



dr hab. Paweł Kaźmierczak, prof. UIK  
(1970–2024)

## Farewell to a Good Man

(pp. 15–18)

It is never easy to write about a truly good man, and it feels even more daunting when that man was your friend. Paweł's life was not punctuated by scandals, dramatic upheavals, or sudden twists of fortune. Instead, it was marked by something far more precious—something intangible yet deeply felt by all who knew him closely. It was a life of quiet resolve, defined by an unwavering commitment to what he held most dear: spiritual and intellectual growth, an unshakable devotion to his family, their safety and well-being, and building authentic relationships. This gentle yet purposeful way of living echoes the ancient ideal of virtue, *arete* the highest form of excellence, and a life lived in harmony with its most meaningful purpose.

When I think of Paweł's character, I am reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul: "He was patient, he did not seek applause, he was not quick to anger, he kept no record of wrongs, but he rejoiced in the truth."

Paweł lived these biblical words. His relationship with God was sincere and deeply personal, nourished by years of study, and inspired by the writings of mystics. Even though such a path may seem an unlikely recipe for worldly success, Paweł's academic achievements were remarkable precisely because they flowed from his rejoicing in truth. He was a true philosopher—a seeker of wisdom—compelled by a deep inner yearning, an abiding need to understand. This pursuit of wisdom blossomed, almost incidentally, into a rich legacy of books, articles, and ideas.

As a colleague and collaborator, Paweł was a man of rare compassion and unfailing dependability. We often remember people by what they did—the moments and events that left their mark. Yet with Paweł, it is equally telling what never happened, what we do not remember. In all the years I knew him, never once did he fail to show concern for someone's plight. Never did he turn down a request for help. Never did he shy away from a task he believed in. And not once did he leave someone feeling let down or disappointed.

In terms of his own career, one might say he was too willing to shoulder the burdens of others, too generous with his time, and too quick to say yes when asked for help. But it was precisely these qualities that made him so widely loved and respected. His students, too, were deeply touched by his generosity and dedication. The outpouring of heartfelt tributes shared online by both current students and alumni after his passing speaks volumes about the lasting impact he had on all who had the privilege of sitting in his lectures.

Professor Paweł Kaźmierczak earned his degree in philosophy in 1998 and was awarded his doctorate in 2002 from the Ignatianum University in Cracow. His dissertation, *The Personalist Concept of Education in the Teachings of John Paul II*, was supervised by Fr. Dr. hab. Stanisław Głaz SJ and later published as a book in 2003. In 2020, his academic career reached another milestone with his habilitation thesis, *The Neo-Aristotelian Philosophy of Education in the Perspective of Alasdair MacIntyre* (Ignatianum Scientific Publishing, Cracow, 2019).

Professor Kaźmierczak was the author of four books and over sixty scholarly articles published in both Polish and English. His academic pursuits reached beyond research and writing; he was also a dedicated editor. As co-founder and editor-in-chief of the *Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education*, he transformed the publication from its inception into a highly-ranked academic journal within just four years—a testament to his organizational talent and tireless efforts.

Equally remarkable was his work as a translator. By translating works from English and German into Polish, he introduced Polish readers to dozens of invaluable scholarly and popular texts.

At the heart of Professor Kaźmierczak's intellectual journey lay a commitment to practical philosophy, particularly in the Aristotelian tradition. In his writings, he consistently engaged with fundamental questions about goodness, the pursuit of a good life, and the means of achieving it. His scholarly interests spanned social and political philosophy—exemplified by his insightful book, *Dietrich von Hildebrand and National Socialism* (Ignatianum, Krakow, 2011)—but his true passion dwelled in the philosophy of education.

The Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, which was closest to Paweł Kaźmierczak's heart, holds that a proper socio-political order is a prerequisite for meaningful education. Viewed through this integral perspective, philosophy is not an insular academic discipline but rather a living tradition of debate and shared moral inquiry that shapes social institutions and practices. One of the central issues within this framework is the influence of the philosophy of education—and more broadly, intellectual culture—on the development of what Alasdair MacIntyre referred to as an “educated public” or a robust intelligentsia. Paweł explored this theme extensively, most notably in his book *The Catholic Intellectuals' Club in Krakow 1956–1989* (Ignatianum, Krakow, 2009) and in numerous articles.

Paweł Kaźmierczak placed great importance on the anthropological and ethical dimensions of pedagogy, especially regarding the teleological nature of education. He demonstrated that the practical solutions in education and pedagogy depend on the adopted conception of the good and the good life. He also illustrated how liberalism and expressivism, when interpreted consistently, can hinder—or, in extreme cases, entirely negate—the possibility of setting meaningful educational goals. Paweł underscored the lifelong necessity of cultivating moral virtues as understood in classical philosophy. Drawing on MacIntyre's work, he explained that the absence of these virtues often leads to a loss of life's purpose and direction. Furthermore, he argued that the proper development of these virtues during childhood is essential for achieving practical rationality later in life, which in turn enables self-education and the ability to independently guide one's life.

This brief glimpse at the scope of Professor Paweł Kaźmierczak's academic legacy reveals not only its breadth (always deliberate and cohesive, never chaotic) but also the intellectual dexterity required to command the methodologies and conceptual frameworks of disciplines such as history, political science, philosophy, and pedagogy. The dedication he poured into mastering these fields resulted in scholarly works marked by extraordinary depth and rigor.

Sadly, as we are reminded by the words of Ecclesiastes, “Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.” It was

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Paweł's body that failed him—he succumbed to cancer, leaving us in the prime of his creative powers, still planning and charting future projects nearly to his final days.

His loss leaves an irreplaceable void not only in the hearts of his family and friends but also in the landscape of Polish philosophy and pedagogy.

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