

## Religious freedom in fundamental living.

**Miroslav Lyko**  
Slovak Republic

### Preface

Human person has got preconditions, that make him a being with a unique dignity. We mean especially the brain, will, freedom and secular soul. In the introduced article, we will further look at the attribute of freedom, where the frame of it includes also the religious

freedom. As it will be a theological-philosophical scheme, with the ambition to refer some reasons and implications of the religious freedom lived in the fundamental core of human in joining the external preconditions of his full development, we will also not avoid the essential context, which is the searching for the truth and the favour to truth.

The article wants to remind the reader only some facts, that hang with the religious freedom. The reason is for example continual danger of its corruption and also the fact, that it has to be constantly developed, from the side of individual and also the whole communities. Reasoning the need of religious freedom for human being can be done by various ways, we have chosen the theological-philosophical.

### Religious freedom as a part of human freedom and the fundamental human rights

The fact, that the freedom in the real and full sense is the attribute of human and only human, is generally known and accepted. In the further article, the freedom of the human person and also the things that are connected to it, will be watched under the angle of view of the Catholic Church teaching as an institution, which not only defines this value, but also tries to implement into life, into interpersonal and interreligious relationships, appealing to relevant instances, to indulge each person develop the freedom by appropriate way. It is namely about the building up the basic condition for realisation of the process of searching for the freedom. And since, each truth

achieved, is always only one passage of the way to full truth" (John Paul II., *Fides et ratio*, 1999, no.2)<sup>1</sup>, the religious freedom will be always needed for this aim.

According to some relevant documents ( not only) Catholic church, including the declaration of the Second vatican concilus *Dignitatis humanae*, inseparable part of human's freedom is also his religious freedom: Dignity of human person is being increasingly realized by our coevals and the amount of those, who demand for people to be allowed to act according to their own judgement and to enjoy the responsible freedom, hence not to act because of compulsion, but conducted by the belief of responsibility. They also demand the jural delimitation of the public power, for to the scope of the righteous freedom of persons and communities not be too bounded. These demands of freedom in the human society refer above all to the values of human soul, mainly to the free practising of religion in society" (Documents of the Second Vatican council, *Dignitatis humanae*, 2008, no 1). <sup>2</sup> The religious freedom even integrates into the list of the fundamental human rights, as natural right of the human person for the civil freedom. It is emphasized for example in Catechism of Catholic church: „This natural right has to be appreciated in juridical order of society the way, that it would become the civil law" (*Catechism of the Catholic church*, 1998, no. 2108).<sup>3</sup> Modern philosophy and also theology often concern their concentration on human being. They highlight in many opportunities, various ways and forms, that „the desire for the truth belongs to the nature of human himself"(John Paul II., *Fides et ratio*, 1999, no. 3)<sup>4</sup>. This implicists, that the right for the religious freedom, which prepares the way to human, searching for the truth, must be added into the human's nature.

It is well-known, that the living of the religious freedom is not the same in all parts of the world. Except of the subjective circumstances own to each individual, especially and above all, thanks to the original and unique situation, in which he is occurs, is the standard of its living affected also by the objective facts. These are affected by the profan society, often not only desacralized, but also secularized, but they are also affected by churches themselves, and especially

relating to an acceptance or non-acceptation of the laws of others – often competitive – religions for the appropriate improvement of each its member or sympathiser. But the dignity of human and the general goodness stand over the anxiety of those, who do not want to give up their privileges (Frank, 2013, *Evangelii gaudium*, no 218).<sup>5</sup> This is also valid for the case of religious freedom.

## **Objective facts affecting fundamental living of the religious freedom in theological-philosophical understanding**

The category of objective factors affecting the internal and also external living of the religious freedom includes for example the influence of family, state, Church (general and also particular). It is rather about creating the conditions and opportunities for the improvement of the religious freedom of each member of the community, for acceptance of his decision for some church and some way of executing the internal and also external cult act, which is not in conflict with the smart valid secular legislative.

### **1.- Family as a place of building the bases of the religious freedom**

Family, established on the heterosexual monogamous marriage, should have an ambition to create the conditions for real everyday living of the religious freedom, for example for the process of searching for the truth. Couple, especially if they have different religion, respecting the church of partner and also the religious practice, create the air of religious acceptance, openness for ecumenic and inter-religious dialogue without the necessity to sort the professed religion and its religious and also moral demands. Their children are reared not only in this atmosphere, but also in the air with the public and also private cult, convivial religious days connected with the natural familiar atmosphere.

### **2.- The state not only tolerating, but also wishing the value of the religious freedom**

Individuals, families and also churches can live in the surrounding of the external religious freedom in case, that the state or the organ, which is in equal position, creates appropriate conditions. Not only in the form of the law, but also in practical level. If the state respects the warranty of believers for appropriate celebrating of the convivial days, if it allows the public cult above all at holy places, if it supports the warranty of church to establish and administer schools, school apparatus, if it allows the churches and religious communities to concern on the charitable and missionary works, if it is able to accept the religious medias, if it allows people to build their lives on the recognized truth, then it is on the way of positive support of the religious freedom. Nobody can demand from the church, *to bind the religion to secret human intimacy without any affect on the social and national life, without the care of health of institutions of the citizen society, without stating the events, that interest the citizens. Authentic faith always implicits the deep desire to change the world, give values and leave behind oneself the best* (cf. Frank, 2013, *Evangelii gaudium*, no. 183)<sup>6</sup>. Pope Francis in exhortation in context with our topic adds by one breath, that the openness to *transcendence could form the new political and economical mentality, which could help to go through the absolute dichotomy between the economy and social general goodness* ( cf. Francis, 2013, *Evangelii gaudium*, no. 205)<sup>7</sup>

State, which can be claimed, that it respects the religious freedom, must guarantee in its legislative some fundamental facts. More than a decade ago, some of them were said by Slovak theologist Kutny: „The law order of the state, in laic context of the religious freedom (...) wants to state the right and freedom of each human person, to become a member of community or church, but not only the opportunity to practice, but also the opportunity to change and exchange the religion or faith, and to freely, alone or together with others, publically or privately, state them in practical life. Nobody can be forced to this categorical step“ (Kutny, 2001, *Fundamental dimension of human conscience*, s. 132)<sup>8</sup>.

If we consider the conception of Church the Catholic Church, then it can be reminded, that exactly this establishment appeals to keep the phenomenon of religious freedom, and that also according to dignity of each person, staying mainly in freedom. In the other hand, it is necessary to add a comment of Kutny, that the religious freedom does not mean the agreement with the mistake, because „ out of the right for religious freedom in the right sense, from the principal point of view, it is not possible to want to derive the moral accessibility to the agreement with mistake“ (Kutny, 2001, *The fundamental dimension of human conscience*, s. 153)<sup>9</sup>. But let us go back to the matter. Catholic church has by its own authority, a potential to effectively appeal to individuals and also communities, to use and improve the religious freedom – their and freedom of the others.. Religious freedom, according to the principle of satisfaction of the duty of searching for the truth, by which is each person gifted by brain fixed, has its message by the improvement of inter-personal relationships, by the renaissance of the soul sphere of each human person. But its message is mainly in creating the conditions to search for the right God and consequently for the fulfilment of the known, religious and moral demands, that arise of it. As the Church leads its members, but not only them, to the right God, has a behalf of religious freedom, and that for their members and also for the others.

### **Subjective facts affecting the insufficient fundamental living of the religious freedom in theological-philosophical understanding**

In this part of the article we will name the subjective factors, affecting the inappropriateness and insufficiency of the application of the religious freedom for concrete human. We mean for example insufficient forming of the conscience of individual, mainly from the reason of carelessness, enclosing to the calling of searching for the truth, indetermination of human. The conjunct denominator of these actual and existing barriers, concerning the religious freedom, is the personal sin of a human.

As the human person is an original, it can be stated, that his way of searching for the truth is unique. And unique is also the fundamental living of the religious freedom and its usage for advantage of the truth. „ The impact of the act of human to his own life, as well as the destiny of the others, is the subject of arguments – that, what is good for somebody, is bad for the other; that, what is permitted for one, that banns the voice of conscience“ . (Kondrla, 2013, *Three aspects of analyzing the values*, s. 11) Religious freedom allows this way the forming of the conscience according to own beliefs, and at the same time, acting according to them. Also thanks to the lived religious freedom.

From our considering further emerges, that if a human successfully faces the storm of sin, if he chooses the way of truth with help of God's mercy, then he will learn more and more, the positive features of the life with God, that mean the freedom and a life in truth and with the Truth.

## Summary

The free recognizing of the truth is essential for the improvement of a human. By the religious freedom, where the objective and also subjective facts help in its realization , he can live the full life with the fair, or even loving relationships to other people. The goal of our theological-philosophical considering, except of other, also by referring to objective and subjective factors, affecting the degree of living the religious freedom, was to evoke the efficient reflexion of the affected ones. It is up to consideration of reader, if we have achieved it at least particularity.

## USED LITERATURE:

**Documents Of The Second Vatican Concil.** (2008). *Dignitatis humanae*, Trnava Association of St. Adalbert , 2008. No . 1 ISBN 978-80-7162-738-8.

**Francis , 2013.** *Evangelii gaudium*. [online]. 2014, [cit.2014-01-08]. Available on the internet: <http://www.radiovaticana.cz/clanek.php4?id=19230>, no. 183, 205, 218.

**John Paul II . , 1998.** *Fides et Ratio* . Bratislava : Don Bosco , 1998 , no. 2-3 ISBN 80-88933-06-4.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* , 1998. Trnava: Association of St. Adalbert , 1998 , no. 2108. ISBN 80-7162-253-2.

**Kondrla , P. And Col.** 2013. Three aspects of the examination of values. Ljubljana : Apokalipsa , 2013 , p.11 ISBN 978-961-6894-29-6.

**Kútňy, I.** (2001 ). Fundamental dimension of human conscience. Rome: Slovak Institute , 2001. S.132 , 153 ISBN 80-88696-26-7.

---

1John Paul II., 1999. *Fides et ratio*, 1999, no.2

2Documents of the Second vatican concil, *Dignitatis humanae*, 2008, no. 1

3*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1998, no 2108

4John Paul II., 1999. *Fides et ratio*, 1999, no 3

5Francis, 2013. *Evangelii gaudium*. [online]. 2014, [cit.2014-01-08]. Available on the internet: <http://www.radiovaticana.cz/clanek.php4?id=19230>, no. 218

6Francis, 2013. *Evangelii gaudium*. [online]. 2014, [cit.2014-01-08]. Available on the internet: <http://www.radiovaticana.cz/clanek.php4?id=19230>, no. 183

7Francis, 2013. *Evangelii gaudium*. [online]. 2014, [cit.2014-01-08]. Available on the internet: <http://www.radiovaticana.cz/clanek.php4?id=19230>, no. 205

8Kútňy, I. 2001. Fundamental dimension of human conscience. Slovak institute: Roma, 2001, s 132

9Kútňy, I. 2001. Fundamental dimension of human conscience. Slovak institute: Roma, 2001, s 153