

MEDNARODNA ZNANSTVENA KONFERENCA
MEĐUNARODNA ZNANSTVENA KONFERENCIJA

ZBORNIK POVZETKOV
ZBORNIK SAŽETAKA

**SODOBNI IZZIVI NA PODROČJU
PSIHOLOGIJE RELIGIJE IN PASTORALE**

***SUVREMENI IZAZOVI NA PODRUČJU
PSIHOLOGIJE RELIGIJE I PASTORALE***

Logarska Dolina, Slovenija, 2025

Mednarodna znanstvena konferenca

SODOBNI IZZIVI NA PODROČJU PSIHOLOGIJE RELIGIJE IN PASTORALE

Zbornik povzetkov znanstvenih prispevkov

23. – 25. junij 2025

Logarska Dolina, Slovenija

Međunarodna znanstvena konferencija

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Zbornik sažetaka znanstvenih radova

23. – 25. lipnja 2025

Logarska Dolina, Slovenija

International Scientific Conference

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN THE FIELD OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION AND PASTORAL PRACTICE

Book of Scientific Paper Abstracts

23–25 June 2025

Logarska Dolina, Slovenia

Urednik / Editor: dr. Damijan Ganc

Programski odbor in recenzenti / **Program Committee and Peer Reviewers:**

dr. Drago Jerebic (predsednik), dr. Josip Bošnjaković, dr. Josip Šimunović, dr. Damijan Ganc, dr. Sara Jerebic, dr. Andrej Šegula

Izdaja / Edition: 1. spletna izdaja (PDF) / 1st online edition (PDF)

Kraj in leto izdaje/ Place and year of publishing: Ljubljana, 2025

Izdajatelj / Publisher: Teološka fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani / Katolički bogoslovni fakultet u Đakovu

Dostopno na / Available at:

<https://www.teof.uni-lj.si/uploads/ZBORNIK%20povzetkov%20Sodobni%20izzivi.pdf>

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Kataložni zapis o publikaciji (CIP) pripravili v Narodni in univerzitetni knjižnici v Ljubljani

COBISS.SI-ID 242389251

ISBN 978-961-7167-31-3 (Teološka fakulteta, PDF)

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TEOF

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Teološka fakulteta



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KAZALO POVZETKOV / KAZALO SAŽETAKA / INDEX OF ABSTRACTS

Branko Klun: Obstacles to Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology	5
Damijan Ganc, Drago Jerebic: Theology in Dialogue: Interdisciplinary Opportunities in Pastoral Practice	7
Nikola Vranješ: On the Importance of Psychological Counseling and Support in Regular Pastoral Settings: Some Highlights and Challenges	9
Josip Šimunović: School Pastoral Care and the Possibilities of Action in Student Crisis Situation	11
Antun Volenik, Andrija Piskač: Authenticity and Faith: Psychological Insights into Religiosity Freed from Complexes	13
Tomaž Erzar, Katarina Kompan Erzar: Among Males: The Need for Transparency and Connectedness	15
Andrej Šegula: Algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, and the Synodal Renewal of Pastoral Practice: Between Technological Opportunity and Spiritual Discernment	17
Dominik-Borna Čepulić: Psychodynamics of Spiritual Life	19
Drago Jerebic: Overview of Authors, Concepts, and Current Challenges in the Field of Psychology of Religion in the World and Slovenia	21
Josip Bošnjaković: The Rooms of Conversation – The Need of Time and Adverse Times	23
Damijan Ganc: Theology of Parenthood as One of the Responses to Contemporary Pastoral Challenges	25
Sara Jerebic: Recovery from Relational and Religious Trauma	27

Ovire v dialogu med teologijo in psihologijo

prof. dr. Branko Klun

Teološka fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Če dialoga ne razumemo le kot izmenjavo vpljudnostnih fraz, temveč kot prizadevanje za resnično medsebojno razumevanje različnih sogovornikov, potem takšen dialog zahteva poglobljeno refleksijo tako o lastnem miselnem obzorju kot o obzorju drugega. Miselno obzorje empiričnih znanosti, kamor spada tudi sodobna psihologija, je pogosto sprejeto kot samoumevno, pri čemer se premalo zavedamo njegovega naturalistično zoženega pogleda na stvarnost. Takšno zoženje teologiji že vnaprej odreka možnost, da bi bilo njeno področje prepoznano kot nekaj »realnega«, oziroma se stvarnost, ki jo teologija izraža, zvede na drugotne fenomene. Tako je npr. Bog reduciran na idejo o Bogu, ta ideja pa je lahko nadalje zvedena na možganske procese, v katerih se oblikuje. Teologija se takšne redukcije ustraši, ker »znanstveni« pristop zanika temelje njenega miselnega obzorja in ji odreka zmožnost spoznanja resničnosti. Še več, teologija lahko podvomi v svoja izhodišča in morda želi postati bolj znanstvena, kar pa lahko vodi v shizofreno situacijo v odnosu do lastne živete vere.

Zato je ključno, da prepoznamo meje znanstvenega pristopa in njegovega miselnega okvira. Mnogi znanstveniki in psihologi to storijo spontano, ker jim življenjska izkušnja razkriva omejenost znanstvene metodologije. A treba je iti še korak dalje. S pomočjo fenomenološkega pristopa se moramo zavedati, da izhodišče stvarnosti, ki ga pogosto jemljemo kot samoumevno, ni zunanji svet, temveč doživljanje v prvi osebi, ki ga ni moč povsem reducirati na tretjeosebno, empirično (znanstveno) perspektivo. Ta od znotraj živeta stvarnost je v določenem smislu izvirnejša od zunanje stvarnosti, čeprav sta obe v stalni medsebojni interakciji. Na ta način se odpre prostor za teologijo, ki je prvotno vezana na to vnaprejšnjo, izkustveno zasidrano stvarnost. Tako se teologija ne počuti več ogrožene s strani empiričnih znanosti, saj v fenomenološkem pristopu ni človek tisti, ki se pojavlja v znanstveno razložljivem svetu, temveč znanost nastopa znotraj človeka in njegovega celovitega doživljanja življenja in sveta.

Ključne besede: teologija, psihologija, fenomenologija, redukcionizem, stvarnost;

Obstacles to Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology

If we understand dialogue not merely as the exchange of polite phrases, but as a genuine effort toward mutual understanding between different partners, then it demands deep reflection on both our own intellectual horizon and that of the other. The intellectual framework of the empirical sciences—including modern psychology—is often accepted uncritically, with little awareness of how it narrows our view of reality through a naturalistic lens. This narrowing precludes theology from being recognized as dealing with something truly “real,” or, alternatively, it reduces the reality theology articulates to secondary phenomena. For example, God is reduced to the idea of God, and that idea is further reduced to specific brain processes

in which such a notion arises. Theology finds such reductionism threatening because the “scientific” approach in this context denies the foundations of its intellectual world and its capacity to offer genuine knowledge of reality. Moreover, theology may begin to question its own starting points and attempt to become more “scientific,” which can lead to an inner conflict—or even a schizophrenic situation—in relation to its own lived faith.

It is therefore essential to acknowledge the limits of the scientific approach and its intellectual horizon. Many scientists and psychologists already do so intuitively, as their lived experience reveals the limitations of scientific methodology. But it is necessary to go a step further. The phenomenological approach helps us recognize that the starting point of reality is not the external world—as is often assumed—but our first-person experience, which cannot be fully reduced to a third-person, empirical (scientific) perspective. This inwardly lived reality is, in a certain sense, more foundational than the external world, even though both are in constant interaction. This recognition opens space for theology, which is primarily rooted in this pre-given, experientially grounded reality. In this light, theology no longer feels threatened by the empirical sciences. From a phenomenological perspective, it is not the human being who appears within a scientifically explained world, but science that appears within the human being—within their holistic experience of life and the world.

Keywords: theology, psychology, phenomenology, reductionism, reality;

Teologija v dialogu: interdisciplinarne priložnosti v pastoralni praksi

asist. dr. Damijan Ganc in doc. dr. Drago Jerebic
Teološka fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

V današnji sekularizirani, pluralni in terapevtsko naravnani postmoderni kulturi je pastoralna teologija poklicana, da znova premisli svoje epistemološke temelje in najde nove načine, kako nagovoriti sodobnega človeka. V prispevku bomo predstavili priložnosti, ki jih prinaša večja vključenost v interdisciplinarni dialog. Ta vključuje učenje novih vsebin in metod, ki jih je smiselno povezovati s temeljnimi sporočili veselega oznanila. Hkrati je interdisciplinarni dialog namenjen skupnemu iskanju in ustvarjanju bolj humane družbe v smislu bratskega humanizma, ki ga predlaga papež Frančišek.

V prispevku bomo predstavili dva koncepta, ki sta pomembna za razumevanje pomena interdisciplinarne odprtosti pastoralne teologije. Prvi koncept – »Logos spermatikos« - sega v čase prvih cerkvenih očetov in predlaga, da je potrebno v spoznanjih drugih disciplin prepoznavati pristna »semena resnice«, ki lahko obogatijo pastoralno prakso. Posebno mesto med tem disciplinami zavzemata psihologija in psihoterapija, saj ponujata poglobljene vpogled v dinamiko človeškega doživljanja, oblikovanja identitete in vzpostavljanja odnosov – ravno na tistih mestih, kjer sodobni človek doživlja največjo razpetost in iskanje. Njune ugotovitve lahko pomembno dopolnijo teološko antropologijo, zlasti v prizadevanju, da pastoralna postane bolj odzivna na relacijsko in afektivno razsežnost človekovega bivanja.

Drugi koncept, ki je pomemben za interdisciplinarni razvoj sodobne pastoralne teologije, je prenesen iz relacijske psihoanalize in se imenuje »ranljivost in vplivanje«. Tudi za odnose med disciplinami velja podobno kot za medosebne odnose, da je za medsebojno vplivanje in skupno rast potrebna tudi medsebojna ranljivost, ki vključuje iskrenost, odprtost, sposobnost poslušanja, priznavanja napak, zanimanje za razumevanje druge perspektive. Takšno vstopanje pastoralne teologije v interdisciplinarni dialog bo relacijsko verodostojno in bo pripomoglo k ustvarjanju varnega ozračja, ki je potrebno za skupno rast in razvoj.

V zaključnem delu prispevka bomo predstavili še nekatere praktične možnosti aplikacije psihoterapevtskih intervencij v pastoralno prakso. S tem bomo pokazali, da večja interdisciplinarna odprtost pastoralne teologije prinaša nove priložnosti za obogatitev pastoralne prakse, večjo senzitivnost vzpostavljanje varnih odnosov in prepričljivost, da zmore na ustrezen način nagovoriti sodobnega človeka.

Ključne besede: pastoralna teologija, interdisciplinarni dialog, Logos spermatikos, ranljivost in vplivanje, sekularizacija, postmoderna kultura;

Theology in Dialogue: Interdisciplinary Opportunities in Pastoral Practice

In today's secularized, pluralistic, and therapeutically oriented postmodern culture, pastoral theology is called to critically re-examine its epistemological foundations and to explore new ways of meaningfully engaging the contemporary individual. This paper presents the opportunities that emerge through greater involvement in interdisciplinary dialogue. Such dialogue includes the integration of new insights and methods, which can be meaningfully connected with the core message of the Gospel. At the same time, interdisciplinary collaboration aims to contribute to the joint pursuit of a more humane society, in the spirit of the fraternal humanism promoted by Pope Francis.

We introduce two key concepts that highlight the theological significance of interdisciplinary openness in pastoral theology. The first—Logos spermatikos—originates with the early Church Fathers and suggests that genuine “seeds of truth” can be found in other disciplines. These insights have the potential to enrich pastoral practice. Of particular relevance are psychology and psychotherapy, which offer deep perspectives into the dynamics of human experience, identity formation, and relational development—precisely in those areas where contemporary individuals experience fragmentation and a search for meaning. These fields can substantially complement theological anthropology, especially in efforts to make pastoral care more responsive to the relational and affective dimensions of human life.

The second concept, drawn from relational psychoanalysis, is that of “vulnerability and influence.” Just as interpersonal relationships require vulnerability for mutual growth, so too does interdisciplinary engagement. This includes openness, authenticity, the ability to listen, admit error, and seek genuine understanding of alternative perspectives. Such an approach allows pastoral theology to enter interdisciplinary dialogue in a relationally credible manner and to contribute to the creation of a safe space for shared development.

In conclusion, we present several concrete examples of how psychotherapeutic interventions may be thoughtfully integrated into pastoral settings. In doing so, we demonstrate that greater interdisciplinary openness offers new possibilities for enriching pastoral practice, fostering relational sensitivity, and building credible, trust-based connections capable of addressing the needs of today's culture.

Keywords: pastoral theology, interdisciplinary dialogue, Logos spermatikos, vulnerability and influence, secularization, postmodern culture;

O značenju psihološkog savjetovanja i podrške u redovitim pastoralnim prilikama: neki naglasci i izazovi

prof. dr. sc. Nikola Vranješ

Katolički bogoslovni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

Psihološko savjetovanje i podrška osobama i zajednicama u duhovno-pastoralnom smislu od neprocjenjivog je značenja za život Crkve. Ta se podrška u pastoralnom kontekstu ostvaruje na različitim razinama i u različitim oblicima. Ipak, dosadašnja pastoralna praksa pokazuje da se psihološko i psihoterapijsko djelovanje u dinamikama pastorage većinom aktualizira vezano za tzv. krizne ili neredovite pastoralne situacije. Uglavnom se radi o kontekstu pomoći u području pastorage braka i obitelji, ili pak o kontekstu pomoći osobama s izraženim psihičkim oboljenjima ili smetnjama. Drugim riječima, dinamizmi psihološke podrške kao da još nisu dovoljno valorizirani u širem smislu na širim razinama pastoralne stvarnosti, iako se mnogi od njih redovito aktualiziraju u mnogim pastoralnim kontekstima. A sama ta stvarnost sve više ukazuje na potrebu aktualiziranja prakse psihološkog savjetovanja i drugih oblika psihološke podrške i u redovitim duhovno-pastoralnim prilikama, tj. u prilikama koje kao takve ne uključuju kontekst krize ili snažnijeg izazova, bilo psihološkog bilo duhovnog.

Redovite i s njima blisko povezane pastoralne prilike kao što su neki elementi sakramentalnih slavlja, osobito slavlja sakramenta pomirenja, duhovni razgovori, različiti oblici pastoralno-katehetske priprave za sakramentalna i druga slavlja, molitva i molitvena i duhovno-slavljenička okupljanja, različiti neformalni susreti i dr., sve više ukazuju na potrebu daleko snažnije pozornosti na elemente, dinamizme, oznake i potrebe psihološke strukture i na njihovo razlikovanje od elemenata duhovne naravi. Pritom je važno naglasiti da se kao važnu razlikovnu oznaku i kriterij pristupa uvijek treba zadržati jasno razlikovanje između psihološkog i pastoralno-duhovnog pristupa u djelovanju. Nužno je, dakle, uvijek voditi računa o razlici u značenju i sadržaju psihološkog i pastoralno-duhovnog pristupa. Na taj se način upućuje na potrebu skladnog prinosa tih dvaju pristupa životima osoba i zajednica, tj. na potrebu izbjegavanja nepotrebnog i često opasnog apsolutiziranja jednog ili drugog pristupa.

U ovome izlaganju naglasak je na teološko-pastoralnom razlučivanju značenja takvog oblika djelovanja koji će podrazumijevati i poštovati razlikovanje, ali i što skladnije povezivanje psiholoških i duhovnih elemenata i pristupa u navedenim, kao i u drugim redovitim pastoralnim situacijama. Pritom se naglasak stavlja na neke elemente i izazove naznačenog djelovanja u redovitijim i uočljivijim pastoralnim prilikama, razlučivanje kojih može poslužiti i kao primjer i kao poticaj za djelovanje i u drugim duhovno-pastoralnim kontekstima.

Ključne riječi: psihološko savjetovanje, podrška, pastoral, duhovnost, Crkva;

On the Importance of Psychological Counseling and Support in Regular Pastoral Settings: Some Highlights and Challenges

Psychological counseling and support for individuals and communities in a spiritual and pastoral sense are of invaluable importance for the life of the Church. This support in the pastoral context is realized at different levels and in different forms. However, pastoral practice to date shows that psychological and psychotherapeutic action in pastoral dynamics is mostly actualized in connection with so-called crisis or irregular pastoral situations. This primarily refers to the context of pastoral care for marriage and family, or assistance to individuals with severe mental illnesses or disorders. In other words, the dynamics of psychological support do not seem to have been sufficiently valorized in a broader sense at the broader levels of pastoral reality, although many of them are regularly actualized in various pastoral contexts. And this reality itself increasingly points to the need to actualize the practice of psychological counseling and other forms of psychological support in regular spiritual-pastoral situations as well, i.e. in situations that as such do not include the context of a crisis or a stronger challenge, either psychological or spiritual.

Regular and closely related pastoral occasions such as some elements of sacramental celebrations, especially the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual conversations, various forms of pastoral-catechetical preparation for sacramental and other celebrations, prayer and spiritual-celebratory gatherings, various informal meetings, etc., increasingly indicate the need for much stronger attention to the elements, dynamisms, signs and needs of the psychological structure and their distinction from elements of a spiritual nature. It is essential to emphasize that, as a crucial distinguishing mark and criterion of approach, a clear distinction should always be maintained between the psychological and pastoral-spiritual approaches in practice. It is therefore necessary to always take into account the difference in the meaning and content of the psychological and pastoral-spiritual approaches. In this way, it highlights the need for a harmonious integration of these two approaches into the lives of individuals and communities, i.e., to avoid the unnecessary and often dangerous absolutization of one approach or the other.

In this presentation, the emphasis is on theological-pastoral discernment of the meaning of such a form of action that implies and respects distinction, while also fostering the most harmonious connection of psychological and spiritual elements and approaches in the above, as well as in other regular pastoral situations. In doing so, the emphasis is placed on some elements and challenges of the indicated action in more regular and visible pastoral situations, the discernment of which can serve as both an example and an incentive for action in other spiritual-pastoral contexts.

Keywords: psychological counseling, support, pastoral activity, spirituality, Church;

Pastoral škole i mogućnosti djelovanja u kriznim situacijama učenika

*prof. dr. sc. Josip Šimunović
Katolički bogoslovni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*

Pastoral škole ili pastoralno djelovanje u prostoru i kontekstu škole podrazumijeva razne oblike dragovoljnog djelovanja i služenja kršćana koji snagom svoga vjerničkog identiteta i zauzetosti pridonose humanizaciji i kulturi škole u različitim dimenzijama njezina ostvarivanja, odnosno života i rada. Riječ je o dobrovoljnoj ponudi različitih aktivnosti i slobodnom prihvatanju tih ponuda. Adresati pastorage škole jesu: učenice i učenici, nastavnice i nastavnici, drugi djelatnici i djelatnice škole te roditelji učenika. Prema opisu što je to pastoral škole, može se reći da su prvi i najvažniji nositelji pastorage škole sami kršćani „koji žive i djeluju u školskom okruženju te koji se angažiraju razmjerno svojim raznolikim karizmama, sposobnostima i mogućnostima.“ Tako su nositelji pastorage škole: vjeroučitelji, učenici, roditelji, nastavnici, stručno i tehničko osoblje kao vjernici te kvalificirani pastoralni djelatnik.

Pastoralno djelovanje Crkve u području škole „obuhvaća sve napore kojima Crkva i njezini članovi pridonose humanizaciji škole, suoblikovanju kulture školskog života, razvoju identiteta i profila škole, kulturi međusobnog ophođenja, kulturi rješavanja konflikata i dolaženja do konsenzusa, kulturi vođenja škole, kulturi poučavanja, učenja i vrjednovanja te percepciji školskopedagoškog doprinosa vjeronauka ostvarivanju ciljeva škole.“ Aktivnosti i ponude pastorage škole pokrivaju sva područja crkvenog služenja (dijakonija, martirija, liturgija i koinonija). U predavanju ćemo se zadržati u području dijakonije (kršćanske ljubavi i nesebičnog služenja) s naglaskom na konkretnim oblicima i poticajima pastorage škole koji mogu biti u pastoralnom, psihološkom i pedagoškom savjetovanju ili pomoći učenika kod anksioznosti, rastave roditelja, vršnjačkog nasilja i bolesti.

Ključne riječi: pastoral škole, adresati pastorage škole, nositelji pastorage škole, učenici, oblici pastorage škole;

School Pastoral Care and the Possibilities of Action in Student Crisis Situations

School pastoral care, or pastoral ministry within the space and context of the school, refers to various forms of voluntary engagement and service undertaken by Christians who, empowered by the strength of their religious identity and commitment, contribute to the humanisation and cultural formation of the school across the different dimensions of its realisation, that is, life and work. This involves the voluntary provision of a range of activities and the free acceptance of these offerings. The intended recipients of school pastoral care are: pupils, teachers, other members of the school staff, and the parents of pupils. According to the description of what constitutes the pastoral care of schools, it may be said that the primary

and most important agents of school pastoral care are the Christians themselves “who live and act within the school environment and who engage according to their various charisms, abilities, and capacities”. Thus, the agents of school pastoral care include: religious education teachers, pupils, parents, other teachers, professional and technical staff as believers, and qualified pastoral workers.

The pastoral activity of the Church within the realm of education “encompasses all efforts by which the Church and its members contribute to the humanisation of schools, the co-formation of school culture, the development of school identity and character, the culture of interpersonal relations, the culture of conflict resolution and the attainment of consensus, the culture of school leadership, the culture of teaching, learning and evaluation, as well as the perception of the pedagogical contribution of religious education to the realisation of the school’s objectives”. The activities and initiatives of school pastoral care span all areas of ecclesial ministry (diakonia, martyria, liturgy, and koinonia). This lecture will focus on the domain of diakonia (Christian love and selfless service), with an emphasis on practical expressions and initiatives of school pastoral care that may take the form of pastoral, psychological, and pedagogical counselling or educational counselling and support for pupils experiencing anxiety, parental separation, peer violence, or illness.

Keywords: school pastoral care, school pastoral care recipients, school pastoral care agents, pupils, school pastoral care forms;

Autentičnost i vjera: psihološki uvidi u religioznost oslobođenu kompleksa

izv. prof. dr. sc. Antun Volenik SJ

*Andrija Piskać, mag. psych.; univ. bacc. phil. et relig.
Fakultet filozofije i religijskih znanosti Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*

U vremenu izrazite fragmentiranosti identiteta, porasta anksioznosti i sveprisutne krize smisla, pojam autentičnosti postaje gotovo ideal kojemu suvremeni čovjek teži. Ipak, autentičnost, kako u psihološkom tako i u duhovnom smislu, često ostaje nejasna i teško dostižna, osobito u kontekstu religioznog života. Iz toga razloga važno je promišljati o odnosu između autentičnog selfa i življene vjere, polazeći od psihodinamskih teorija i njihovih pojmova pravog i lažnog ja, uz uključivanje Eriksonove teorije identiteta te recentnih istraživanja o sramu i religijskoj motivaciji. Pritom je potrebno osloniti se i na filozofske uvide, ponajviše na Heideggera, kako bismo dublje razumjeli egzistencijalne temelje autentičnosti.

Religioznost, premda često motivirana iskrenom težnjom za smislom i transcendencijom, može ujedno biti nesvjesni izraz psiholoških obrana, osobito ako je vođena strahom, krivnjom ili nerazriješenim sramom. Na taj način vjera postaje sredstvo samopotvrđivanja ili bjekstva od sebe, umjesto prostora slobode, odnosa i osobnog rasta. Upravo zato iznimno je važno razlikovati religioznost koja proizlazi iz autentičnog ja – spontanog, odgovornog i otvorenog za odnos s Drugim – od one koja je oblikovana lažnim ja, koje teži sigurnosti kroz prilagodbu i udovoljavanje vanjskim religijskim normama.

Cilj ovoga rada je ukazati na nužnost integracije psihološke svijesti u pastoralni i duhovni rad: osvještavanje srama, lažnih motivacija i unutarnjih konflikata ključno je za izgradnju zdravog vjerskog identiteta. Istinska vjera nije bijeg od sebe, već poziv na putovanje prema cjelovitosti – putem odnosa, ranjivosti i istine. Autentična vjera tako ne negira ograničenja ljudskosti, nego ih uključuje u hod prema Bogu. Ovaj rad želi potaknuti interdisciplinarni dijalog između psihologije, teologije i pastorale te ohrabriti zajednički rad na podršci vjernicima koji tragaju za dubljim, istinitijim življenjem svoje vjere – ne iz kompleksa, već iz susreta s vlastitim autentičnim ja.

Ključne riječi: autentičnost, psihologija religioznosti, psihodinamika, kompleks;

Authenticity and Faith: Psychological Insights into Religiosity Freed from Complexes

In a time of pronounced identity fragmentation, rising anxiety, and a widespread crisis of meaning, the concept of authenticity is emerging as an ideal to which modern individuals increasingly aspire. Yet authenticity—both psychological and spiritual—often remains unclear

and difficult to attain, especially within the context of religious life. For this reason, it is essential to reflect on the relationship between the authentic self and lived faith, drawing from psychodynamic theories (particularly the concepts of the true and false self), Erikson's theory of identity, and recent research on shame and religious motivation. Philosophical insights, especially those of Heidegger, are also indispensable for a deeper understanding of the existential foundations of authenticity.

Religiosity, though often motivated by a sincere search for meaning and transcendence, can also unconsciously serve as a psychological defense—especially when driven by fear, guilt, or unresolved shame. In such cases, faith may become a form of self-affirmation or escape from the self, rather than a space of freedom, relationship, and personal growth. Therefore, it is crucial to distinguish between religiosity that flows from the authentic self—spontaneous, responsible, and open to relationship with the Other—and that which is shaped by the false self, seeking security through conformity and compliance with external religious norms.

The aim of this paper is to emphasize the need for psychological awareness in pastoral and spiritual work: recognizing shame, false motivations, and internal conflicts is key to building a healthy religious identity. True faith is not an escape from the self, but a call to a journey toward wholeness—through relationship, vulnerability, and truth. Authentic faith does not deny human limitations but incorporates them into the path toward God. This paper seeks to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue between psychology, theology, and pastoral care, and to support believers in their search for a deeper, more truthful experience of faith—not shaped by complexes, but born of an encounter with the authentic self.

Key words: authenticity, psychology of religiosity, psychodynamics, complex;

Med moškimi: potreba po transparentnosti in povezanosti

prof. dr. Tomaž Erzar in izr. prof. dr. Katarina Kompan Erzar
Teološka fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Odraščanju fantov se že desetletja posveča premalo pozornosti in raziskav. Največ prostora je bilo namenjenega temam, ki so vedno stereotipizirale to obdobje prehoda v odraslost in ki se jih mladi moški tudi sami najpogosteje oklepajo: fizična moč, molčečnost, uporaba nasilja za reševanje krivic, želja po seksu in pustolovščina. Toda resnično doživljanje sebe in drugih pri fantih je treba razumeti v smislu prevzemanja pobude, izražanja čustev, iskanja moškega vzornika, občutka pripadnosti moškim vrstnikom in ohranjanja moške čistosti. V cerkvenih institucijah, odgovornih za oblikovanje in izobraževanje mladih fantov, bi moral biti poudarek na prepoznavanju in razvijanju notranjega doživljanja fantov, tako v njihovih odnosih z domačimi, vrstniki kot tudi starejšimi moškimi, ki lahko služijo kot vzorniki moškosti. Potreba po priznanju in potrditvi s strani starejših moških je v središču njihovega odraščanja, vendar lahko mlade fante izpostavi škodljivemu vplivu starejših generacij. Ko vstopijo v novo cerkveno okolje, se zdi, da so rane, ki so jih utrpeli med odraščanjem v družini, premagane, vendar so lahko le skrite za oblikami odvisnosti: pornografija, alkohol, prenejanje, promiskuitetna spolnost in deloholizmem.

V naši predstavitvi bomo opisali psihoterapevtsko delo z mladimi redovniki in duhovniki, s poudarkom na gradnji varnih odnosov v izvorni družini, razvoju moške pobude, odpuščanju sebi in odprtosti za dobro. Očiščenje Cerkve spolnih zlorab pomeni spodbujanje moške čistosti.

Ključne besede: moškost, razvoj, formacija, Cerkev, notranje doživljanje, izvorna družina, transparentnost, povezanost;

Among Males: The Need for Transparency and Connectedness

For decades, the experience of growing up as a boy has been under-researched and oversimplified. Much of the attention has focused on stereotypical themes associated with the transition into manhood—physical strength, emotional stoicism, the use of violence to address injustice, sexual conquest, and a thirst for adventure. These narratives, often reinforced by culture and internalized by boys themselves, obscure the more nuanced reality of male adolescence.

In contrast, a boy's authentic inner life is better understood through qualities such as emotional expression, initiative, the search for male role models, the need for belonging among male peers, and the desire to preserve a sense of masculine integrity. These aspects offer a deeper and more human account of what it means to grow into manhood.

Church institutions, which play a significant role in the formation and education of young boys, should shift their focus toward nurturing this inner experience. This involves fostering healthy

relationships within families, peer groups, and especially with older men who can serve as positive, grounded models of masculinity. Central to a boy's journey into adulthood is the deep need for recognition and affirmation from older men. Yet, this very need can leave them vulnerable to the harmful legacies of previous generations.

As boys enter Church environments, they appear to be moving beyond the wounds sustained within their families. In reality, these wounds are often not healed but merely hidden—masked by addictive behaviors such as pornography, alcohol abuse, overeating, promiscuous sex, and workaholism. Without intentional formation and authentic mentorship, the pain of growing up unacknowledged festers beneath these patterns, undermining their spiritual and emotional development.

In our presentation we will describe psychotherapeutic work with young religious and priests, with an emphasis on building relationships of secure attachment in the family of origin, developing masculine initiative, forgiving oneself and opening oneself to the good. To cleanse the Church of sexual abuse means to foster masculine purity.

Key words: masculinity, development, formation, Church, inner experience, family-of-origin, transparency, connectedness;

Algoritmi, umetna inteligenca in sinodalna prenova pastore: med tehnološko priložnostjo in duhovnim razločevanjem

doc. dr. Andrej Šegula

Teološka fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Sodobna digitalna orodja in umetna inteligenca (UI) vse bolj preoblikujejo načine, kako komuniciramo, se povezujemo in tudi kako doživljamo religiozno izkušnjo. Pastoralna praksa ni izjema. Digitalne platforme, družbena omrežja, aplikacije in algoritmi so postali orodja, preko katerih se oblikujejo novi prostori oznanjevanja, molitve in duhovnega spremljanja. S pomočjo algoritmov lahko pastorela doseže večje število ljudi, bolj ciljno in vsebinsko prilagojeno – kar predstavlja pomembno priložnost za Cerkve, ki iščejo poti, kako ostati blizu ljudem v sodobnem času.

Uporaba UI omogoča personalizirano oblikovanje verskih vsebin, kar lahko poveča občutek bližine in relevantnosti verskega sporočila za posameznika. Prilagojene pridige, molitve, povabila na dogodke in vsebine za premišljevanje lahko pomagajo vernikom, da se duhovno poglobijo v okoliščinah svojega vsakdana. V tem smislu ima digitalna pastorela velik misijonski potencial.

Kljub tem prednostim pa je nujen kritičen in interdisciplinaren razmislek. Psihološki in sociološki vidiki kažejo na nevarnosti t. i. "mehurčkov vsebin", kjer algoritmi uporabnikom ponujajo le informacije, ki potrjujejo njihove obstoječe nazore, kar lahko vodi v verski individualizem in zapiranje v homogena okolja. Dodatno se zmanjšuje neposredni osebni stik, ki je bistven za izkušnjo skupnosti, solidarnosti in skupnega duhovnega iskanja. Pozornost zahtevajo tudi t. i. digitalni verski vplivneži, ki z uporabo sodobnih medijev oblikujejo duhovne poglede širših občinstev. Njihov vpliv je lahko pozitiven – če povezuje, spodbuja in pogloblja vero – ali negativen, če vodi v površinskost, senzacionalizem ali manipulacijo.

V takem kontekstu razmislek o vlogi umetne inteligence v pastoreli presega tehnično in organizacijsko raven. Zahteva duhovno in pastoralno razločevanje – torej skupno iskanje odgovorov na vprašanja, kako ohraniti človeško toplino, soodgovornost in občestvenost v digitalnem svetu. Tu se vse tesneje prepletata tematika UI in sinodalnosti.

Sinoda o sinodalnosti (2021–2024) je v življenje Cerkve vnesla močan poudarek na skupnem poslušanju, vključevanju vernikov in prenovi pastoralnih struktur. Slovensko nacionalno sinodalno poročilo, ki ga je pripravil škof Maksimilijan Matjaž, poudarja, da sinoda ni enkratni dogodek, temveč proces. To sinodalno logiko je treba prenesti tudi na področje digitalne pastore, kjer je ključno skupno razločevanje, duhovno spremljanje in odprtost za navdihe Svetega Duha. Digitalna pastorela, če želi biti pristna, mora vključevati sinodalne razsežnosti: občestvenost, soodgovornost in zvestobo evangelijskemu oznanilu v sodobni kulturni stvarnosti. Prispevek zato predlaga model pastoralnega razločevanja, ki povezuje teološki, psihološki, sociološki in tehnični vidik ter spodbuja Cerkve, da ostane blizu ljudem tudi v dobi algoritmov – brez izgube človeške bližine in duhovne globine.

Ključne besede: umetna inteligenca, algoritmi, pastorela, sinodalnost, digitalna skupnost, duhovno razločevanje, občestvenost, interdisciplinarnost;

Algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, and the Synodal Renewal of Pastoral Practice: Between Technological Opportunity and Spiritual Discernment

Contemporary digital tools and artificial intelligence (AI) are increasingly transforming the ways we communicate, connect, and experience religion. Pastoral practice is no exception. Digital platforms, social networks, applications, and algorithms have become instruments through which new spaces for preaching, prayer, and spiritual accompaniment are emerging. Algorithms can help pastoral ministry reach a broader audience in a more targeted and content-adapted way—offering significant opportunities for churches seeking to remain close to people in today's world.

AI enables the personalization of religious content, which can enhance the sense of relevance and closeness of the Gospel message for individuals. Tailored homilies, prayers, event invitations, and reflections can support believers in deepening their spiritual lives within their everyday context. In this sense, digital pastoral care carries strong missional potential.

Nevertheless, a critical and interdisciplinary reflection is necessary. Psychological and sociological perspectives warn of the dangers of so-called “filter bubbles,” where algorithms reinforce preexisting beliefs and reduce openness to diversity, dialogue, and genuine spiritual searching. Moreover, the erosion of direct interpersonal contact may weaken the communal experience of solidarity and shared faith. Attention must also be paid to religious digital influencers who shape spiritual perceptions via online platforms. While they can foster connection, evangelization, and faith deepening, there is also the risk of superficiality, manipulation, or commercialization of spirituality.

In this context, reflecting on the role of AI in pastoral care goes beyond technical and organizational issues. It demands spiritual and pastoral discernment—a shared search for how to preserve human warmth, co-responsibility, and ecclesial communion in the digital age. Here, the themes of AI and synodality increasingly intersect.

The Synod on Synodality (2021–2024) introduced a renewed emphasis on shared listening, the inclusion of the laity, and the transformation of ecclesial structures. The Slovenian national synodal report, prepared by Bishop Maksimilijan Matjaž, highlights that synodality is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. This synodal logic must extend into the digital domain, where common discernment, spiritual guidance, and openness to the Holy Spirit are essential. For digital pastoral ministry to be authentic, it must integrate the key dimensions of synodality: communion, co-responsibility, and fidelity to the Gospel in today's cultural landscape. This paper proposes a model of pastoral discernment that integrates theological, psychological, sociological, and technological perspectives. It encourages the Church to remain close to people in the algorithmic age—without sacrificing human presence, spiritual depth, or communal integrity.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, algorithms, pastoral care, synodality, digital community, spiritual discernment, communion, interdisciplinarity;

Psihodinamika duhovnog života

*doc. dr. rer. nat. Dominik-Borna Čepulić
Hrvatsko katoličko sveučilište u Zagrebu*

Ovo izlaganje nastojat će pružiti uvid u to kako psihologija može poboljšati razumijevanje i razvoj duhovnog života pojedinca. U glavnim zapadnjačkim religijskim tradicijama, duhovni život može se shvatiti kao odnos Boga i vjernika, a jedan od temeljnih aspekata duhovnog života je percepcija Boga od strane vjernika. Postoji značajna varijabilnost u načinu na koji ljudi percipiraju Boga, a te percepcije mogu ili promicati ili ometati nečiji duhovni razvoj. Psihodinamska teorija predlaže da je način na koji percipiramo druge ljude oblikovan iskustvima u ranom djetinjstvu. Konkretnije, internalizacijom objektnih odnosa iskustva iz ranog djetinjstva formiraju nesvjesno razumijevanje toga kako odnosi funkcioniraju. Ovo razumijevanje potom utječe na očekivanja i percepciju ličnosti, namjera i ponašanja drugih ljudi. Psihoanalitičarka Ana-Maria Rizzuto predložila je da se slični procesi mogu primijeniti i na razvoj poimanja Boga. Razlikovala je dva elementa koji oblikuju nečiju predodžbu o Bogu: koncept Boga i sliku Boga. Koncept Boga odnosi se na shvaćanje Boga na razini intelekta, dok slika Boga obuhvaća cjelokupni psihološki doživljaj Boga (koji je prvenstveno emocionalan i često nesvjestan). S obzirom na to da međuljudski odnosi više ovise o svojim emocionalnim aspektima nego o intelektualnim, razumno je pretpostaviti da slika Boga ima značajniji utjecaj na razvoj duhovnog života od samog koncept Boga. Nadalje, budući da je slika Boga oblikovana iskustvima iz ranog djetinjstva, moguće je da su za iscjeljivanje iskrivljenih i disfunkcionalnih slika Boga potrebna korektivna emocionalna iskustva iz novih odnosa sa značajnim osobama. Jedan način da se to postigne je putem psihoterapije. Stoga, čini se vjerojatnim da psihoterapija može potaknuti ozdravljenje ne samo odnosa s drugim ljudima, već i odnosa s Bogom, te na taj način poticati rast u duhovnom životu.

Ključne riječi: psihodinamska psihologija, duhovni život, psihoterapija, slika Boga, koncept Boga;

Psychodynamics of Spiritual Life

This presentation provides insight into how psychology can enhance the understanding and development of one's spiritual life. Spiritual life, at least in major Western religious traditions, can be understood as a relationship between God and the believer. A fundamental aspect of an individual's spiritual life is their perception of God. There is a significant variability in how people perceive God, and these perceptions can either promote or impede one's spiritual development. Psychodynamic theory proposes that individuals' perceptions of others are shaped by their early childhood experiences. More specifically, these experiences influence an individual's unconscious understanding of relationships through the internalization of object relations. This understanding subsequently affects their expectations and perceptions regard-

ing the personalities, intentions and behaviors of others. Psychoanalyst Ana-Maria Rizzuto proposed that similar processes may be applicable to the development of individual's understanding of God. She distinguished between two elements that shape a person's view of God: the God concept and the God image. The God concept refers to an individual's intellectual understanding of God, whereas the God image encompasses the entirety of one's psychological responses to God (which are primarily emotional and often unconscious). Given that a relationship depends more on its emotional aspects than on its intellectual ones, it is reasonable to presume that the development of one's spiritual life is more significantly influenced by the God image than by the God concept. Furthermore, since the God image is shaped by early childhood experiences, healing distorted and dysfunctional images of God may require corrective emotional experiences in new relationships with significant others. One approach to achieving this is through psychotherapy. Thus, it appears plausible that psychotherapy can facilitate healing not only in relationships with other people, but also in one's relationship with God, thereby supporting growth in spiritual life.

Key words: psychodynamic psychology, spiritual life, psychotherapy, God image, God concept;

Pregled avtorjev, konceptov in aktualnih izzivov na področju psihologije religije v svetu in Sloveniji

doc. dr. Drago Jerebic

Teološka fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Psihologija religije je področje, ki raziskuje odnos med človekovo notranjo izkušnjo, verskimi prepričanji in vedenjem, znotraj psihološkega okvira. V zadnjem stoletju se je razvila iz filozofsko-teoloških razprav v empirično in konceptualno razvejeno psihološko disciplino. Klasični avtorji, kot sta William James in Carl G. Jung, sta religijo razumela predvsem kot notranjo, transformativno izkušnjo: James je poudaril subjektivno, preobrazbeno moč religije, medtem ko je Jung religioznost razumel kot simbolni izraz kolektivnega nezavednega in pot k psihološki celovitosti oz. individuaciji, pri čemer je razvil pojma *numinoznega in arhetipov*. Freud je religijo obravnaval kot nevrotično iluzijo, medtem ko je Viktor Frankl poudaril njeno eksistencialno funkcijo – kot vir smisla, upanja in duhovne odpornosti.

Pomemben preobrat v razumevanju religiozne motivacije je vpeljal Gordon W. Allport, ki je razlikoval med *intrinzično* in *ekstrinzično* religioznostjo ter pokazal, da ima prva večji potencial za etično delovanje in odprtost. Abraham Maslow je religiozne in mistične izkušnje vključil v teorijo samoaktualizacije kot t.i. *vrhunske izkušnje*, ki zaznamujejo osebno rast. Kenneth Pargament pa je razvil teorijo religioznega spoprijemanja, kjer loči med pozitivnimi strategijami in negativnimi, ki pomembno vplivajo na duševno zdravje.

V sodobnem času se psihologija religije sooča z več izzivi: pluralizacijo religij in duhovnosti, interkulturno raznolikostjo, vprašanjem duhovne integracije v terapijo, pojavom religioznih dvomov in kriz, ter digitalizacijo duhovnosti. Pomemben razvoj prinašajo tudi pristopi, ki temeljijo na teoriji navezanosti (Kirkpatrick) in objektno-relacijski teoriji (Rizzuto), ki osvetljujejo, kako se odnos z Bogom oblikuje skozi zgodnje odnose in notranje reprezentacije. Religija lahko v tem kontekstu deluje tudi kot *holding environment* – simbolno okolje, ki posamezniku nudi občutek varnosti in psihološke opore.

Christian Gostečnik in Anton Trstenjak predstavljata dva ključna stebra slovenskega prispevka k psihologiji religije. Gostečnik povezuje dve področji, ki sta bila dolgo ločeni: pastoralno in psihoterapijo. Pri tem ne izhaja iz dogmatične teologije, temveč iz psihološke potrebe človeka po odnosu, smislu in transcendenci. Religioznost umešča v realni, terapevtski, čustveni in simbolni prostor človekovega življenja – kot način, kako posameznik razume, čuti in zdravi najgloblje odnose z drugimi, s seboj in z Bogom. Trstenjak pa je razvil antropološko psihologijo, kjer je človeka razumel kot bitje, ki teži k osredotočenju osebnosti, pri čemer se duhovna in psihološka razsežnost prepletata. Psihična in duhovna rast se po njegovem vedno dogajata v odnosih, vera pa je globoko medosebna izkušnja, ki izhaja iz notranje naravnosti, ne zunanje prisile. Oba avtorja religijo razumeta kot ključno duhovno in razvojno realnost človeka.

Prispevek ponuja pregled ključnih konceptov in avtorjev psihologije religije ter osvetljuje aktualna raziskovalna vprašanja, pomembna za sodobno psihološko in pastoralno prakso.

Ključne besede: psihologija religije, pastorage, teologija, znanstveni dialog, interdisciplinarno sodelovanje;

Overview of Authors, Concepts, and Current Challenges in the Field of Psychology of Religion in the World and Slovenia

The psychology of religion is a field that studies the relationship between a person's inner experience, religious beliefs and behaviour, within a psychological framework. Over the last century, it has developed from philosophical-theological debates into an empirically and conceptually diversified psychological discipline. Classical authors such as William James and Carl G. Jung understood religion primarily as an inner, transformative experience: James emphasised the subjective, transformative power of religion, while Jung understood religiosity as a symbolic expression of the collective unconscious and a path towards psychological wholeness or individualisation, developing the concepts of *the numinous and archetypes*. Freud saw religion as a neurotic illusion, while Viktor Frankl emphasised its existential function - as a source of meaning, hope and spiritual resilience.

An important turning point in the understanding of religious motivation was introduced by Gordon W. Allport, who distinguished between *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* religiosity and showed that the former has a greater potential for ethical action and openness. Abraham Maslow included religious and mystical experiences in the theory of self-actualisation as so-called *peak experiences* that mark personal growth. Kenneth Pargament developed a theory of religious coping where he distinguished between positive strategies and negative ones that have a significant impact on mental health.

In contemporary times, the psychology of religion faces several challenges: the pluralisation of religions and spirituality, intercultural diversity, the issue of spiritual integration in therapy, the emergence of religious doubts and crises, and the digitisation of spirituality. There are also important developments in approaches based on attachment theory (Kirkpatrick) and object-relational theory (Rizzuto), which shed light on how a relationship with God is formed through early attitudes and internal representations. In this context, religion can also function as a *holding environment* - a symbolic environment that provides a sense of security and psychological support for the individual.

Christian Gostečnik and Anton Trstenjak represent two key pillars of the Slovenian contribution to the psychology of religion. Gostečnik brings together two fields that have long been separated: pastoral care and psychotherapy. In doing so, he does not start from dogmatic theology, but from man's psychological need for relationship, meaning and transcendence. It locates religiosity in the real, therapeutic, emotional and symbolic space of human life - as the way in which the individual understands, feels and heals his deepest relationships with others, with himself and with God. Trstenjak, on the other hand, developed an anthropological psychology, where he understood the human being as a being who tends to focus the personality, with the spiritual and psychological dimensions intertwined. Psychological and spiritual growth, he argued, always takes place in relationships, and faith is a deeply interpersonal experience that arises from inner attitudes, not external coercion. Both authors understand religion as a key spiritual and developmental reality of human beings.

This article provides an overview of key concepts and authors in the psychology of religion and highlights current research questions relevant to contemporary psychological and pastoral practice.

Keywords: psychology of religion, pastoral, theology, scientific dialogue, interdisciplinary cooperation;

Sobe razgovora – potreba vremena i nevremena

izv. prof. dr. sc. Josip Bošnjaković
Katolički bogoslovni fakultet u Đakovu,
Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku,
Hrvatsko katoličko sveučilište u Zagrebu

Potrebe vremena i zahtjevne okolnosti u kojima se mnogi ljudi nalaze postavljaju pred vjernike izazov: kako odgovoriti na potrebe onih koji su u potrebi, osobito u kriznim situacijama. Iako se društvo suočava s različitim problemima i pitanjima, uvijek ostaje ključno pitanje: kako biti, a ne samo što znati. Naime, za mnoge ljude danas je važnije imati unutarnju snagu i sposobnost biti prisutan u teškim trenucima, nego posjedovati samo intelektualno znanje. S obzirom na to, dijalog između teologije i psihologije postaje sve značajniji put u pronalaženju odgovora na ljudske krize, sumnje i poteškoće. Ovaj dijalog ne samo da poziva na suradnju, nego i nudi mogućnosti za dublje razumijevanje kompleksnih ljudskih problema.

Rad bračnih i obiteljskih savjetovatelja u Hrvatskoj pokazuje kako raste potreba za individualiziranim pristupom svakom pojedincu u njegovoj specifičnoj situaciji. Taj pristup ne samo da pomaže u prevladavanju kriznih trenutaka, nego omogućava i bolje uključivanje tih ljudi u širu društvenu zajednicu. Ova potreba također naglašava važnost temeljite pripreme teologa, svećenika, redovnika i redovnica, kako bi znali biti uz ljude u njihovim teškoćama i potrebama. Briga za psihičko zdravlje postaje izuzetno važna, te je razvijanje vještina poput aktivnog slušanja, empatije, suosjećanja, strpljenja i razumijevanja postalo ključno u pastoralnom radu. Ove vještine nisu samo korisne, nego su nužne za stvaranje prostora u kojem ljudi mogu osjetiti sigurnost i biti voljeni u svojoj slabosti. U kontekstu teološkog studija i pastoralne službe, razvoj ovih sposobnosti mora biti prioritet kako bi se adekvatno odgovorilo na izazove današnjeg društva.

Ključne riječi: sobe razgovora, krizne situacije, psihičko zdravlje, interdisciplinarni dialog, formacija teologa;

The Rooms of Conversation – The Need of Time and Adverse Times

The needs of the times and the challenging circumstances many people face present a challenge for believers: how to respond to the needs of those who are in distress, especially in times of crisis. Although society faces various problems and questions, one question always remains crucial: how to *be*, and not just what to know. For many people today, it is more important to have the inner strength and the ability to be present in difficult moments than to possess intellectual knowledge alone. Given this, the dialogue between theology and psychology becomes an increasingly important way of finding answers to human crises, doubts, and struggles. This dialogue not only invites cooperation but also offers opportunities for deeper understanding of complex human problems.

The work of marriage and family counselors in Croatia shows how the need for an individualized approach to each person in their specific situation is growing. This approach not only helps individuals overcome times of crisis but also enables better inclusion of these people into the wider social community. This need also emphasizes the importance of thorough preparation for theologians, priests, monks, and nuns, so that they know how to be present with people in their times of difficulty and need. Care for mental health is becoming increasingly important, and developing skills such as active listening, empathy, compassion, patience, and understanding has become crucial in pastoral work. These skills are not just useful, but essential for creating a space where people can feel safe and loved in their weakness. In the context of theological studies and pastoral service, developing these abilities must be a priority in order to adequately respond to the challenges of today's society.

Keywords: rooms of conversation, crisis situations, mental health, interdisciplinary dialogue, formation of theologians;

Teologija starševstva kot eden izmed odgovorov na sodobne pastoralne izzive

asist. dr. Damijan Ganc
Teološka fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Kljub bogastvu teoloških disciplin ostaja področje teologije starševstva doslej nezadostno razvito in sistematično obravnavano. V tem prispevku se bomo posvetili prizadevanju, da zapolnimo to vrzel ter utemeljimo starševstvo kot pomembno izkustveno območje teološke refleksije, kjer se na poseben način razodevajo in utelešajo različni vidiki Božjega razodetja in delovanja. Teologija starševstva omogoča globlje razumevanje poklicanosti staršev s pomočjo štirih razsežnosti: ontološke, hermenevtične, mistagoške in eshatološke.

Ontološka razsežnost izpostavlja, da starševstvo spreminja identiteto posameznika, saj starši postajajo Božji sodelavci pri podarjanju in oblikovanju življenja. Tako se v tem odnosu najgloblje odraža Božja generativnost in njegovo relacijsko bistvo. Hermenevtična razsežnost poudarja pomen razumevanja Boga skozi doživljanje odnosa z otrokom. Starševstvo se na ta način oblikuje v "šolo vere", kjer se starši in otroci skozi odprtost in ranljivost vzajemno učijo ter poglobljajo svojo vero. Mistagoška razsežnost postavlja starše v vlogo spremljevalcev in pričevalcev, ki otroka uvajajo v življenje, odprto za presežno, ter v skrivnostni svet Božje prisotnosti. Njihova drža in dejanja postajajo »utelešena kateheza«, v kateri se blagoslov, nežnost in stik kažejo kot konkretni izrazi Božje osvobajajoče ljubezni. Eshatološka razsežnost pa opozarja, da starševstvo presega nadzor in načrte staršev, saj pomeni predvsem izročitev otroka v njegovo lastno poklicanost. Gre za globoko zaupanje, da se v otrokovi življenjski zgodbi uresničuje Božji načrt na edinstven način.

Tematska analiza apostolske spodbude *Amoris Laetitia* papeža Frančiška potrjuje, da je starševska ljubezen odsev Božje ljubezni in razodeva globino njegove odnosnosti. Ljubezen med zakoncema in odprtost za življenje sta med seboj neločljivo povezana v stvariteljskem redu. S svojo dejavno ljubeznijo starša otroku posredujeta kerigmo in mu razodevata Božji očetovski ter materinski obraz. Ob tem ga ne vzgajata le v duhu vere, temveč tudi za temeljne človeške vrednote, s čimer prispevata k gradnji bratskega humanizma. V tem poslanstvu imata starša zagotovljeno oporo v zakramentalni milosti, Cerkev pa jima mora prisluhniti in zagotavljati konkretno podporo. Prispevek v zaključku utemeljuje nujnost interdisciplinarnega pristopa k razvoju teologije starševstva, zlasti z vključevanjem sodobnih psiholoških in psihoterapevtskih spoznanj. Kot primer tovrstne povezave predstavljamo analizo Marijine materinske drže v luči teorije navezanosti, s čimer želimo pokazati, kako se lahko teološko premišljevanje o starševstvu plodno razvija tudi v dialogu z empiričnimi znanostmi.

Interdisciplinarno utemeljena teologija starševstva predstavlja dragoceno priložnost za pastoralno teologijo. Med pomembnimi potmi, po katerih Cerkev podpira vernike na njihovi poti svetosti, je tudi pomoč pri uresničevanju ljubezni v rahločutnih in varnih odnosih v družini. Teologija starševstva s svojo osredotočenostjo na konkretno izkušnjo odnosa med staršem in otrokom omogoča poglobljeno razumevanje svetosti vsakdanjega življenja, v katerem pastoralno delovanje Cerkve postaja prostor rahločutnega spremljanja, odprtega poslušanja in podpore staršem v njihovih vsakdanjih izzivih, stiskah in pomembnih življenjskih odločitvah.

Ključne besede: teologija starševstva, starševska identiteta, *Amoris Laetitia*, interdisciplinarna teologija, teorija navezanosti, religiozna izkušnja, pastoralna teologija;

Theology of Parenthood as One of the Answers to the Current Pastoral Challenges

Despite the richness of theological disciplines, the field of the theology of parenthood remains underdeveloped and insufficiently systematized. This paper seeks to address this gap by proposing parenthood as a significant experiential locus of theological reflection—an arena in which diverse aspects of divine revelation and action are uniquely manifested and embodied. The theology of parenthood offers a conceptual framework for a deeper understanding of this vocation through four interrelated dimensions: ontological, hermeneutical, mystagogical, and eschatological. The ontological dimension emphasizes that parenthood transforms the identity of the individual, as parents become co-creators with God in the gift and formation of life. In this relationship, God's generativity and relational nature are most profoundly reflected. The hermeneutical dimension highlights how parents come to know and interpret God through their lived relationship with their child. In this sense, parenthood becomes a "school of faith," where mutual openness and vulnerability foster spiritual growth for both parent and child. The mystagogical dimension situates parents as companions and witnesses who gently initiate the child into the mystery of God's presence. Their posture and gestures become an "embodied catechesis," in which blessing, tenderness, and presence serve as concrete expressions of God's liberating love. The eschatological dimension underscores that parenthood ultimately transcends parental control and expectation: it is, above all, an act of entrusting the child to their unique vocation, through which God's providential plan unfolds.

A thematic analysis of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* affirms that parental love is a reflection of divine love and reveals the depth of God's relational nature. Marital love and openness to life are intrinsically united in the order of creation. Through their embodied love, parents transmit the kerygma and reveal the maternal and paternal face of God to the child. In doing so, they not only nurture faith but also cultivate fundamental human values, thereby contributing to the building of a fraternal humanism. In this vocation, parents are sustained by sacramental grace, while the Church is called to listen attentively and provide concrete pastoral support.

In its final section, the paper argues for the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to the development of the theology of parenthood—particularly through the integration of contemporary psychological and psychotherapeutic insights. As an example of such integration, it presents an analysis of Mary's maternal posture through the lens of attachment theory, demonstrating how theological reflection on parenthood can be fruitfully enriched by dialogue with the empirical sciences.

An interdisciplinary theology of parenthood thus presents a valuable opportunity for pastoral theology. One of the meaningful ways the Church accompanies the faithful on their journey toward holiness is by supporting them in living out love through sensitive and secure familial relationships. By grounding itself in the concrete experience of the parent-child bond, the theology of parenthood deepens our understanding of the holiness of everyday life—transforming pastoral ministry into a space of gentle accompaniment, attentive listening, and supportive presence for parents in the midst of their daily challenges, struggles, and decisive life moments.

Keywords: theology of parenthood, parental identity, *Amoris Laetitia*, interdisciplinary theology, attachment theory, religious experience, pastoral theology;

Okrevanje po relacijski in religiozni travmi

doc. dr. Sara Jerebic

Teološka fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani

Religija lahko posamezniku nudi prostor smisla, skupnosti in notranjega miru. Za posameznike, ki so odraščali v togi religiozni vzgoji, se ta prostor lahko prelevi v vir globoke psihološke stiske. Še posebej kadar se verska pravila prepletajo z nedostopnimi ali čustveno hladnimi starši, nastane specifična oblika relacijske travme. Otrokova potreba po pripadnosti, čustveni sprejetosti in brezpogojni ljubezni je pogosto postavljena v konflikt z religioznimi zahtevami po ponižnosti in samonadzoru. Relacijska travma se ne razvije zgolj zaradi posameznih dogodkov, temveč predvsem zaradi ponavljajoče se izkušnje, kjer otrokova čustva niso bila slišana, upoštevana in je otrok v stiskah ostajal sam. Kadar se to zgodi znotraj verske vzgoje, se pogosto oblikujejo globoko ponotranjeni občutki sramu, nevrednosti, grešnosti in dvoma vase. Notranji kritik, ki se je prvotno oblikoval kot glas starša ali verske avtoritete, sčasoma lahko postane 'božji glas', ki posameznika spremlja z občutkom prisile moralne dolžnosti in potrebe po perfekcionizmu.

Prispevek osvetljuje, kako posamezniki z izkušnjo relacijske travme pogosto doživljajo notranjo razdvojenost med tiho intuicijo telesa in močnim, pogosto kritičnim glasom, ki obsoja in določa, kdo bi morali biti. V procesu okrevanja je potrebno zaznati razliko med notranjim glasom, ki vodi v rast, in glasom ponotranjenega strahu, ki je konstrukt vzgoje, kulturnih in verskih prepričanj. V ospredju je potreba po varnem odnosu, kjer se lahko preverjajo in razgrajujejo stara prepričanja. Ne z namenom zanikanja duhovnosti, temveč z namenom ponovne povezave z resničnim jazom in avtentičnostjo.

Prispevek poudarja pomen notranje tišine, telesne regulacije, samoopazovanja ter refleksije, ki posamezniku pomagajo slišati, kaj je resnično njegovo in kaj je lažni jaz, ki je nastal kot produkt sistema. Za pastoralne delavce, ki se srečujejo s posamezniki, ki izgubljajo vero, imajo notranje konflikte in dvome ali se umikajo iz skupnosti, je bistveno razumevanje, da ti procesi pogosto niso izraz upora, temveč globinskega iskanja lastnega jaza in avtentičnosti po relacijski ali duhovni travmi. Potrebujejo varno okolje, kjer so sprejeti brez pogojevanja. Sočutna prisotnost, odprtost za iskrena vprašanja o smislu, veri in identiteti ter poslušanje brez potrebe po popravljanju ali usmerjanju, so temeljne drže sočutne pastorage.

Ključne besede: relacijska travma, realigiozna travma, duhovno okrevanje, notranja razdvojenost, sočutna pastorage;

Recovery from Relational and Religious Trauma

Religion can offer individuals a space for meaning, community, and inner peace. However, for those who have grown up in rigid religious environments, this space may become a source of

deep psychological distress. This is especially true when religious rules are intertwined with emotionally distant or inaccessible parenting, giving rise to a specific form of relational trauma. The child's need for belonging, emotional acceptance, and unconditional love often comes into conflict with religious demands for humility and self-control.

Relational trauma does not stem merely from isolated events but rather from repeated experiences in which a child's emotions are unheard, disregarded, and where the child is left alone in distress. When this occurs within a religious upbringing, it often results in deeply internalized feelings of shame, unworthiness, sinfulness, and self-doubt. The inner critic—originally formed as the voice of a parent or religious authority—can eventually become perceived as the "voice of God," shadowing the person with an oppressive sense of moral obligation and a drive for perfectionism.

This contribution highlights how individuals with experiences of relational trauma often feel torn between the quiet intuition of their body and a strong, often critical voice that judges and dictates who they are supposed to be. The healing process requires learning to distinguish between the inner voice that fosters growth and the voice of internalized fear—a construct shaped by upbringing, cultural norms, and religious beliefs. Central to recovery is the presence of a safe relationship in which old beliefs can be examined and deconstructed—not to reject spirituality, but to reconnect with one's true self and authenticity.

This article emphasizes the importance of inner silence, bodily regulation, self-observation, and reflection as means through which individuals can discern what is truly theirs and what constitutes a false self shaped by systemic influences. For pastoral workers accompanying individuals who are losing their faith, struggling with internal conflicts and doubts, or withdrawing from religious communities, it is vital to understand that these processes often do not stem from rebellion, but from a profound search for the true self and authenticity following relational or spiritual trauma. These individuals need a safe space where they are unconditionally accepted. Compassionate presence, openness to honest questions about meaning, faith, and identity, and a willingness to listen without the urge to fix or redirect are fundamental attitudes of compassionate pastoral care.

Keywords: relational trauma, religious trauma, spiritual recovery, inner fragmentation, compassionate pastoral care;

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