense of the poverty of others. Sometimes the wealth of individuals is built on the work of many impoverished people, who have their working conditions and pay dictated to them by the rich, because they have to earn enough to survive. Therefore, so-called social equalisation is justified by ordinary justice. The wealthy should participate in the process of assisting the poor, especially those who are exposed to a life which undermines their human dignity. This alignment can be done as charity. However, in the realities of the modern world, charity alone is not enough. It must be accompanied by state activity in the form of various institutions and solutions that provide citizens with social support. There is no doubt that this type of activity fits the principles of social justice.

However, there is a danger that this concern for social justice may not have anything to do with ordinary justice, and could even resemble injustice. If, for example, taxes are so high that they will bankrupt many businesses, it must be questionable whether the state social spending is fair. What is the good in giving one person what rightfully belongs to them by virtue of their human dignity (eg. benefits for those living below the subsistence level), if another loses the possibility of employment, something to which they

have a natural right (the right to work)? In addition, the distribution of wealth in society, which is an expression of the principle of social justice (and defined as social justice) may be openly unfair. An example is funding initiatives from the state budget, from taxpayers' money, which taxpayers do not agree with for ethical or political reasons. Do not refunds of abortifacients or funding of *in vitro* treatments awaken in most taxpayers a sense of injustice?

The Christian point of view. Today, social justice is ideologised by the New Left. In turn, extreme liberals question its legitimacy. The Catholic Church also expresses an opinion on this issue. According to the Church's teaching, it is a virtue and social principle. As such, it is inscribed in the social message of the Gospel.

In general, social justice can be seen as the virtue of rational social action. It is particularly important in the area of political life. In the political arena, social justice is simply political order that is based on the principle of equality before the law, legal security, the guarantee of fundamental rights, political equality and civil rights²⁰. It turns out that citizens have widespread expectations and aspirations related to this political order. A sense of social justice is what probably absorbs their minds and hearts most in politics. Besides, there is almost universal consensus that the duty of every political community is to seek not only the common good, but also justice, which *de facto* is identified with social justice.

The problem of social justice appears to be inseparably associated with politics, which is understood in Catholic social teaching as the prudent concern for the common good. In this perspective, we can talk about fair politics. The reflections of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger are extremely interesting in this regard. In his view, the essence of morally just politics is in a quest for the common good which is rational. Politics is a field generally reserved for the exercise of reason. This is not so much reason as shaped by technology, but rather moral reason, or rational judgment on what serves justice and peace, and therefore also morality, that is, to everything that triggers good²¹.

According to Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, rational judgment must be constantly made and protected from the attitudes, structures and circumstances that weaken its ability. In particular, it

should be protected from the bias that may accompany power. Bias favours the formation of various myths that appear to be the implementation of social justice, but in fact are masks and costumes for power²².

The beginning of the XXI century is not free from political myths. For example, time after time there are attempts to confer the status of myth on real values. Contemporary political myths treat true values unilaterally and somewhat selectively. This applies particularly to such values as progress, science and freedom, which dominate the social consciousness. They are explained and understood in a biased way, like myths. Therefore, Ratzinger issued an insistent call to modern man, who is mentally in postmodernity, to free himself from political myths. This is necessary to "bring reason to reason". Only then we can talk about politics as rational and thus morally fair²³.

The basis of morally just politics are values. Catholic social teaching clearly emphasizes that the most important values are the highest values which apply to everyone, regardless of various majority decisions defining axiology on the basis of statutory law. These values are not difficult to discern by reference to natural moral law.

Here, again, it is worth paying attention to the words of Benedict XVI, which are contained in his encyclical *Caritas in veritate*. He wrote: "In all cultures there are examples of ethical convergence, some isolated, some interrelated, which are an expression of the one human nature, willed by the Creator; the tradition of ethical wisdom knows this as natural law. This universal moral law provides a sound basis for all cultural, religious and political dialogue, and it ensures that the multi-faceted pluralism of cultural diversity does not detach itself from the common quest for truth, goodness and God. Thus adherence to the law etched on human hearts is the precondition for all constructive social [and political] cooperation"²⁴.

Thus, in this light, giving to each what is rightfully his, and therefore, according to natural law, seems to be a universal principle, acceptable to all people of good will and possible to implement not only the lives of individual people, but also in the context of human communities, institutions, social structures, states and the international community.

By itself, justice in social life, however, is not enough. It must be replenished by social love, which in practical terms means solidarity. In other words,

²⁰ B. Sutor, *Etyka polityczna. Ujęcie całościowe na gruncie chrześcijańskiej nauki społecznej*, p. 154.

²¹ Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Europa. Jej podwaliny dzisiaj i jutro*, trans. S. Czerwik, Wydawnictwo Jedność, Kielce 2005, pp. 58 – 59.

²² Cf. *ibid.*

²³ Cf. *ibid.*

²⁴ Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter Caritas in veritate* (June 29, 2009), 59.

social justice needs social love. The practice of these two social virtues, as well as their implementation as social policy is the way to social peace.

Those who point to the need for globalization of social justice for peace and even development are right in many ways. It seems that this kind of globalization will be possible only when the understanding of social justice is free of ideological manipulation, and its practical application is based upon that which the ethical wisdom common to all men calls natural law.

But there is another question. Does globalization of justice have a chance of success in the current situation of pluralism, which embraces almost the entire post-modern world? Luckily the Christian view of social justice provides an incentive for optimism. The wisdom of the Catholic Church comes to our aid. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* contains a certain passage relating to this: "Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority"²⁵.

The *Catechism of the duty of social justice* in a broader context reveals the truth about man. It reminds us that justice this can only be achieved by respecting the transcendent dignity of man, which essentially means a special respect for the dignity of every human person. Respect for this dignity implies a further issue, namely the rational recognition of the equality and, at the same time, the differences between people. This, in turn, points to the need for solidarity, which, as a kind of friendship or social love, is a requirement of human brotherhood, and in particular Christian brotherhood²⁶.

Finally, it is worth appreciating the importance of social justice in the lives of individuals and communities; an importance whose deepest justification is the truth about man created in the image and likeness of God, endowed with an immortal spiritual soul, redeemed within the mystery of death and resurrection of Christ and called to participate in God's happiness²⁷.

Conclusions. Social justice, despite attempts to ideologise it or to totally eliminate it in favour of concern for "ordinary" justice, appears to be a moral

and social imperative. It is essential to strive for just politics, a just state, just governments, just institutions, just social structures, because only then can there be fertile ground on which everyone can receive what he deserves. Conversely, if each person receives what is his due, it is an expression of a just society, and therefore one in which social justice is respected.

1. *Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Caritas in veritate (June 29, 2009).*

2. *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1993.*

3. *Hayek F., von, The Mirage of Social Justice, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1976.*

4. *Höffner J., Chrześcijańska nauka społeczna, trans. S. Pyszka, Wydawnictwo Apostolstwa Modlitwy (Księży Jezuici), Kraków [1999].*

5. *Klose A., Odpowiedzialność społeczna dzisiaj, trans. Z. Kowalska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PAT, Kraków 1999.*

6. *Kowalczyk S., Idea sprawiedliwości społecznej a myśl chrześcijańska, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1998.*

7. *Majka J., Filozofia społeczna, Wrocławskie Księgarnia Archidiecezjalna, Wrocław 1982.*

8. *Mazur J., Ad bonum per politicam. Wybrane zagadnienia z etyki życia politycznego, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2011.*

9. *Perelman Ch., Éthique et droit, Université de Bruxelles, Bruxelles 1990.*

10. *Perelman Ch., O sprawiedliwości, trans. W. Bieńkowska, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa 1959.*

11. *Ratzinger J., Europa. Jej podwaliny dzisiaj i jutro, trans. S. Czerwik, Wydawnictwo Jedność, Kielce 2005, pp. 5 – 59.*

12. *Rawls J., Teoria sprawiedliwości, trans. Panufnik, J. Pasek, A. Romaniuk, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1994.*

13. *Strzeszewski Cz., Katolicka nauka społeczna, Wydawnictwo KUL, Lublin 2003.*

14. *Swift A., Political Philosophy: A Beginners' Guide for Students and Politicians, Polity Press Ltd, Cambridge 2006.*

15. *Szarfenberg R., Krytyka i afirmacja polityki społecznej, Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2006.*

Стаття надійшла до редакції 23.08.2016



²⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1993, No. 1928.*

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 1929 – 1942.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, No. 1934.