

WHY DO EVEN DEEPLY RELIGIOUS PEOPLE NEED DISTANCE FROM THEIR OWN IDEAS ABOUT GOD? SECULARISATION AS AN IMPORTANT MEANS FOR THE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE OF RELIGIONS AND SOCIETIES

Inocent-Mária Vladimír SZANISZLÓ

Faculty of social studies, College Danubius

Richterova 1171, SK – 925 21 Sládkovičovo

vladimir.szaniszlo@vsdanubius.sk

Summary

When we speak in a religious environment about secularism, often this term sounds very negative, even dismissive. Inside the Catholic Church, this concept has several connotations and often leaves the impression that, given our belief, we have to reject this Process. However, precisely because of the devastating terrorist attacks of religious fanatics in the 21st century, we must take into account that no one disputes that these perpetrators were deeply religious people. Therefore, question arises: whether the process of secularization actually undermines the faith and relativizes religiously-grounded human being? Nowadays, in theology but also in other associated social sciences, an important problem emerged that is related to the question, whether there is still any autonomy and independence left for the humanity (for sciences, social life, economy), provided it acknowledges the sovereignty of God. Whether a believer is capable of having an unbiased, factual relationship to the world or whether his/her commitment to God estranges him or her entirely from the matters of this world. Hence, the essential inquiry is whether the relationship with God, belief, and worship, influence life of the person oriented towards God and in what sense (e. g. whether it represents a strange, interfering element in their world)? By means of this study, an attempt is made to demonstrate that the secularization is a legitimate Process, but also the fact that, nowadays, the danger of secularism has emerged. As it is with every virtue, in this case there are also two extremes and only through tedious search of the truth and mutual dialogue, one can find the proper central point. Otherwise there will be, on the one hand, a loss of faith, because of relativizing the relationship between the human being and God, or, on the other hand, a totality of the human being, who puts himself/herself in the position of God.

Keywords: secularization, secularism, Church, dialogue, reverential.

Introduction

Secularism is defined as an extreme form of secularization, where the human being pretends to have reached total independence and autonomy from God in »his/her« world or where he/she directly denies the existence of God in order to establish his/her own independence. Therefore, it cannot be perceived as equal to atheism. It denies the existence of any different worlds. Atheistic worldview is not willing to acknowledge that faith (or religion, i.e. the Church) has anything to say about the essential questions of life. In ethics, economy, culture and politics, much more autonomy is demanded, while faith, or the religion, designates the realm of the world beyond. This is how secularism is defined classically, for example, by Karl-Heinz Peschke or Albert Josef Beneš.

However, secularization is a term, whose basis can be found in the biblical and, therefore, also the Christian worldview. The Latin term *saeculum* is one of the two terms that point to the world: *Saeculum* relates to the historic time (Greek *aeon*), while *mundus*, the second term, describes the spatial world (Greek *cosmos*). The Greeks used it to refer to space and place, but for the Hebrews, the world is a history whose origin is to be sought in God.¹

Despite the fact that the Church looks beyond the boundaries of the world, which is why it is often described as the »refugee from the world«, the meaning of »earthliness« is emphasized in the Christian terminology and, with it, the meaning of the world and the service to the world. Even in theology, the autonomy and independence of the world are acknowledged through the duty of every Christian to become engaged within the world. It is understandable that, due to this fact, certain level of tension emerges. Originally, the word secularization also meant the expropriation of assets of a Church. The term de-sacralisation is also related to this topic, i.e. the separation of the secular from the ecclesial realm (the family, marriage, etc.).

If we wanted to classify the above mentioned questions on secularism and secularization, a good place to turn to is the classic study of the special moral theology that was structured around the Ten Commandments, especially the first commandment: »I am the Lord thy God..., thou shalt have no other Gods before me« (Deut 5:6–7; Ex 20:2–3). Having other gods represents: superstition, infidelity. Here, idolatry is mentioned as a perverse religious perception of Satanism and a desire to grasp the power. A human being is, the-

¹ Cf. Dominik KALÁTA, *Sekularizácia a kresťanský postoj k svetu*, in: *Svedectvo viery*, II, Trnava, 1992, 390.

refore, supposed to follow the true God despite his/her autonomy. Even the incarnation of God is subject to the same ethical norms as every moral deed of a human being and it influences others. A human being has the right and the duty to use his/her autonomy for good purpose. In this case, the intention is important.² Ultimately, in the Roman Empire, this topic already appeared through the demythologization of the world by means of Christianity. Finally, the earlier function of idols was to achieve unity of human beings and nature, since both were a part of nature.³ The Greek *cosmos* was deified; in the Hebrew understanding, the space is a creation of God.⁴

1. The Meaning of Secularization

How can the tension between the imperative from God in the first commandment, on the one hand, and the human autonomy as a sign of a creative gift and trust of God in people, on the other hand, be resolved? Firstly, one has to take a look at the type of tension involved in this. When it comes to secularization, the tension involved is between:

- God and the world,
- this life and afterlife,
- science and faith,
- the commitment to God and the service to the world,
- the Church and the state.

Possibly, the realm of culture (sacred art) or the aesthetics could be added to the list. Does that mean that de-sacralisation and secularization are related to the development of natural sciences? This process was best described by Hannah Arendt in her work *Human condition*.⁵ Everything depends on whether the claimed autonomy really belongs to these secular realms, that is, whether human beings are entitled to autonomy through secularization or not. There are certain values that are worth the effort when human beings do their best in their own creative ways to fully develop as persons. The secular

² Cf. Karl-Heinz PESCHKE, *Christliche Ethik, Bd. 2: Spezielle Moralthologie*, Trier, 1995, 130.

³ Cf. Friedrich GOGARTEN, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit. Die Säkularisierung als theologisches Problem*, in: Harvey COX (ed.), *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective*, New York, 1965, 12–30, at 19.

⁴ Cf. Dominik KAL'ATA, *Sekularizácia a kresťanský postoj k svetu*, 390.

⁵ Cf. Inocent-Mária SZANISZLÓ, *Hannah Arendt a zánik kontemplácie*, in: *Viera a život*, (2007) 3, 27–32.

world follows its own laws that do not succumb to the norms of faith and religion; however, that does not mean that human beings have no responsibility for (not) using the mundane reality in accordance with the plan of their creator. Also, the secular world and secular people did not create themselves; instead, their existence depends on the will of a higher being. That is what is designated by the term of the so called *relative autonomy*.⁶

Relative autonomy means that the mundane matters doubtlessly have sovereignty and they follow their own rules; nevertheless, these do have their roots in God. Human beings have been set free from the superiority of »elements of this world« by God – God incarnated himself into the world through Christ – through the secularization process (Col 2:8.20; Gal 4:3, and 1 Cor 8:4) and it is this religious truth that one finds at the source of Christian humanism.⁷ Here, it is important to emphasize the following: When human beings find God, they try to use him for their own purpose.⁸ According to Gibellini, Marie-Dominique Chenu, as well as Karl Rahner, closed and strict conservatism attempts to arrange the world according to the guidelines of the Church and, thus, to make the Church the only valid leader in the world. The Church, however, is not appointed to lead the world in a conservative style and manner; if not for anything else, then because it does not have solutions for all concrete problems in the world! And that is exactly why we must respect the autonomy of the world in its individual realms.⁹ We cannot understand the world as if we had a »direct wire« to God – for example, an attempt to explain natural disasters in the world as a punishment from God! Rahner clarifies that secularization does not mean deconsecrating of religious virtues but – on the basis of faith – the acknowledgement of independence and purposefulness of the world.¹⁰

It concerns the correct assessment of secular realities; these uphold their real autonomy and mundaneness that represent their uniqueness, their own goals, rules, methods and their specific meaning for the good of human beings. Nonetheless, only a person oriented towards God is capable of acting objectively, i.e. to realistically handle the mundane matters, albeit in conformity with their autonomy and observing the moral rules. Furthermore, Piegsa

⁶ Cf. Karl-Heinz PESCHKE, *Christliche Ethik, Bd. 2: Spezielle Moraltheologie*, 48–49.

⁷ Cf. Dominik KALATA, *Sekularizácia a kresťanský postoj k svetu*, 392–393.

⁸ Cf. Rosino GIBELLINI (ed.), *La teologia del XX secolo*, Brescia, 1992, 16–25.

⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 136.

¹⁰ Cf. Kuno FÜSSEL, *Sekularismus*, in: Karl RAHNER – Herbert VORGRIMLER (eds.), *Kleines Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1961, 295.

adds that only religiously anchored Hope surmounted the framework of philosophical ethics as well as the secular humanism and only by losing faith the awareness of human dignity can disappear.¹¹

2. Secularization and the Church

The task of the Church is to pervade the world in accordance with the gospels without decomposing its structure.¹² Marianno Fazio speaks even of de-clericalisation of the world. He considers it necessary because false clericalism results in abolishment of differences between the natural and supernatural order, between ecclesiastic and political power.¹³ Studying the creation (the pillars of Christianity) is the fundament for the correct understanding of secularization. God has given people the ability to discover structures of reality. This enabled the access to the deepest reality of life through faith. The harmony between faith and reason leads to the acknowledgement of relative autonomy of material (mundane) reality. In many kinds of religions, scepticism is the key ability of human beings. Fundamentalism hinders the secularization by means of religious totality that harms the fundamental human rights.¹⁴

Yet another author that deals with secularism due to his emotional relationship to the Church is Gianni Vattimo (born in 1936). In his book *Credere di credere*, he justifies his return to Christianity through the historic defeat of reason: it proved itself incapable of solving essential problems of the human existence. However, the philosophical crisis of the Enlightenment and historicism also represent motives for his orientation to Christianity.¹⁵ For Vattimo, secularization and secularism (still without reciprocal differentiation) are distinguished in this context in terms of an *authentic confessional experience*: »Secularization as a constructive component of confessional experience represents the original relationship that has roots in the sacred core from which we have estranged ourselves, which, however, still remains active in this decadent shape.«¹⁶ Precisely the collapse of autarkic rationality caused both, the indivi-

¹¹ Cf. Joachim PIEGSA, *Der Mensch – das moralische Lebewesen. Religiöse Grundlage der Moral. Glaube-Hoffnung-Liebe, II, St. Ottilien, 1997, 183; 190.*

¹² Cf. Albert Josef BENEŠ, *Božské cnosti, Praha, 1997, 26.*

¹³ Cf. Marianno FAZIO, *Crisis of the truth about man, Zenit, Februar 7, 2007, at: <http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/a-crisis-of-the-truth-about-man>.*

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁵ Cf. Peter BURDA, *Rezension des Buches von Gianni Vattimo: Credere di credere (Milano: Garzanti 1996), in: Teologické texty, 31 (2008), 54–55.*

¹⁶ Gianni VATTIMO, *Credere di credere, Milano, 1996, 9–10.*

dual and mass return to religiosity.¹⁷ Vattimo sees the secularization as a positive moment in the study of Jesus and as an inner reality of Christianity. As the abandoned Jesus on the cross, modern human beings also feel the remoteness of God and they sometimes estrange themselves from God. Hence, this process also appears in the confessional area. If human beings were to part from God that would absolutise and idealise the secular reality – i.e. *sacralise* it in an inappropriate manner. That is why a right relationship to God is important in order to have a right relationship to the world.¹⁸

Cardinal Dominik Duka from Prague defines secularization of autonomous vocation of mundane reality, which means that earthliness can be correctly understood only in Christianity.¹⁹ Furthermore, he postulates that secularization finds its full meaning and its own aims through the mystery of incarnation. Secularization advocates the earthly reality. If it is destroyed, it would be replaced by other currents of thought that would fully suppress the mundane autonomy.

Frederich Gogarten speaks of secularization as the legitimate sequence of biblical faith having an impact on the history.²⁰ Human beings, perceived as the children of God, are free from the world but at the same time free for the world. The Christian faith secularizes the world and gives people autonomy and *responsibility*. For a society that has not gone through the process of secularization, a tight relationship between politics and religion is characteristic (Mt 22:21).²¹

It concerns a Christian phenomenon, which means that it unfolds in the context of Christian faith.²² The hope for the modern world depends on the premise that autonomous human beings do not lose the connection to God and that secularization (or as Gogarten named it – the de-deification – while Košč compares it to *aggiornamento* and sees in it a means of new evangelization and apostleship²³) does not degenerate to secularism.²⁴

¹⁷ Cf. Peter BURDA, *Rezension des Buches von Gianni Vattimo: Credere di credere* (Milano: Garzanti 1996), 54.

¹⁸ Cf. Gianni VATTIMO, *Credere di credere*, 11.

¹⁹ Cf. Dominik Duka, *Náboženství v sekularizované společnosti*, 2010, at: <http://www.dominikduka.cz/prednasky-proslovy/nabozenstvi-v-sekularizovane-spolecnosti/>.

²⁰ Cf. Friedrich GOGARTEN, *Verhängnis und Hoffnung der Neuzeit. Die Säkularisierung als theologisches Problem*, 15.

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 23.

²² Cf. Friedrich GOGARTEN, *Destino e speranza dell'epoca moderna*, Brescia, 1972, 20.

²³ Cf. Stanislav KOŠČ, *Sekularizácia* 2009, at: http://www.uski.sk/frm_2009/ran/2004/cl040211.htm.

²⁴ Cf. Rosino GIBELLINI (ed.), *La teologia del XX secolo*, 125 and 132.

Benedict XVI explained secularization during a meeting with lay persons engaged in the Church as a positive appeal towards the Christians: It does have an impact on the »definite exemption of the Church from the mundane forms«. Hence, the Church is meant to be »in the world but not of the world and open for dialogue with the world«²⁵.

3. Different Forms of Secularization

For the Swiss philosopher Rhonheimer, who pleads for a *Christian secularity*, it is crucial to strive for a Christian ideal of a secular democratic citizenship. He sees a twofold identity of a citizen: as a Christian and as a civilian enabling tolerant cohabitation with other religions and even the non-believers in a modern democratic society. In the perspective of the Kingdom of God, being secularized is tantamount to being *feasible*. The realm of God realizes itself in the sense of its becoming a part of the world and overcoming the evil in it. Christian secularity is characterized as full of pluralism, respect for the human rights, freedom and political culture, although not of multiculturalism.²⁶

In this manner, the »earthliness« is acknowledged as the autonomy and independence of the world and the meaning of serving the world. However, at the same time, it also emphasizes the duty of each Christian to engage himself/herself in the world. The Second Vatican Council shares the understanding of *relative autonomy* of mundane realities, while it refuses the understanding of autonomy that leads to pseudo-sacralisation of certain areas of life (such as it occurs, for example, in nationalism, in state, class totalitarianism or in individualism).²⁷

Gibellini highlights the positive impact of secularization as a formation process on the modern society through the Christian impulse. He points to the aspect of continuity. Also, he uses the term de-sacralisation, whereby he differentiates the relative and radical forms. He emphasizes that a relative de-sacralisation is discovered already in the creation, provided the creator is distinguished well enough from the creation. This way, the biblical revelation refuses the pantheistic, monistic and animistic theories. During the stru-

²⁵ BENEDIKT XVI., *Príhovor Benedikta XVI. na stretnutí s laikmi angažovanými v Cirkvi* (Speech of Pope Benedict XVI. at the meeting with the engaged laity in the Church), 2012, at: <http://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cisloclanku=20110925006>.

²⁶ Cf. Martin RHONHEIMER, *Christian Secularity, Political Ethics and the Culture of Human Rights*, in: *Josephinum Journal of Theology*, 16 (2010), 320–338.

²⁷ Cf. Anselm GÜNTHÖR, *Chiamata e Riposta. Una nuova teologia morale, vol. II: Morale speciale*, Alba, 1988, 41–59.

ggle against idols, Christianity secularized the world and freed it from a false sacralisation.²⁸

An important problem is connected to the question whether, in the end, the acknowledgement of the sovereignty of God in the mundane realms (such as sciences, social life, economy) does not deny autonomy and independence. Is the believer capable of having an objective, factual relationship to the world or does his connection to God cause a full estrangement from the matters of the world? The query is concerned with whether the relationship to God influences the life of the person oriented towards God through faith and worship and in what sense (for example, whether it represents a strange, interfering element in mundane areas of their world). Peschke says that, from the beginning of the New Age, the Church has hesitated to acknowledge the methods of nature sciences (for example, thinking of the »Galileo Case« or the Darwin's theory of evolution). It even wanted to subordinate the natural sciences to the »norms of faith«, thinking that the Holy Scriptures should also be normative for the profane sciences. In reality, however, these scriptures are normative only for the realm of the religious truth. Christians often deal only with the personal redemption and not with the constitution of the world. The profane world often turned away from faith and God, and also from religion, because they were not useful for science, progress and development of a better world; on the contrary – as some thought – they were even harmful.²⁹ However, others believed that for Christians living in a community of mercy – thus, in the Church – a question emerges whether they can navigate properly in the mundane and earthly institutions, that is, whether they can respect the mundane character of those institutions or are they being forced to act against their own belief in some ways when they engage in the mundane environment?³⁰

Günthör argues that such de-sacralisation and secularization are not objective because the mundane realms and human beings who exist within them are isolated from every relationship to transcendent supernatural realities. These are only justified to hold onto if they encourage people to adequately value the worldliness that belongs to earthly things and areas. Only in this way it is possible to discern if the relationship to God is alienating for the

²⁸ Cf. Rosino GIBELLINI, *La teologia della secolarizzazione*, u: Rosino GIBELLINI, (ed.), *La teologia del XX secolo*, Brescia, 1992, 113.

²⁹ Cf. John MACQUARRIE, *God and Secularity*, Bd. III.: *New directions in the Theology Today*, Philadelphia, 1967, 50.

³⁰ Cf. Anselm GÜNTHÖR, *Chiamata e Riposta. Una nuova teologia morale*, vol. II: *Morale speciale*. Alba, 1988, 42.

human being, i.e. if it is perceived as an alien and disturbing element within this world.

Gibellini differentiates, as it was mentioned above, between radical de-sacralisation that the world builds without *sacrum* and relative de-sacralisation that restricts the impact of religious understanding of the profane world. The latter form of secularization means, according to Gibellini, that every part of the society, including the Church, seeks and finds its own place in the world.

The *absolute secularism*, on the contrary, wants absolute autonomy of the world and denies the necessity of salvation and redemption, as well as the existence of evil. Human beings ignore the fact that, as a creation of God, they depend on the will of God. This is similar to the utopic self-affirmation because the world without God is a chimera and an illusion. It *cannot be humane*. So, it refers to another form of unfaith and the arrogance that is contrary to the human nature because it denies the image of human beings as children of God.³¹ Gogarten speak of *individualism oriented towards self*.³²

4. Vattimo's Critical Principle of Love

For Vattimo, due to secularization, a image of God was unveiled in which He is understood only as a »helper in times of difficulties«; perceived as a God that reacts as an automat when human beings beg something from Him. Such a God, however, is more of an object of instrumentalised superstition than a real vivid God. Moreover, Vattimo says that human beings stride through the history as if there was no God, while at the same time pretending as if they served God. Burda adds that Bonhoeffer, as well as Vattimo, interpret the death of God the Helper in such a way that he must be at human beings' disposal when human beings do not know how to go on with their lives or do not understand something.³³

The sense of secularization as a kenotic dimension of Christianity represents a direct opposite to such relict of the image of God. Vattimo illustrates this statement on an example of the classic study of moral theology: human beings believed that they would be able to act on the basis of justice; here one can see that if this is not possible, human beings turn to God with hope again. Human

³¹ Cf. Karl-Heinz PESCHKE, *Christliche Ethik, Bd. 2: Spezielle Moraltheologie*, 49.

³² Cf. Rosino GIBELLINI (ed.), *La teologia del XX secolo*, 118.

³³ Cf. Peter BURDA, *Rezension des Buches von Gianni Vattimo: Credere di credere* (Milano: Garzanti 1996), 55.

beings become frightened of genetic manipulation, euthanasia, ecology, etc.³⁴ If God is acknowledged for the first time during disillusionment of the modern progressive faith or when difficulties arise, the prejudices of our culture against the religion are confirmed because the transcendence is understood as an opposite to rationality. Religion is moved near the atavistic natural religion which sees God in the grim forces of the nature full of superstition and magic.³⁵ Through demythologization, however, the real world will be liquidated. It would become a fable, that is, there would be no objective world anymore; it would only become what human beings make of it: »the will to power«, as Nietzsche named it in his »Gotterdammerung – Twilight of the Gods«³⁶.

Vattimo sees the solution in *kenotic Christian life*. Here, God stands in the centre and deliberately renounces his omnipotence, relinquishes his transcendental superhumanly power and makes himself a human being, a brother and a friend to every human being. That is where a profoundly human, friendly, tender and so positively weak Christianity originates.³⁷ Vattimo finds a connection between Catholicism, Nietzsche's explanation of God's death, and nihilism of Heidegger in the humanization of God: *Kenosis*, in which the redemption will occur.³⁸

Vattimo's secularization theory proves that a rereading of the new development of Christian study of the humanization in Christianity is necessary.³⁹ The ablation of the concept of being, described as *sacrum*, represents the overcoming of relicts of a fatalistic (antique) and mythological (dominant, consisting of terrible power and might) religion.⁴⁰ Vattimo sees the secularization as a positive moment in the study of Jesus and as an inner reality of Christianity. The abandoned Jesus on the cross is the abandoned modern human being who feels and suffers from the distance and absence of God.⁴¹ The sole regulative critical element in this case is *love*. How far the secularization of the authentic religious reality has progressed can be judged on the basis of how much love, friendliness, tolerance, honesty and respect for others, plurality and democracy have grown.⁴²

³⁴ Cf. Gianni VATTIMO, *Credere di credere*, 13.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 14.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 14.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 47.

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 26.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 30.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 34–35.

⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, 60.

The Critical Principle of Love enables the overcoming of the gap that emerges between modernity and the Christian proclamation. This principle exposes the masks of the new myths in the figure of Jesus Christ. Christ is revealed through the unmasking »of the true sense of the salvation story«⁴³. Our faith would like to wear masks continuously. That is why this faith must be radically refined without denial of modernity. *The believer cannot believe in any other way than through a dialogue*. The critical principle of love is, therefore, a direct opposite to every form of fundamentalism and dogmatism. Such a believer does not believe in an authoritative but in a dialogical, fraternal, friendly God – a partner. Hence, he/she looks for the realm of God in humility and builds it further; he/she participates in the story of redemption and proclamation.⁴⁴ Coming from this dialogue, the postmodern Christianity develops its ethics of dialogue and solidarity. Trusting one's own faith means to have the hope of authentic faith. In such a manner, Vattimo seeks the one who is fully different.⁴⁵ Finally, Burda asks how this search will prevent human beings from succumbing to doubt and despair or even to spiritualism and to vague, unsure religion instead of living in humbleness and love. This is naturally possible because human beings are always tempted not to communicate and not to think. Nonetheless, as it has been already stated above: This would entail believing in the Golden Calf, that is, in the assumption of having a »direct wire« to God, which leads to a completely false picture of the reality in the world.

5. The Preliminary Summary

Let us therefore provisionally summarize the reasons that speak in favour of the meaning of secularization stated by Günthör:⁴⁶

- there is valid mundaneness, autonomy and independence of the earthly spheres and of human beings who exist within them;
- the characteristics of the mundane spheres and of human beings who exist within them is not necessarily comprised only of their earthliness and autonomy but also of the orientation towards God;
- orientation of the mundane reality and of human beings towards God in no way represent reduction of the earthliness the world is entitled to;

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 95.

⁴⁶ Cf. Anselm GÜNTHÖR, *Chiamata e Riposta. Una nuova teologia morale, vol. II: Morale speciale*, 50–59.

- a total de-sacralisation due to sins devastates the right mundaneness and the sense of earthly matters;
- the salvation through Christ gives back earthliness to the world;
- the Church as an actualisation of redemption (*sacramentum mundi*) must commit to the right sacralisation and secularization of the world;
- Christians must also act appropriately in the world with respect to the valid autonomy of the mundane reality and, at the same time, in accordance with the gospels and the critical principle of love.

6. A Necessary Condition for the proper Functioning of Secularization

Finally, we will attempt to provide a statement that will describe a virtue, which is particularly important for the contemporary world. Skoblík mentions earnest service to the world – i.e. rightly understood earthliness – which requires connection to God. *Reverentia*, i.e. fear, honour, emotion due to the mystery of God is the opposite of the reckless self-confidence towards God and it also entails a respectful assumption of self-renunciation of God. In this expression, a lot is contained: from admiration to the state of being astonished, from adoration to worship, from embarrassment to fear (awe).⁴⁷

When human beings act with *Reverentia*, they interpret their being in such a way as if they are part of a system which requires admiration and silence. *Reverentia* is an authentic utterance of real devotedness; it is an expression of experienced proximity and distance at the same time. In Christianity, it represents the acceptance of the mystery of God which is both personally and absolutely dominant. It is not only a psychological, but also an ethical phenomenon. It is being concretised in action and reinforces itself in the area of ethics through virtues, especially those proving veracity of the relationship of persons towards God. In such a way, *Reverentia* is reflected in the *responsible* actions of persons. Humanization of the world is supported through the acknowledgement of human possibilities, through consignment that serves the improvement of the world, through following the model of Jesus, and, finally by fulfilling God's intentions. The desire for the proximity of God and the awareness of his unreachability, leads the *Reverentia* into the silent adoration as the highest moral activity of the creature towards the Creator.⁴⁸ In the

⁴⁷ Cf. Jiří SKOBLÍK, *Přehled křesťanské etiky*, Praha, 1997, 142.

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 143.

systematisation, *Reverentia* is associated with the virtue of justice, because it gives everyone what they deserve: cognition to the perceptible and disciplined respect to the imperceptible.⁴⁹

Conclusion

This study attempted to demonstrate that secularization is a correct Process aimed at a better understanding of this world, although it is nowadays threatened by the danger of secularism. Similarly as in the study of virtues, there are two extremes that should be avoided here as well. Through the tedious search for the truth (which constitutes a necessary condition of all really religious Faith) and through the effort to lead a real dialogue that has to include very different collocutors, an actual central point can be found.

The correctly understood secularization is based on the belief in the true God, who created our shared world and who really communicates with us through Revelation and Accompaniment. This secularization follows Vattimo's principle of love and also exercises the virtue of *Reverentia*. Only in this way can we have a right attitude to this world and a right relationship with each other, as well as foster the interreligious dialogue.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 144.

Sažetak

ZBOG ČEGA JE I DUBOKO RELIGIOZNYM LJUDIMA POTREBAN ODMAK OD NJIMA VLASTITIH PREDODŽBI O BOGU? SEKULARIZACIJA KAO VAŽNO SREDSTVO MIROLJUBIVOG SUŽIVOTA RELIGIJA I DRUŠTAVA

Inocent-Mária Vladimír SZANISZLÓ

Fakulta sociálnych štúdií, Vysoká škola Danubius
Richterova 1171, SK – 925 21 Sládkovičovo
vladimir.szaniszlo@vsdanubius.sk

Kada u religioznom okruženju govorimo o sekularizaciji, često taj pojam poprima vrlo negativan prizvuk. Unutar Katoličke crkve, taj pojam sadrži nekoliko konotacija te često ostavlja dojam da sam proces sekularizacije nije spojiv s našom vjerom. No, upravo radi strašnih terorističkih napada religioznih fanatika u XXI. stoljeću, potrebno je uzeti u obzir da nitko ne osporava duboku religioznost onih koji su počinili te zločine. Prema tome, postavlja se pitanje podriiva li uistinu proces sekularizacije vjeru, odnosno relativizira li religioznost vjernika? U suvremenoj teologiji, kao i u drugim srodnim humanističkim znanostima, javlja se problem vezan uz pitanje postoji li još uvijek neko područje autonomije ljudskih bića (znanosti, društvenog života, ekonomije), koja bi istodobno priznavala Božji suverenitet. Nadalje, može li vjernik imati nepristran, na činjenicama utemeljen odnos prema svijetu ili ga njegova vjera u Boga u potpunosti otuđuje od svijeta? Prema tome, glavno pitanje jest utječu li odnos prema Bogu i vjera na život vjernika i kako (npr. jesu li one strani element koji mrsi odnose unutar njegova svijeta)? Ovaj članak želi pokazati da je sekularizacija legitiman proces, ali, isto tako, da se danas javlja opasnost sekularizma. Kao što je to slučaj sa svim vrlinama, i ovdje postoje dvije krajnosti, dok pronalaženje zlatne sredine iziskuje naporno traženje istine i međusobni dijalog. Bez toga, s jedne strane, prijeti gubitak vjere potaknut relativiziranjem odnosa između ljudskih bića i Boga, a s druge strane imanentni totalitarizam koji postavlja ljudsko biće na mjesto koje pripada Bogu.

Ključne riječi: sekularizacija, sekularizam, dijalog, reverentia.