Abstract

INTRINSIC RELIGIOSITY PRACTICE
Psychological aspects of intrinsic religiosity of Catholic women – mothers of small children.

Key words:
Intrinsic religiosity, Prayer, Spirituality of an Everyday Life, Motherhood, Catholic Faith, Identity, Narrative Analysis

Secularisation of the current post-modern Europe represents a collapse of Christianity in the sense of an integrating power of the society; however, it does not mean extinction of Christianity as such. The largest European church has been responding to the changes in the post-modern society by moving the emphasis from Catholicism (institutionally – as a doctrine attitude of the church) to Catholicity (openness and universal attitude of the church). Despite this inner movement, the Roman Catholic Church is losing numbers of their members and frequently it does not satisfactorily address, among the competition in the ‘religious market’, agnostics or even the ‘searching’ ones.

From another point of view, however, it is obvious that for many people it still remains a ‘home’ in which they develop their faith as an individual expression of existential needs. The symbolic universe of the traditional Catholic religion provides these people with factual as well as symbolic tools to develop spirituality.

Significant changes in religiousness and spirituality in a post-modern society have been recently a subject of a growing professional interest. In the area of psychology there is an increasing number of published theoretical work as well as research studies related to psychology of religion – in foreign as well as Czech and Slovak specialist literature.

In the area of the professional psychological research the key work relates to mainly quantitative studies focusing on exploring various aspects of religiousness and spirituality (frequently in the context of a psychology of a person, psychology of health and coping); in addition, another key area is exploring mental aspects of conversion and the theme of fundamentalism and sects. A smaller area is dedicated to examining the so-called ‘spirituality of an everyday life’: e.g. psychological aspects of a religious practice and religious experiences; however, even in this area, the number of studies, focused qualitatively in the case, is increasing.

The presented thesis focuses on the spirituality of an everyday life in its metal aspects. The objective of this thesis is to understand the experience of women who, within the Catholic religion, practice their faith in a specific life situation which is characterised by taking care of small children, their main activity.

The theoretical and methodology basis leading to this objective is a hermeneutic-narrative approach based on the assumption that when trying to capture experience of someone else we depend on a discourse, texts and interactions which require interpretation. The narrated story is understood as a ‘life interpretation’ based on which the researcher interprets meaning of the explored experience.

In the presented thesis I summarise the results of my qualitative research which I dedicated to the experience of Catholic religiousness of a coherent group of twelve mothers of small children. The results represent a description of key findings of the development of religiousness; description of a challenging life situation in which the participating Catholic others must ‘fight’ for their religiousness despite unfavourable circumstances; an
interpretation of contributions of praying on the everyday level, in traumatic situations and on the level of well-being. The thesis demonstrates how their religiousness help cope with the situations better on a subjective level. The last part of the thesis is dedicated to a narrative interpretation of storytelling from the point of view of importance which the participating women attribute to their religiousness – as proven by the concept of ‘metanoia’, a religious practice significantly impacts how the participating women interpret themselves and it enables them to continuous recreate their own identity.