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A Teacher and Education for Values. Ideas of Father Karol Mazurkiewicz

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to show the views of Father Karol Mazurkiewicz concerning a teacher and education for values. The deliberations contained in this text are a part of the discussion concerning the history of the theory of upbringing and pedeutology. His pedagogical publications became the basis of the analyses and interpretations. The analyses of sources were carried out according to the methodology of the historical and pedagogical research. The article presents the pedeutological ideas developed by the priest against the background of his brief scientific biography. Father Mazurkiewicz compared a teacher to a priest. In the context of the education for values, a distinctive feature of the views of Fr Mazurkiewicz was the formulation of pedagogical principles that play an important role in the educational activity of both lay teachers and members of the clergy dealing with upbringing and teaching. The discussion leads to the conclusion that the ideas related to the teacher's personality traits and tasks were derived from the concept of upbringing. Fr Mazurkiewicz understood upbringing as shaping a man in accordance with the values such as good, truth and beauty. These ideas have not lost their validity. Therefore, the main intention of the undertaken research is to show that values such as good, truth and beauty can and should be promoted in contemporary schools and in upbringing activities carried out by various institutions. The principles stemming from them have a timeless value in shaping proper interpersonal relationships and preparing a person for living in the society.

A teacher, like a priest, prepares human souls for life.

Both of them reach into the world of ideals and supernatural phenomena.

(Karol Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 69)

Introduction

Fr Karol Mazurkiewicz is one of the less known representatives of sciences related to upbringing and education. This year (2022) marks the 80th anniversary of the death of Father Karol Mazurkiewicz, a pedagogue, a historian of education, and a distinguished priest. Fr Mazurkiewicz's publications related to education fall within the scope of the history of education, theory of education and pedeutology. The latter sub-discipline is the most neglected in pedagogical historiography, which should not be the case. In the existing pedagogical literature, in turn, publications from the history of education and upbringing (Hellwig 2001, 1993; Kabacińska 2008; Szulakiewicz 2000) have been discussed, as well as (partly) texts from the theory of education (Chmaj 1962; Skoczylas 2017, 2019). Therefore, in this article, I am trying to outline Fr Mazurkiewicz's pedeutological ideas, looking for an answer to the question: what should a teacher be like in order to provide the child with education for values? What are the tasks of a teacher-educator who wants education to be carried out in the world of values? Values are a category that is present in every scientific discipline and culture¹. For example, it is worth quoting the words of Władysław Stróżewski who said the following about values: "Every value, including the guiding idea of cultural formations, must be referred to good. Good itself transcends all cultural limitations, but, on the other hand, it enters into each cultural formation and justifies it as a good for something. Without reference to good, no value would find its sufficient reason" (Stróżewski 1992: 127). Such understanding of values is relevant to the sciences of upbringing and close to the interpretation of education for values by Fr Mazurkiewicz whose ideas will be presented in this article.

Karol Mazurkiewicz. Several biographical facts

Karol Mazurkiewicz was born on 17 February 1881. He began gaining pedagogical experience in 1902 when, at the age of 21, he started teaching in an elementary school in Bartodzieje near Wągrowiec. His preparation for the teacher's profession took place in Rogoźno Wielkopolskie where he attended a preparatory course for

¹ An interesting approach to values can be found in, inter alia, works of such authors as Antoni Siemiąkowski (1986), Władysław Stróżewski (1992), Bogusław Wolniewicz (1993).

teachers, and in the teacher-training college in Kcynia (Kabacińska 2008: 561)². In 1906 he entered the Seminary in Poznań and was ordained a priest in Gniezno in 1910. Over the following years, he combined his teaching activities and participation in academic life with his duties as a priest, performing various functions in the parishes assigned to him. He was one of the priests who truly cared for the religious education of young people and took part in the educational activities of the Church³.

In 1919 Fr Mazurkiewicz started studies at the University of Poznań in the first Polish Department of Pedagogy directed by Antoni Danysz⁴. Under his supervision, he prepared the doctoral dissertation entitled *Początki Akademii Lubrańskiego w Poznaniu 1519–1535. Przyczynek do dziejów rozwoju nauk humanistycznych w Polsce [The Beginnings of the Lubrański Academy in Poznań 1519–1535. Contribution to the History of the Development of Humanities in Poland]*, published in 1921, and he obtained the doctor's degree in 1922. Then, he took up commissioned lectures on pedagogy at the Seminary in Poznań (*Pamiętnik szóstego Zjazdu w Poznaniu 8 IV–10 IV 1931 [Diary of the Sixth Meeting in Poznań 8.04–10.04.1931]*: 255; Szpet 2003: 158). Moreover, he gave lectures on the history of education and didactics at the Poznań High School of Trade (Hellwig 2001: 157)⁵. In 1924 he was appointed as a parish priest at the church of St John of Jerusalem in Komandoria in Poznań. In 1926, his habilitation took place at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv. The habilitation thesis was entitled *Benedykt Herbest. Pedagog – organizator szkoły polskiej w XVI wieku, kaznodzieja – misjonarz doby reformacji [Benedykt Herbest. Pedagogue, Organiser of the Polish School in the 16th Century, Preacher – Missionary of the Age of Reformation]*. In 1926 he became a professor at the Seminary for priests in Poznań.

His teaching and scientific activity resulted in the fact that he was invited to work in various societies and committees⁶. As early as in 1916, he became a member of the Poznań Society for the Advancement of Arts and Sciences. From 1925 he was a member of the Committee for Studying the History of Education and School in Poland. In August 1930 he started cooperating with the Committee for the History

² K. Gorzejowski (1936) presented a detailed history of the seminary in Kcynia.

³ More on this issue: J. Szczepaniak 1997, 1999.

⁴ Antoni Danysz (1853–1921) obtained his doctoral degree at the University of Wrocław (1876), and his habilitation thesis on pedagogy and didactics was written at the University of Lviv in 1895. In 1919 he became the director of the Department of Pedagogy at the University of Poznań.

⁵ From this period the following lectures were published: *Pedagogika i dydaktyka. Wykłady ks. prof. Mazurkiewicza na Wyższym Kursie Pedagogicznym. Koło Naukowe. Towarzystwo Studentów Akademii Handlowej w Poznaniu [Pedagogy and Didactics. Lectures by Prof. Mazurkiewicz at the Higher Pedagogical Course. Scientific Club. Society of Students of the Academy of Trade in Poznań]*, (Mazurkiewicz 1938).

⁶ The list of more important publications by Fr Mazurkiewicz in the bibliography of this article.

of Education and School of PAU (Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences) (Szulakiewicz 2000: 253, 255).

In the interwar period, he participated in the activities of St Jan Kanty Union of Theological Institutes in Poland (Skoczylas 2018: 35) and he took part in the meetings of this union⁷. During the meetings he delivered lectures, and sometimes he chaired the discussions in the Catechetical-Dogmatic Section or in the Section of Pedagogy and Catechetics. He was the chairman of the latter. For example, at the fifth meeting, he presented a paper on the topic: *Pogram i metoda nauczania pedagogii* [*The Program and Method of Teaching Pedagogy*]. During the eighth meeting he gave two lectures: the first one in the Section of Pedagogy and Catechetics: *O kardynalne hasło nowoczesnej pedagogiki* [*For the Crucial Motto of Modern Pedagogy*]⁸, and the second one during the general meeting: *Czynnik dydaktyczny na naszych katedrach* [*The Didactic Factor in Our Departments*] (*Pamiętnik ósmego Zjazdu...* 1937: 6, 8).

At the beginning of the Second World War, he continued to serve as a parish priest and he was a member of the secret Polish National Committee. In 1941 he was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to the Dachau concentration camp. Then, in October 1942, he was probably transported to a place near Linz (Austria) where he was killed in a gas chamber.

A teacher towards the idea of education for values.

Fr Mazurkiewicz's reflections, which are part of the issue concerning the interpretation of upbringing for values and a teacher's tasks, were included in several of his publications published in the interwar period. Particularly valuable for the present considerations is the book entitled *Wychowanie w świetle prawdy chrześcijańskiej* [*Education in the Light of Christian Truth*]. It is worth tracing at least some of this author's pedeutological ideas on the aforementioned problems, i. e. the teacher's tasks and education for values. At the very beginning, it should be emphasized that, in his reflections, Fr Mazurkiewicz sought an answer to the question of what a teacher should be like and what qualities he/she must have in order to be an educator who teaches the most important values in life.

Fr Mazurkiewicz discussed the issue of a teacher (his/her preparation for the job, personality traits and obligations) from the point of view of upbringing and education. He indicated the goals and means of education. And he identified a teacher with a person who brings children up (he did not separate the two functions). What

⁷ More on this issue in the diaries from the meetings, see: the bibliography of this article.

⁸ The text of the article published in the after-meeting volume was entitled: *O hasło wychowawcze dzisiejszej doby* [*For the Crucial Motto of this Age*].

became important for Fr Mazurkiewicz in the context of pedagogical activity in general was the understanding of the essence of upbringing. According to Mazurkiewicz, education is “the creation of a man” (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 10). In his reflections on education and upbringing he adds that every human being has the right to education, and the reasons for this include: 1. the right to life, 2. the right to the perfection of a student, 3. the rights and duties of coexistence with others (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 16–17). He approached the categories he used in his reflections on upbringing and on the educational role of teachers from the perspective of the importance of values in human life. It was these that implied the basic tasks of an educator flowing from such a concept of education. And Fr Mazurkiewicz’s concept was based on the conviction that the basic idea of educational activity should be teaching young people the respect for values or, in other words, cardinal virtues, such as truth, goodness and beauty. It was to them that he subordinated the desirable qualities of a teacher, calling them virtues; and it was because of them that he formulated the tasks for teachers-educators. It is because, in his opinion,

[...] the aims of education boil down to the three most important denominators established by Aristotle as the ultimate ends of human activities. These are: Truth, encompassing the scientific culture; Goodness: individual, based on the ethical culture; social, based on the collective culture; and general human goodness based on the religious culture; Beauty, revealing itself externally in physical and material culture and refining the man internally – the aesthetic culture (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 37).

While recognising these values, i. e. goodness, truth and beauty, Mazurkiewicz also formulated the scope of qualifications of teachers. He assumed that “The basis of all educative virtues is a love of teaching, that is, a calling for being a teacher. Otherwise, the educator will fall into the role of a mechanic who stuck in routine” (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 69). Beginning with reflections on the qualifications of educators arising from the virtue of goodness, Fr Mazurkiewicz argued that a good teacher is like a father, and that goodness is linked to love. This, in turn, gives rise to the virtue of patience which is so necessary for teachers. Love for the student, however, does not result in being too close with him/her or tolerating his/her mistakes. According to Mazurkiewicz, the idea of goodness results in the necessity to be fair, which he described as follows: “In educational efforts, fairness must walk hand in hand with love” (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 70). Truth was one of the most important values for Fr Mazurkiewicz. He believed that it represented the dominant category in the educational process. What qualities of a teacher did he promote in this regard? He made several postulates on this matter, calling the teacher a representative of truth. This meant that:

As such, the teacher is obliged to provide the student with information, advice, guidance, instruction and information that reflects the truth; and the pupil has the right to approach the teacher as a signpost giving the right path. Confidence in the truthfulness of the teacher is an indispensable condition for fruitful educational work (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 75).

He postulated that, if a teacher wants to educate students for truth, he himself must be the embodiment of truth in everything he says and does. The student must perceive the teacher as a reflection of truth, and thus the student will see the teacher as a person who supports them in their uncertainties or doubts. Truth makes the teacher obliged to be a model of righteous conduct.

And the third value related to both education and the teacher's work is beauty. This value results in the teacher's obligation to develop a sense of beauty in the pupil. Beauty requires certain qualities of a teacher. And these qualities are manifested not only in the external appearance of the teacher (although it is important), but also in what Fr Mazurkiewicz called the sense of tact. Mazurkiewicz described the sense of tact as a gift of God. He linked tact to the word, and the word was to be a reflection of beauty. According to Fr Mazurkiewicz, beauty in the teaching profession should be combined with moral truth, and the aesthetic appearance should be harmonised with the corresponding inner value – with the beauty of the soul. He argued that this field of education, which we would nowadays call aesthetic upbringing, is neglected and in need of repair. At the end of his considerations on beauty in education, he states: "The perception of beauty is always a model of the subtlety of the culture of the soul" (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 78). These indicated values turn out to be the fundamental ideas in the process of building an individual's identity. Their true understanding makes every human being's life easier, which is why they must be fulfilled in the process of upbringing and education.

Taking into account the need to fulfill education understood in this way, i. e. education which creates a human being, teachers have both the duty and the right to use all educational means for the good of the student. He cautioned, however, that educators do not have absolute rights to dispose of the person of the pupil. What is more, he claims that even parents have no such right as they are not the owners of children but those who gave them life.

In his publications, Mazurkiewicz locates education (educational and upbringing activity) in the real world, without idealizing it or making it unreal. He communicates to his readers that there is both evil and good in the world we live in. He postulates, however, that reality should be judged rationally and then ideas and principles of education should be constructed or outlined. Therefore, he argues that "the world is not completely evil, for it would be hell, nor is it completely good, for it would be paradise" (Mazurkiewicz 1936: 17). That is why, a man must be adjusted to living in

this world; he must be able to cope with evil and enjoy what is good. Since there is good in the world, the task of education is to teach this good. It is worth asking how Fr Mazurkiewicz recommended doing good and teaching good? He points to one principle in this regard. He argues that, in order to teach goodness to others, one must be good oneself. What, according to him, does it mean to be good? In his interpretation of the problem, he refers to the proper understanding of 'I' and 'you'. He says that "in this work, it is not only about one's 'I', but also about the nice, close 'you' and the further 'he', and about as many people as possible whom one encounters in life" (Mazurkiewicz 1936: 19). While reading Fr Mazurkiewicz's texts, one can see the great value of the approach in which one's 'I' does not obscure the proper perception of another person. He warned the readers against tolerating a situation in which, for some people, there is no 'you' on the horizon, as there is only 'I'. And the man is only preoccupied with his own self. Then, in Fr Mazurkiewicz's opinion, the man uses a Pharisaic logic that does not allow him to distinguish good from evil. He does not look at goodness from the perspective of the community, but from the perspective of the party and selfish interests. "And yet, truth and goodness are and will always remain values to be recognized, whether they spring from this side or that side, from friend or foe, for they are reflections of the eternal Truth, and the eternal Good from God" (Mazurkiewicz 1936: 13–14). He thus postulates the belief in the goodness of the world and in the existence of values. From this comes the message that the educator must have a positive attitude towards the pupil, and that the teacher can only use punishment when other solutions have already been applied.

Speaking about the duties and rights of teachers, Mazurkiewicz also addresses the issue of the institutions responsible for education, distinguishing four categories of them and calling them cells. These are the family, the nation-state, the Catholic Church and school. Education takes place in each of these social cells. However, he assigns a special role to school in particular, calling it an "instrument of upbringing" (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 55 et seq.). (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 55 i n.). In his interpretations, he emphasizes that the educational activities of the teacher and school are determined by numerous factors. However, he believes that values in education turn out to be the basic categories and signposts in the process of an individual's development. Their correct understanding in upbringing and implementation facilitates the preparation of the individual for life both as an individual and in the society. Such a value-based education is the primary responsibility of the teacher.

An important determinant of Fr Mazurkiewicz's pedeutological thought is the attempt to look at the essence of the teacher as a priest, a pastor of souls, leading his pupils towards good. Such an approach is to be found in the essay entitled *Duszpasterz wobec nauczycieli* [*A Priest and Teachers*] published in 1933. Commenting on the teaching profession, he compared it with the priesthood, seeing a similarity

in the vocation of both priests and teachers. For him, a teacher is, in essence, a priest. Mazurkiewicz applies his remarks to the clergy undertaking the task of teaching and education. However, he argues that priests should also be familiar with pedagogy, because anyone who wants to be a teacher should have pedagogical knowledge. He also referred to the condition of pedagogical publications of his time and expressed the view that they were only devoted to matters of teaching and neglected the problems of upbringing⁹. He considered this to be a sign of the times. Mazurkiewicz gives John Bosco as an example of both a teacher and a priest (Mazurkiewicz 1937a). Based on the example of John Bosco¹⁰, whom he perceived as the master of educating the youth, he discussed the qualities of a good teacher. He argued that John Bosco was the kind of master who not only educated the intellect of the young, but also influenced their heart and will, shaping their character into the desired direction. According to Mazurkiewicz, John Bosco influenced the youth by word and example. Speaking of him as a priest-teacher, Mazurkiewicz recalled the most important principle that guided the founder of the Salesian congregation in his work. The principle was as follows: “A priest must, above all, show his heart to the young. He who does not love them had better give up his activities...” (Mazurkiewicz 1937a: 153).

In his reflections, Mazurkiewicz referred to the issue of priests working in schools and cooperating with the teaching staff. Such priests should be an example of how to remain patient in the difficulties of education and not to lose the will or become discouraged from educational work. Mazurkiewicz called for the cooperation of the school and its teachers with the Church and its priests to work together in the education of the society.

While answering the basic question of what a teacher-educator should be like, Mazurkiewicz used the category of “the personality of a teacher” and wrote: “Since the influence of a teacher must be constructive, the teacher should be characterised by outstanding personal qualities in order to be able to positively shape the awakening soul of a young man” (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 65).

Showing the complexity of the essence of the teaching profession, Mazurkiewicz saw its educational impact in the fact that a teacher must be well prepared to teach his/her subject. Then, she/he will be a good example to their students in undertaking their duties. He warned his readers against sluggishness in the teacher’s activity, and he used the category of teacher sluggishness (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 67) which hinders education and teaching.

⁹ The issue of the meaning of pedagogical knowledge in teachers’ work were discussed by him during the meetings of Theological Institutes in Poland.

¹⁰ John Bosco (1815–1888) – an Italian priest, founder of the Salesian congregation and co-founder of the Salesian Sisters. The pedeutological ideas of Fr John Bosco and teachers of Salesian schools are described in the publication: Wierzbicki 2011.

As it has already been mentioned, apart from teachers and school, parents are involved in the process of upbringing and education. In this context, Mazurkiewicz draws our attention to the dangers of wrong parental actions. One of these is, e. g. parental zealotry, which he sees as a dangerous phenomenon in the process of upbringing. Such a parental attitude can destroy all other educational activities, including the effects of teachers' work.

Understanding education as the creation of a human being, Mazurkiewicz claimed that it is necessary to be aware of various imperfections of a man and thus of the society in which every human being is to function. And, in this context, he once again returns to the issue: the individual versus the society; the individual self and the self in relation to another person. In his view, the defect from which many problems arise both for the individual and for the society, is the vice he calls "man's first love", i. e. one's 'I' (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 190). Thus, the primary task of a teacher is to show the child that there is another human being who also has his/her needs, rights, and sometimes even greater rights than the 'I'. The educator should strive to develop in pupils the proper understanding of the presence of another person, and to make them accustomed to respecting it.

Another task of pedagogues is to shape the educationally desirable way of expressing feelings. Feelings and their meanings must be learned by the child gradually and with a clear understanding of their significance in the life of every human being and the society. For this reason, he believed that the teacher must also show his/her feelings in the proper manner: he/she must express them as clearly as possible so that the child can understand them correctly. Another dimension of educational activity, according to Fr Mazurkiewicz, was to act appropriately in a given situation, which was linked to such expression of feelings by each person. He describes this with the following statement: "He who sows love, cleans up love!" (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 192). That is why, the pedagogue must teach the pupil that there is a certain order in the world of rights of all people, and that such order is characterized not only by rights, but also by obligations. The child's first feelings are experienced in the family, but the school must also take responsibility for the process of developing in pupils the right attitude expressed in the display of feelings towards others and the world. These issues must be normalized according to the principle:

While preserving the order of closer and further love, it is necessary to give everyone what is due to them, and sometimes even more, subordinating the feelings of self-love to higher feelings. The pupil must, therefore, also slowly understand that, when there is a conflict between the feeling of attachment to a person or family and the love of the country, the Church, or God, the higher feeling must prevail, that is, the love of the country, the Church and God (Mazurkiewicz 1937c: 193).

For the reflections on the work of a teacher and education for values, the ideas expressed by Fr Mazurkiewicz in his study entitled *Czego uczą nas kryzysy ubiegłych wieków [What do the Crises of Past Centuries Teach Us]* become useful. It is because education and upbringing must be carried out in times of crises which occur in every generation, especially in the next generations of Poles. According to Fr Mazurkiewicz, crises result from the lack of faith and from egoism. He calls egoism a disease. In his opinion:

It must be fought in every form, for it is the hooded great enemy of ours. To fight selfishness is not to deny the world, its goods and joys; it is not to condemn worldliness and earthly aims. I can and should love myself; I should work and strive for a suitable position and sustenance of my own, even for comforts and material advantages, if only I acquire them honestly, for the Lord told the man to conquer the earth and acquire its values to enjoy them (Mazurkiewicz 1933:29).

Egoism and all the personal, class and national vices and sins that result from it, are the main source of misfortune and crises. What we need, therefore, is to free ourselves from our narrow selfishness, and to climb higher every day, embracing wider horizons. This landmark and the most stimulating impulse to higher actions which enter the realm of concepts and ideals is the virtue opposed to selfishness, reaching the furthest into infinity, hence it is rightly called the queen of virtues: Christian love (Mazurkiewicz 1933: 31).

And we have to agree with these words of Fr Mazurkiewicz, as we do experience the egoism of contemporary Europe and other kinds of egoism that cause not only crises but also catastrophes.

After outlining the difficulties accompanying education, Fr Mazurkiewicz formulated a thesis that is unusual in pedagogical literature: the teacher's activity is accompanied by numerous joys. And the joys of education flow, in his opinion, from the same source as the happiness of an artist who creates a work of art. A child who is well educated is the work of the teacher-educator. The artist pours his dreamed ideas into his work, and the teacher awakens and shapes the life of the student in the image and likeness of God.

Final remarks

The following message can be formulated based on the analysis of Fr Mazurkiewicz's writings: education is the same as the teacher. Fr Mazurkiewicz's interpretation of education sounds beautiful: to educate means to create a man. And the man should be created on the basis of the principles of goodness, truth and beauty. Beauty should also be understood as moral beauty. A characteristic feature of Mazurkiewicz's

pedeutological views was that he directed various premises important in the educational activity not only to lay teachers, but also to priests involved in upbringing and teaching. He compared a teacher to a priest who should guide the pupil towards goodness. It is worth asking whether it is possible to follow the trace left by Fr Mazurkiewicz regarding the tasks of the teacher-educator today in the context of education for values? The analysis of his views shows that he was well aware of the complexity of the conditions of the educational process and, in this context, of the resulting tasks of teachers-educators. He accurately described the importance of the influence of individuals and institutions on a person's upbringing and development. In his reflections he argued that it is necessary to be aware of various human imperfections, including, as he wrote, the one he called "love of one's own self". Fr Mazurkiewicz taught that it was necessary to fight against the excessive love of self; to fight against one's egoism. He argued that, although every man is concerned with his own self, he must also notice another person. A teacher should take into account the presence of factors that are both destructive and good to the process of upbringing and education. Such a destructive factor is egoism. Therefore, the teachers' toleration of selfishness and overestimation of it in the life of an individual sometimes turns out to be a destructive factor for the individual because it makes one think only of oneself and one's own needs, without taking into account others and their needs. The excessive love of one's 'I' is also destructive for the society as a whole. The list of principles and resulting duties of teachers outlined by Fr Mazurkiewicz is long, but the most important principle is following the values such as goodness, truth and beauty. It is these values that teachers should comply with when formulating the principles of educating and creating each individual. For these are the values that have a timeless, trans-cultural and universal dimension. And those postulates have not lost their relevance even today. And the value and validity of the ideas contained in Fr Mazurkiewicz's writings on the subject: teacher and education in the world of values results, in my opinion, also from the fact that he was a pedagogue who actually worked with young people. Thus, his pedeutological postulates combined theoretical ideas from pedagogical studies with the experience of long practice in the teaching profession.

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