

Vulnerability of the Church through Abuse of Power, Body and Conscience

Josip Bošnjaković
jobosnjakovic@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2324-8717>

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The wounds on the Body of Christ are a part of God's identity. Pierced arms, hips, and legs are a sign and testimony of the Paschal Mystery that is Passion, Death, and Resurrection. The Church is a vulnerable and wounded Body, just as any other person is vulnerable and wounded. The Body of the Church and the body of a person can be wounded by processes that take place within the Body/bodies, and other institutions, persons, states, Churches, religions. The article discusses the wounding of the Church due to the consequences of the processes that take place within the body, and above all, due to the abuse of power, body, and conscience. When the body is exposed to the gaze of others due to being wounded, then a reaction is possible through the feeling of shame, through a complex experience that speaks of the inner process of a being that feels ashamed, which is exposed to the gaze of others. Recovery from wounding is a lengthy process that requires openness, honesty, wound detection, and talking about the course of events that led to wounding. At the same time, the wounded Body needs help, hence the article talks about possible recovery from abuse through tenderness, compassion, empathy, spiritual monitoring of people on their path to recovery.

Key words: abuse, body, Church, compassion, conscience, power, spirit.

*Introduction*¹

Vulnerability is the existential reality of living beings, smaller and larger as well as of the institutions in which the persons operate. It is also a precondition for people to care and be open to each other. At the same time, in Christianity, God is revealed in Jesus Christ, in the Word made flesh (John 1:14), and this speaks of the vulnerability of God and man, Jesus Christ. Taking care of every person means paying attention to where they are wounded so suitable help could be provided. Hiding the wounds, which unfortunately happened on the Body of the Church, led to even more severe »diseases« of the Mystical Body of Christ. Here, in a special way, we mean the hiding of wounds within the hierarchical structures of the Church as an institution, which consequently affected the wounding and the living Body of the Church. Because of being wounded within the Body itself and because of the abuse of power, body, and conscience, we have come to a deep re-examination of loyalty to the mission of Jesus: »Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit« (Mt 28: 19). The identity of the aim of the proclamation of the Gospel, due to various abuses, has led many believers to various doubts, painful moments.

In this article, we want to shed light on the three cases of abuse mentioned: abuse of power, body, and conscience. We want to offer possible recovery processes for all three cases of the abuse, as well as biblical images of healing. Recovery processes have their specificity when we talk about abuse in the Church what we want to keep in mind when writing about abuse, aware of how general principles of recovery we can apply inside and outside the Church, but taking into account the specifics of the Church. We put the abuse of power first because it is the outcome of a misunderstanding of the mission of vocation of the Church, starting with bishops, priests, monks but also lay people. We see a possible way out of this abuse in the synodality of the Church, that is, the increasing networking in the mission of the Church between the ministerial and universal priesthood, that is, church ministers and lay ministers and lay faithful. The biblical picture of healing is God's relationship to Hagar (Gen 16), whom God encounters in her suffering and raises to her feet. The abuse of the Body, through physical abuse, leads to an intense experience and occurrence of shame among the members of the Church. We see the possible path of recovery in tenderness and compassion, and the biblical image of a Samaritan (Luke 10) offers possible steps of healing. In addition, the third abuse, the one related to conscience, tells us about the subtle forms of various abuses. Recovery is possible by recognizing in persons the True Being of God, the true self, the spiritual soul that is a permanent link with God, the sanctuary of a man. The

¹ Translated into English by Katarina Šijaković.

biblical picture of healing we present is the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 6), aware that an encounter with God is possible primarily through a personal encounter between God, who knows the man and the wounded person thoroughly.

1. *Vulnerability of the Church*

»My Lord and my God« are the words of the apostle Thomas, the twin of every believer (John 20: 28) after he brought his finger and looked at Jesus' hands and after he put his hand on Jesus' side, the living signs of Jesus' suffering. It is only through personal experience in meeting Jesus' wounds that Thomas confesses his faith. In the last 30 years, we have encountered severe injuries in the Church, including the abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, serious inconsistencies, attempts to self-justify and protect the external image of the Church², various abuses of power³ manifested through interpersonal relationships. The said wounds make it difficult for the alive, the mystical Body of Christ, to walk fully in the proclamation of the Gospel. Therefore, if the Church, i.e., the living members of the Church, want to experience further resurrection and profess faith in the Risen Lord, they are called to put their finger in Jesus' hands again and put their hands on Jesus' side, i.e., the fingers and side of the Church.

People and believers are affected in numerous ways by the abuse and wrongdoings. It takes years, decades, and a lifetime⁴ for a person to become aware of the consequences of the abuse, as well as the healing process that begins, and can last for decades, even a lifetime. For many people, when it starts, it is already too late. Vulnerability is a consequence of a person being referred to and being connected to others, which is his fundamental characteristic.

² Cf. Stephen J. ROSSETTI, Učimo od svojih pogriješaka: učinkovito odgovoriti na krizu spolnog zlostavljanja djece [Learning From Our Mistakes: Responding Effectively to Child Sexual Abusers], u: Charles J. Scicluna, Hans Zollner, David J. Ayotte (ur.), *Prema ozdravljenju i obnovi. Simpozija 2012. održan na Papinskom sveučilištu Gregoriana u Rimu o seksualnom zlostavljanju maloljetnika*, [Towards Healing and Renewal. The Gregorian Symposium 2012 on Sexual Abuse of Minors Pontifical University Gregoriana Roma], Zagreb, FTI, 2012, 77-98.

³ Cf. Giovanni CUCCI, Hans ZOLLNER, *Crkva i pedofilija. Psihološko-pastoralni pristup* [Church and pedophilia. Psychological-pastoral approach], Zagreb, Filozofsko-teološki institut Družbe Isusove, 2012; Cf. Josip BOŠNJAKOVIĆ, Dati glas maloljetnim osobama što pretrpješe seksualno iskorištavanje »unutar Crkve« [Giving a Voice to Minors who Have Suffered Sexual Abuse »within the Church«], u: Željko Majić, Božo Goluža (prir.), *Mnogolikost vjere. Različiti pristupi istoj stvarnosti. Zbornik radova hrvatskih rimskih studenata* [The Multiplicity of Faith. Different Approaches to the Same Reality. Proceedings of Croatian Roman Students], Rim, Papinski hrvatski zavod sv. Jeronima, 2012, 259-298.

⁴ Cf. Daniel PITTET, *Pater, ich vergebe Euch*, Freiburg, Herder, 2017; Norbert NÜCHTER, *Sexuellen Missbrauch verstehen, behandeln und verhindern*, Marburg, Tectum Verlag, 2013, 155-162.

1.1. Stay connected to others, though wounded

One of the fundamental characteristics of people is to be connected to others⁵. Because a person wants to stay connected with others, since they cannot do without others, it means that sooner or later, they will show themselves vulnerable in front of others. By His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus showed what it means, that is, to be exposed to the gaze of others in his weakness, nudity, and wounding. Because a man is a relational being, he would rather prove himself vulnerable than be left without a relationship with others. When a man feels disconnected from others, unconnected, he then begins to feel ashamed, because he thinks that others have discovered something about him that he himself would rather not show. If there is something about the believer, the Church, which if others found out and which he wants to hide at any cost, then it is very likely that he would feel ashamed, afraid and the connection with others would be jeopardized. This is the original experience of both Adam and Eve (Gen 3: 10). They were ashamed because they were naked, and they were also afraid. Their connection to God was threatened and wounded. It is the experience of almost every man. If a person has never experienced feeling ashamed, that can be a sign that they are not able to empathize, i.e., to be empathetic towards others. Before we talk about the three cases of abuse mentioned at the beginning of the article, we want to briefly emphasize the importance of understanding the shame associated with the vulnerability of man, believers, and the institution.

1.2. A sense of shame

Talking about vulnerability means opening spaces of hope, i.e., it helps a person get rid of shame⁶. The gift of shame that presses a man to look at his wounds and allow others to see them speaks of man's ability to suffer under the gaze of other persons as he gives meaning, both to the wound and to the person. It is also a sign of a moral attitude⁷. Disappointment about oneself, the rift between two realities – the dream about oneself and reality – keeps shame alive, like a hidden trauma⁸. Frozen by the gaze of others, with whom he would so gladly have a relationship of respect and appreciation, he experiences painful disappointment because he is not valued enough because he has disappointed others.

⁵ Cf. Brene BROWN, *Verletzlichkeit macht Stark*, München, Goldmann, 2017, 221-253.

⁶ Cf. Boris CYRULNIK, *Scham, Die vielen Facetten eines tabuisierten Gefühls*, Munderfing, Fischer & Gann, 2018, 74.

⁷ Cf. *ibid*, 14.

⁸ Cf. *ibid*, 52

Shame is sometimes a poisonous feeling and, according to Imre Hermann⁹, it occurs when a small child loses contact with the mother, the relational object with which they are connected and on which they rely. Therefore, the voices of lay believers in the Church who are ready to rise up against abuse are a sign of hope. They are people who are ready to tell their own mother, that is, the Church: in some aspects of your behavior, I do not recognize myself and I am ashamed, but I want to build further. In the Gospel of John, while Christ is on the cross, he says to the Mother »Here is your son« (John 19: 26), but also to the disciple he loved »Here is your mother« (John 19: 26). It is a mutual relationship of care on the basis of which it is possible to restore the trust that has been undermined by more severe trauma. Most physiological diseases are caused by the social and personal processes of disease¹⁰. At the societal level, Haller¹¹ cites the following processes leading to illness, and the same in the Church: slander, notoriety, discrediting, defamation, neglect, and oppression with respect to ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion, and sexual orientation. All these processes also take place in the Church, and a good part of people go through these processes. Other processes of illness of great personal or social, ecclesiastical significance are insults, shame, humiliation. Humiliation is different from shame. It is an extremely violent behavior since its goal is to collapse the spiritual world of another person. Humiliating behaviors include mocking others, that is, jokes at the expense of the weak and unprotected. Then there is resentment as a process that leads to illness, but it is often a consequence or a reaction to an action. Indignation is a passive way of aggression towards superiors in the Church because it is often one of the possible responses to dissatisfaction, disappointment, and humiliation. Compassion and tenderness can be attributed to all these disease processes as a cure for them, on a personal and social level, about which I will say more later.

2. Abuse of power

Understanding power in the Church is fundamental to the coexistence of all members in the Church. Power is manifested in words, space, society, relationships, command and obedience, that is, how a person treats himself and others concerning these themes and realities. It is appropriate to consider whether the structures of power are not supported when the ordination in certain parts of Croatia begins to address the priest, the bishop as the exalted, the venerable, the reverend? Is it not more natural to leave it to the faithful, brothers and sisters to call the ministers of the Church as they see them based on their service, rather than a priori giving some attribute?

⁹ Cf. *ibid*, 73.

¹⁰ Cf. Reinhard HALLER, *Die Macht der Kränkung*, Wals bei Salzburg, Ecowin, 2015,105.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid*, 79-175.

»You will destroy our Church... but we will not allow it!«¹² is the provocative title of Bogner's book, which as a theologian and journalist critically approaches the current situation in the Church, saying that the aforementioned is the view of those who are losing something in the current crisis, who want to, through critique, leave to future generations a better Church as their heritage. From the initial enthusiasm and opening of the Church to the world after the Second Vatican Council the Church in some countries faces mass withdrawals¹³. Rossetti¹⁴ wrote about the topic of facing staying in the Church back in 1996, in America, realizing then three possibilities: to deny the accusations, to leave the Church, to grow in faith. Bogner¹⁵ follows the third clue with his book. He points out with clarity that something has been broken, the Church has lost credibility. Although the experience of Germany, the USA, Ireland, and Australia cannot be copied to Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, we can certainly talk about similar dynamics.

Issues in Church that arise are as follows: power in the Church, hierarchy, the relationship between clergy and laity, the role and contribution of women, the issue of celibacy, etc. What happens that many feel poisoned in the Church and leave it? How to restore equal dignity to all in the Church? Is Pope Francis himself, whom many see as the source of the problem, expected to solve problems and challenges by neglecting and devaluing particular Churches and particular archdioceses? Many unjustifiably blindly believed in the ministers of the Church. In addition to being a teacher's body, the Church is also a social reality, a living organism in which what is taught should be witnessed vividly and consistently.

Due to the increasing frequency of sexual abuse, many Church members have become concerned about the image the Church has in the world. This is an understandable first reaction, but in the long run, it is neither a solution nor an aid, both to those who have suffered, survived the abuse and to those who have committed abuse. Zollner¹⁶ talks about the bunker mentality in the Church, emphasizing that such a mentality is an integral part of the typical Catholic mixture that allows abuse and makes it difficult to detect and that things want to be resolved exclusively within the Church.

Here we also mention the abuse of power when it comes to money and the distribution of money in the Church. This has been talked about far less

¹² Cf. Daniel BOGNER, *Ihr Macht uns die Kirche kaputt... doch wir lassen das nicht zu!*, Freiburg, Herder, 2016.

¹³ Here are just a few examples: In 2019, about 450,000 believers, left the Church in Germany (Catholic and Evangelical). In 2020, only one Catholic priest was ordained in Ireland (26 dioceses).

¹⁴ Cf. Stephen J. ROSSETTI, *A Tragic Grace, The Catholic Church and Child Sexual Abuse*, Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1996.

¹⁵ Cf. Bogner, *Ihr Macht uns die Kirche kaputt...*, 9-35.

¹⁶ Cf. Hans ZOLLNER, *Duhovne rane uzrokovane seksualnim zlostavljanjima* [Spiritual Wounds Caused by Sexual Abuse], *Vjesnik đakovačko-osječke nadbiskupije*, 2 (2018) 146, 57-61.

in recent years, but when it comes to money, it is important to point out the abuse of power and the distribution of money. The fundamental problem of a member of the Catholic Church in this area is when what is entrusted to the management of persons for a short time is considered and held as their private property, while at the same time a certain autonomy in the management of funds is punished and it is not allowed to develop authority, and on the other hand, large debts are easily forgotten/erased. A big step forward in the Catholic Church has been made with pastoral and economic councils¹⁷.

2.1. *The possibility of recovery from the abuse of power*

The Church is a living Body¹⁸, very functional, but often slow in immense changes. To reach change and transformation, which by the large part is needed because of the sexual abuse scandals, long-term and systemic processes of change are mandatory. One of the possibilities is in the synodality of the Church¹⁹. For this to happen, it is useful to enrich oneself with the gifts of the Church from its great historical heritage. The International Theological Commission²⁰ denotes synodal governance by the following words:

»offers a specific description of the historical development of the Church as such, breathes life into her structures and directs her mission. The Trinitarian, anthropological, Christological, pneumatological and Eucharistic dimensions of God's plan of salvation, which is at work in the mystery of the Church, are the theological horizon which has been the context for the development of synodality across the centuries«.

DeVill²¹ further points out that the Church should use its heritage by going back to its beginning during Christ's sojourn on earth and involving the entire Christian East. In the memory of the Church one can legitimately find and renew and in a new way use what has been forgotten or set aside over time, often for unclear reasons, understanding that everything comes from God, although in practice it was not realized in the Roman Catholic Church. The notion of synodality implies the active involvement of all members of the Church, among whom the lay faithful have an extremely important place. The next Synod of

¹⁷ Cf. NADBISKUPSKI ORDINARIJAT ĐAKOVO, *Ti Si Krist – za nas i za sve ljude. Izjave i odluke Druge biskupijske sinode đakovačke i srijemske* [You are the Christ – for us and for all People. Statements and Decisions of the Second Diocesan Synod of Đakovo and Srijem], Đakovo, Nadbiskupski ordinarijat, 2008.

¹⁸ Cf. HRVATSKA BISKUPSKA KONFERENCIJA, *Katekizam Katoličke Crkve* [Catechism of the Catholic Church], Zagreb, Glas Koncila, 1994; (KKC).

¹⁹ Cf. Adam J. DEVILLE, *Everything Hidden Shall Be Revealed, Ridding The Church of Abuses of Sex and Power*, Brooklyn, Angelico Press, 2019, 11-15.

²⁰ Cf. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20180302_sinodalita_en.html, (02.07.2021).

²¹ Cf. Deville, *Everything Hidden Shall...*, 7.

Bishops in 2022 will be dedicated to a synod called »For the Synodal Church: Community, Participation, Mission«²², which will certainly stimulate new reflections and changes in the understanding of the distribution of power in the Catholic Church.

2.2. A biblical picture of healing

We see the example of Abram, Sarah, and Hagar (Gen 16) as a form of abuse of power but also healing from its consequences. Namely, since Sarah, Abram's wife, did not give birth to children, she sent her husband Abram to her maid Hagar, who conceived a child. But shortly after, Hagar leaves because Sarah (Gen 16: 6) treated her poorly by abusing her power, and Hagar goes to the desert where God meets her through an angel at a spring/well (Gen 16: 7). The angel of the Lord tells her that the child will be called Ishmael [Give him the name Ishmael (God hears) אִשְׁמָאֵל יִשְׁמַעֵאל]. God hears the child that is in Hagar's womb, so God sees what is hidden, which is in itself inaudible. Another crucial step for Hagar is that she called the God who spoke to her El Roï, or You are the God who sees me (Gen 16: 13 אֵל רֹאֵי אֵל רֹאֵי). In the wake of this event from the book of Genesis, where God stands up for a pregnant woman, although Hagar herself does not seek such an intervention, it can be concluded that God is the one who sees what man does not see, hears what man does not hear²³. Power in the Church is power in the name of God and not only in the name of God, but also in the way of exercising power as God accomplishes it²⁴. It should also be emphasized that in the end, from a theological perspective, God is the one who penetrates the hearts and kidneys (Ps 7: 10). God is the one who is aware of the suffering of the innocent and the suffering of persons due to the abuse of power by superiors.

3. Abuse of body

»The body keeps the score«²⁵ is the title of a book by B. van der Kolk in which it is clearly stated how the body remembers the traumas it has experienced. The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ (KKC 771), remembers the wounds it has suffered. Not wanting to see the wound, wanting to justify oneself, not showing oneself vulnerable in front of others, attacking others that are wounded, calling

²² Cf. GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, *For a synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission, XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, <http://www.synod.va/content/synod/en.html> (02.07.2021).

²³ Cf. Christiane WÜSTE, Eine Frau findet Gottes Namen, *Bibel heute*, 1 (2018) 213, 12-13.

²⁴ Cf. Silvana FUŽINATO, Il servizio è potere. Un fatto biblico-evangelico e teologico, *Diacovensia*, 28 (2020) 2, 189-204.

²⁵ Cf. Bessel VAN DER KOLK, *The body keeps the score*, Great Britain, Penguin Books, 2014.

out others for one's wounds and »illness« are processes that do not lead to healing. It took a time of awareness and finally a joint effort to protect the vulnerable in the Church and the Body of Christ itself. It takes oil of compassion that heals wounds and wine of joy (Lk 10: 30-37) that recovers a decrepit spirit. The feeling of shame occurs in a unique way when the body, especially the naked body, is exposed to the gaze of others. An unpleasant feeling of shame, which can also be noticed on the body, has various causes: physical shame (I'm dirty, I stink, etc.), shame of withdrawal and self-humiliation, and shame as a matter of morality and failing.

These are just some of the possible reactions. When a person cares above all about how others see them and is aware of their mistakes or atrocities that have become public - they want to avoid the views of others because he believes it will protect them. A similar analogy can be applied to the care of church ministers for the external face of the Church, for the external Body of the Church. *What will others say? It is important for others not to find out.* The Church has been deeply confronted with these or similar considerations for the last 30 years, both due to the scandal of sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation²⁶. It was crucial to cover up or not talk about what was going on, at least not to the extent that others found out.

Bogner²⁷ uses the image of the scaffold to illustrate that in many situations in Europe the scaffold has taken first and foremost place instead of the building for which the scaffold erected, and the scaffold is seen to survive rather than the institution it served for. Speaking in the context of the Catholic Church, this would mean taking care of the external appearance of the Body, the external appearance and impression of the Church, and not allowing the Body, a living organism, to breathe. The Christ calls to be in constant reform because the Church needs it, as it is a human and earthly institution²⁸.

3.1. *The ability to recover through tenderness and compassion*

We see the possibility of the body's recovery in compassion and tenderness²⁹. In this first part, there will be more talk of tenderness, while in the biblical picture of recovery there will be more words on compassion. In Western culture we find ourselves in a social, cultural, and technological constellation impoverished by the features of the otherwise rich life of the spirit, and Guanzini claims that »our soul no longer has a history, it does not know with

²⁶ Cf. Brendan GEARY, Joanne Marie GREER (ur.), *The Dark Night of the Catholic Church. Examining the Child Sexual Abuse Scandal*, Buxhall, Kevin Mayhew, 2011.

²⁷ Cf. Bogner, *Ihr Macht uns die Kirche kaputt...*, 11.

²⁸ DRUGI VATIKANSKI KONCIL, *Dekret o ekumenizmu Unitatis redintegratio*, u: Dokumenti, 7. dop. i popr. izd., Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2008., 231-263; (UR).

²⁹ Cf. Isabella GUANZINI, *Tenerenza. La rivoluzione del potere gentile*, Milano, Fonte alle grazie, 2017.

whom to connect more emotionally. Tenderness is the one that should save the creatures of the world of our time³⁰. Tenderness is exactly what we lack to live again and feel like we belong in a common world: we simply need to be more human. The Son of God, by his incarnation, called us for a revolution of tenderness³¹. The joyful revolution of tenderness destabilizes and destroys the compact bureaucracies of power while fostering the unifying power of encounter and touch between bodies.

Pope Francis³² under the theme »The future you« said following in a video message in a TED talk (2017):

»I would like to share today is, indeed, about revolution: the revolution of tenderness. What is tenderness? It is the love that comes close and becomes real. It is a movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears and the hands. Tenderness means to use our eyes to see the other, our ears to hear the other, to listen to the children, the poor, those who are afraid of the future. To listen also to the silent cry of our common home, of our sick and polluted earth. Tenderness means to use our hands and our heart to comfort the other, to take care of those in need. [...] Yes, tenderness is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women. Tenderness is not weakness; it is fortitude. It is the path of solidarity, the path of humility.«

To the extent that power always seeks control, closeness, and security, the tenderness revolution is resilient and responds to any regime of pressure, hardness, fear, and separation with the intent of creating a society open to joy, in which life calls life in a long-term community-building endeavor. There is no other path of humanization for our present and the future world: the revolutionary power of tenderness and feeling/affection (EG, 288) is the supreme path for a new ecology of humanity, sensitive to hands, faces, voices, and bodies in their unrepeatable uniqueness and truth.

As long as there are brave people who call for a revolution of love and tenderness, we have the opportunity to remember how we spring here, to remember how we are called to stand up and stand there. Love and tenderness speak in mutual language: they both touch the most sensitive wires of our being's vulnerability and audacity, beyond all illusions and projections, connecting with others in the truth of their real state. »To resist evil, we need a gentle soul: the greatest challenge ever given to man«³³. The Lamb of God did it. To Him belongs all glory and power (Rev 5: 12).

³⁰ *Ibid*, 14.

³¹ Cf. Pope FRANCIS, *Evangelii gaudium*, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticano, EG 88.

³² Pope FRANCIS, *Videomessaggio del Santo Padre Francesco al TED 2017 di Vancouver »The future you«*, 2017, u: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/messages/pont-messages/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170426_videomessaggio-ted-2017.html (03.07.2021).

³³ Guanzini, *Tenerezza...*, 78.

3.2. A biblical picture of healing

In addition to the aforementioned tenderness, we also see recovery from body abuse in compassion. We want to especially highlight the image of a merciful Samaritan who sympathizes with a wounded man (Luke 10: 25-37). The Gospel passage presents us with one of the most famous parables. The text tells us about a Samaritan, without adding whether he is good, bad, noble, or something else. A Samaritan on his way from Jericho to Jerusalem came across a wounded man. The dignity of man is never lost, no matter what circumstances he found himself in or what he did, or what he endured, what color of skin, nationality, religious affiliation he was. A man always remains a man. The man fell among the robbers, alone, and half-dead. Without going deeper into reflection on this parable, that is, reflecting on the role of priests and Levites, we will highlight the role of *one* Samaritan, who is a reflection of God's light and an echo of God's word shown in compassion. Samaritan represents the new 10 commandments of the heart inscribed in the heart of man, and they are manifested through 10 activities described by different verbs: come closer, see, have compassion, come closer, tend to his wounds, pours out oil and wine, puts him on a donkey, takes him to the inn, takes care of him, takes out two denarii³⁴. These are the words of the process of compassion. Characteristics of compassion according to Strauss et al.³⁵ are: recognizing suffering; understanding the universality of human suffering; being empathetic with the person suffering and connecting with the trouble (emotional resonance); tolerating the unpleasant emotions that arise in response to helping a person who is suffering, while remaining open and accepting the suffering of the other person; motivation to act to alleviate the suffering of the other person. In caring for the Body of Christ, these steps can be signposts to active love of compassion. The parable ends with the words of the scribe who asked Jesus how he could inherit eternal life (Luke 10: 35) with Jesus' answer, »Go and do likewise!« – The signpost of the recovery of the Body of Christ is marked by the words of Christ embodied in one Samaritan man³⁶.

³⁴ Cf. Fernando ARMELLINI, *15a Domenica del TO – Anno C*, (15.07.2017), <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vgGG5J5WMULkzDk7a5p5mcaVvfCownW9/view> (03.07.2021).

³⁵ Clara STRAUSS et al., What is Compassion and how can we Measure it? A Review of Definitions and Measures, *Clinical Psychology Review*, 47 (2016) 15-27.

³⁶ See more at: Josip BOŠNJAKOVIĆ, Jedanaesta scena suosjećanja i 10 novih zapovijedi »suosjećajnog srca« – Lk 10,25-37 [The Eleventh Scene of Compassion and the 10 New Commandments of the »Compassionate Heart« – Luke 10: 25-37], (16.01.2021); <https://savjetovaliste.hr/jedanaesta-scena-suosjecanja-i-10-novih-zapovijedi-suosjecajnog-srca-lk-1025-37/> (07.07.2021).

4. Abuse of conscience

Being able to discern in one's conscience and heart how to do good and avoid evil is one of the greater gifts and abilities (1 Kings 3: 9), which in turn goes through the embers of pain and love (Jn 18:18; Jn 21: 9), confrontation and facing one's shortcomings³⁷, just as Peter, the first stone on the Rock that is Christ. In the Old Testament we read that together with his brothers Judah sold Joseph, his brother, to the Ishmaelites and the ornate (Gen 37) robe is brought to his father to tell him to *Judge* (הִקְרִיבֵנִי) whether this is his son's robe. In the same words, in the next chapter (Gen 38), Judah is asked the same question by Tamar, his daughter-in-law, who conceived a child with him by having Judas lie with Tamar thinking she was a prostitute, after the death of his two sons. He called her a prostitute and then he heard from her the words' *Judge* (הִקְרִיבֵנִי) »whose seal is this on the ribbon and this staff«, to which Judas answered »She is more righteous than I am«. Condemning others by trying to cover up one's own mistakes and wounds is a short-term process and it does not lead to health and a »clear« conscience. Admitting a mistake and asking for forgiveness is the path from slavery to freedom, which sometimes lasts a whole generation, and none of us is deprived of it. There are different ways we can interpret the abuse of conscience, the inner sanctum of each person before whom we are called to take off our shoes, but here we will limit ourselves to just some of the possible abuses in this area. DeVille³⁸ sees the difficulty especially of abuse of power and sexual abuse in a paternalistic society. Emphasizing fatherhood in the Church towards those who are not fathers leads to infantilization of persons, i.e., not taking responsibility, and then believers feel helpless, impotent, unwilling to take the initiative if there is no fatherly blessing. Here we do not confuse the importance of a father's blessing and a mother's blessing, especially when a child asks for that blessing, from the need to obtain permission for all or to obtain permission from a venerable mother, provincial or arch/bishop. It is useful to note how much the debate³⁹ was provoked by the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*⁴⁰ where more space was left for individual episcopal conferences to make decisions.

Another abuse of conscience is when it is very easy to tell people »It is important to pray« which leads to covering irresponsibility and incompetence

³⁷ Cf. Pope FRANCIS, *Papst-Brief an Kardinal Marx*, <https://www.vaticannews.va/de/papst/news/2021-06/papst-franziskus-kardinal-marx-wortlaut-brief-antwort-deutsch.html>, (03.07.2021).

³⁸ DeVille, *Everything Hidden Shall...*, 21-53.

³⁹ Cf. Rocco BUTTIGLIONE, *Risposte amichevoli ai critici di Amoris Laetitia*, Milano, Ares, 2017.

⁴⁰ Cf. Papa FRANJO, *Apostolska pobudnica Amoris Laetitia* [Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*], Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2016 (AL).

with prayer. Sometimes it is easier to worship Jesus present in the Eucharist than to become bread for others. Of course, one does not exclude the other.

We believe that this is putting pressure on people's consciences when they are offered prayer and fasting as a solution, and before that, they do not provide all other possible forms of help. In various difficult situations, when there is an abuse of conscience, an even heavier burden is placed on the shoulders of people when prayer⁴¹ Nobody in any context for any reason at any point in human history deserves to have a monopoly of power of any sort⁴². Only Christ, the Lamb, has all the power, to him who has fully served, to the end.

Idolatry is a permanent temptation in faith, and sometimes an excuse to put ourselves at the center of reality⁴³. Putting a pastor, a bishop, a provincial, a venerable mother, a pope as idols in the life of a believer leads to a dead-end and not to the sources of our life (Jer 2: 13). The evangelist Matthew quotes the words of Jesus (23, 8-10) »As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi'. You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father: you have but one Father in heaven«. The desire to trust father figures as those who care for the welfare of children proved to be a terrible mistake, destroying many lives and permanently damaging many as well. Losing your integrity, a sense of inner security, integration, acceptance, love, your center, is one of the hard losses in life, if not the hardest. Restoring trust in Church ministers is a long-term process.

4.1. Recovery of the spiritual soul

There are various experts in the field of psychology, philosophy, psychiatry, writers in the field of spirituality⁴⁴ that emphasized the importance of recovering a man's (spiritual) being (existence) to achieve healing through it. Among them, we will mention the reflections of Ivančić⁴⁵. Man, as a spiritual being, is marked by the freedom of the human spirit to act in love despite difficult life circumstances. Ivančić calls it the spiritual soul, which according to him is the supreme ability of the human soul and has a structure, like an organism in which man distinguishes personality, intellect, free will, conscience, charac-

⁴¹ Cf. DeVille, *Everything Hidden Shall...*, 19.

⁴² Cf. *ibid*, 14.

⁴³ Cf. *ibid*, 27.

⁴⁴ Cf. Viktor FRANKL, *Čovjekovo traganje za smislom* [Man's Search for Meaning], Zagreb, Planetopija, 2010; Max SCHELER, *Čovjekov položaj u kozmosu* [Man's Position in the Cosmos], Zagreb, Fabula nova, 2005; Thomas MERTON, *The inner experience: Notes on contemplation*, New York, Harper Collins, 2003; Nikolaj BERDJAJEV, *Duh i realnost* [Spirit and Reality], Zagreb, Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1985.

⁴⁵ Cf. Tomislav IVANČIĆ, *Hagioterapija – model terapijske antropologije* [Hagioterapy – Model of Therapeutic Anthropology], *Nova prisutnost: časopis za intelektualna i duhovna pitanja*, 5 (2007) 1, 7-18.

ter, religiosity, cultural creativity, trust, love and spiritual life⁴⁶. Furthermore, Ivančić claims that:

»The realization that being is spiritual gives the conclusion that by working on the healing of the spiritual dimension, man's existence is preserved, and man remains a being that exists. According to analogia entis, God is Beingk, and man as a being participates in God's holiness. He is, according to the Bible, created in the image and likeness of God so that his psychophysical dimension is from the earth, and the spiritual from God. That is why man's spiritual dimension cannot be treated by human means, but by God's«.⁴⁷

It is important to note that Ivančić, while referring to Beck, emphasizes that in every cell of the biological world there is a spiritual dimension, and also that only in an environment of love and tenderness preserve trust and transfer it to the psychophysical level⁴⁸. Accordingly, by working on the spirit, both the spirit and the B/body recover. Ivančić, therefore, advocated the treatment through the *hagios* (sanctus), that is, hagiotherapy. According to Ivančić, hagiotherapy is a model or method that determines how to conduct targeted spiritual therapy that alleviates or removes spiritual pain, treats spiritual trauma or illness in the spiritual soul⁴⁹. Therefore, the recovery of man's sanctuary, the repair of conscience, takes place in the encounter of man and God, with the mediation of persons who, with their professional help, can accompany persons of »wounded consciences«. This can be applied both on the personal level of each believer, but also on the level of the whole Body of the Church. Ivančić, referring to the German theologian Biser, writes that the Central European Church will disappear if it does not become therapeutic⁵⁰. To conclude, recovery is possible for those who have experienced abuse of conscience, helping them to be again through their true self, spiritual souls, to be and renew themselves in a lasting relationship with God who heals every wound (Luke 4: 16-30).

4.2. A biblical picture of healing

Encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman⁵¹ opens horizons of love and hope, of gradualness in the spiritual life. Exactly at noon near the well, so when the sun is above the well, the light, Jesus enters into a conversation with the Samaritan woman, opening new spaces of understanding the relationship with God and with others. The Samaritan woman goes to the well at noon when she

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid*, 6-7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 10-11.

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid*, 11-14.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid*, 15.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid*, 18.

⁵¹ Cf. Fernando ARMELLINI, *Ascoltarti è una festa. Le letture domenicali spiegate alla comunità – Anno A*, Padova, Edizioni Messaggero, 2013, 148-154.

hopes she will not meet anyone, aware of the lapses in her life. But that same woman is thirsty for the best water, well water, she is thirsty for love, respect, peace, fidelity, sincerity, ultimately God⁵². Spiritual abuse⁵³ in the conscience of a person leaves deep traces in the hearts, souls, and consciences. The meeting of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, exactly at noon, so when the sun falls vertically on the well and gives the opportunity to fully illuminate the depths of the well, tells us that God can illuminate the dark moments of the life of those who survived various abuses. Hence the words of the evangelist John, attributing them to Jesus (4, 23-24), are encouraging for all women women of justice and love: »But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him«. Helping people to discover in their true self, the well of their being, conscience, the place of encounter with God, is a path that includes valuing the equal dignity of all people, all believers. In such situations, it is the Spirit of God who guides, and man is a pilgrim called to help others so that they and others, especially survivors of abuse, discover the beauty of fresh water in the wells of their hearts, minds, souls. To be able to help someone, it is necessary to understand what is happening to the person, and for that, you need an ear that listens, or how Solomon will pray to God, give me a heart that knows how to listen – לֵב שִׁמְעֵן (1 Kings 3: 9). It is a permanent mission of the Church, whereby the ministers of the Church but also all the faithful, rooted and grounded in God's love, to provide support and strength to all survivors of abuse to strengthen themselves for the inner man (Eph 3: 14-21).

Conclusion

The Church is a wounded Mystical body for wounded people. In the mission of the Church, its vocation is to go to those who have suffered in various ways and are suffering because of the abuse of power, body, and conscience, who are mostly wounded in the field of the Church. Instead of the frightening self-preservation of the Church, joy can be found by recognizing the wounded on the battlefield of goodness, beauty, justice, noticing and seeing Christ in all of them, but also within themselves. It is a constant challenge to step out of mental and material structures into the field of life, in Galilee, because that is where we find the risen Christ. The first step towards caring for the wounds on and in the Body of the Church is to notice, speak, recognize, call, and then heal with Christ, through Christ, and in Christ, the Anointed One. That is just the beginning of the Church's journey in long-term renewal from within, for the

⁵² Cf. *ibid*, 153.

⁵³ Cf. Doris WAGNER, *Spiritueller Missbrauch in der katholischen Kirche*, Freiburg, Herder, 2019.

strengthening of the inner man, the inner being of the Body of the Church (Eph 3). At the same time, this includes changes in the structures of the Church⁵⁴, the way we understand power, body, conscience, interpersonal relationships, service, and mission. This also includes the transformation of mentality and the constant challenge of conforming to Christ, renewing the spirit of one's mind to clothe a new man, an individual, but also the whole Body of Christ, the Church (Eph 4: 23).

⁵⁴ Cf. Pope Francis, *Vos estis lux mundi*, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20190507_vos-estis-lux-mundi.html (06.07.2021).

Josip Bošnjaković*

Ranjivost Crkve kroz zlorabitu moći, tijela i savjesti

Sažetak

Rane na Kristovu tijelu jesu dio Božjeg identiteta. Probodene ruke, bok i noge znak su i svjedočanstvo pashalnog misterija, to jest muke, smrti i uskrsnuća. Crkva je ranjivo i ranjeno tijelo, baš kao što je i svaka druga osoba ranjiva i ranjena. Tijelo Crkve i tijelo osobe može biti ranjeno procesima koji se događaju unutar tijela, ali i u odnosu s drugim institucijama, osobama, državama, crkvama, religijama, tijelima. U članku se govori o izranjenosti Crkve zbog posljedica procesa koji se događaju unutar samoga tijela, a napose zbog zlorabe moći, tijela i savjesti. Kada je tijelo zbog izranjenosti izloženo pogledu drugih, tada je moguća reakcija osjećaj srama, kompleksnog doživljavanja koje govori o nutarnjem procesu bića koje se srami budući da je izloženo pogledu drugih. Oporavak od izranjenosti dugotrajan je proces koji traži otvorenost, iskrenost, otkrivanje rana i govor o tijekovima koji su doveli do izranjenosti. U isto vrijeme ranjenom tijelu je potrebna pomoć te se stoga u članku govori o mogućim oporavcima od zlorabe, putem nježnosti, suosjećanja, empatije, duhovnog praćenja osoba na njihovu putu oporavka.

Ključne riječi: Crkva, duh, moć, savjest, suosjećanje, tijelo, zloraba.

* Doc. dr. sc. Josip Bošnjaković, Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku, Katolički bogoslovni fakultet, P. Preradovića 17, HR-31400 Đakovo; e-mail: josip.bosnjakovic@djkbf.hr; Hrvatsko katoličko sveučilište, Odjel za psihologiju, Ilica 242, HR-10000 Zagreb; e-mail: josip.bosnjakovic@unicath.hr.