



9.1 Summary of the Thesis.

The aim of the thesis is to take a look in the lives of people with sensory impairments, to compare impacts of blindness, deafness and deafblindness on their personal growth. Special attention is paid to deafblindness because this impairment is not only a sum of deafness and blindness but the impairment which affects the roots of human being, and good understanding of the problems of those people is both condition and prerequisite for providing services and care to them.

The theoretical part is based on literature and presents the definition of blindness, deafness and deafblindness. This is followed by the general theories about human development and spiritual growth formed by Piaget, Erikson and Rogers. They show that on the basic level of the successful personal development we can find the basic biological, mental, social and spiritual needs that must be respected. Although these authors do not speak about a disabled person, we can use their conclusions because a disabled person is not characterized by his/her impairment, he/she has only a few additional specific needs. The growth of personality depends on fulfilling these needs and this is done in the society formed by the attitudes of other people who respect natural rights, freedom and right to live of a disabled person. The development of personality is an endless process which takes place in three dimensions: in the first one - psychological dimension - it is necessary to accept one's shortages and limits. The second one - existential, spiritual dimension - is characterized by social perspective, where there is essential for the person to be accepted and forgiven. Then a person can disclose the third di-

mension - God's love. Here he/she needs the gift of faith. To accept the gift of faith is not an one-off event, it is more a cooperation between God and a human.

The practical part of the thesis proves the applicability of development theories on people with specific needs. This part consists of two surveys. One survey proves that variability on the level of personal development of the blind, deaf and deafblind children with a congenital impairment is caused by the limited possibilities to perceive psychosocial stimulations (visual and auditory input). Blind or deaf children are able to develop compensative abilities through a retained sense and organize their independent lives in future. Deafblind children - even if their intelligence is standard - have limited possibilities of personal development; they are permanently dependent on the specific help of other people, without the care their personality would decline to even lower level.

The other survey is aimed at the people with acquired deafblindness. Those are people who lose completely their sight or hearing. The results show that this impairment limits or even prevents those people from perceiving the world, the society and from experiencing positive events in their lives. To experience joy and happiness in life, in other words, to fulfill spiritual needs is possible for them if they can be provided with the care adequate to their impairment - such care should eliminate the threat to their humanity. It is necessary to create such conditions that enable for deafblind people to make their own decisions about their lives, to find relations in which they could gain more positive attitudes to life. The specific care is especially characterized by conscious cooperation between a deafblind person and his/her assistant or a provider of care.