

SUMMARY

The present issue of the „Ethos” is entitled *The Autumn and Winter of Life*, and it is devoted to the various issues concerning the period of human life referred to as old age. The text *From the Editors* accentuates the fact that old age constitutes the stage in human life in which the transcendence of the human person is manifested in a particular way. In the excerpt from the address delivered during a conference entitled „The Church and the Elderly” John Paul II calls us to rediscover the solidarity of different generations.

The opening section, entitled *The Sense of Human Life - the Sense of Old Age*, opens with an article by Tadeusz Ślipko, SJ, in which the author points to the eschatological perspective of human life, particularly well visible during old age. Fr. Józef Pastuszka in turn directs the reader's attention to the psychological aspects of the experience of old age pointing to both its negative and positive sides. This section ends with an article by Bp. Stanisław Wielgus, who presents man against the background of the entire universe, at the same time pointing to the drawbacks of the so-called cosmopolitan thinking, so widely-spread in the present age.

The next section bears the title *Maturity and the Time of Fulfilment*. It opens with an article by Tomasz Ożóg devoted to old age which offers the human person an opportunity to give a mature shape to his personality which, rich in values, will ripen during the life that is still to come. Olga Czerniawska directs the reader's attention to various aspects concerning the experience of the passing of time in old age. Finally, Halina Worach-Kardas points to the fact that the lengthening of life-span which we have witnessed in the recent decades should be accompanied by efforts to enhance both physical and mental activity of the elderly, as well as by elimination of illnesses and disabilities.

The subsequent section is entitled *Facing the „Winter of Life.”* It begins with a reflection by Fr. Antoni Siemianowski, who shows that experiencing old age in a religious perspective enables acceptance of the limitations bound with this period of life, as well as living them through as the preparation for the ultimate deliverance of one's being. Robert Spaemann analyses philosophical and sociological arguments put forward in favour of euthanasia, proving that its acceptance ultimately leads to the treatment of the human person as an object (also on the part of the subject, which turns out to be the case with suicide). The concluding article in this section is devoted precisely to the question of suicide, and the author, Maria Jarosz, points to the social factors which might contribute to the decision to take one's own life.

The next set of articles, entitled *The Elderly in the Society*, commences with an article by Wojciech Pędich, who by analysing the current tendencies attempts to address the question about the place of the elderly in the society of the future. Małgorzata Halicka in turn

addresses the observation that the aging of the society calls for a change in the predominating attitudes towards the elderly, as well as for the creation of a new „culture of old age.” Finally, Andrzej Ochocki gives an outline of the present demographic tendencies, and concludes his analysis with the thesis that these tendencies, as well as the cultural and economic reasons, postulate a change in the social policy, and in particular the creation of conditions which are favourable for the proper growth of the family.

The part of the issue comprising articles concludes with a short anthology of poems by Polish poets on the subject of old age.

The section **I n t e r v i e w s o f t h e „ E t h o s ”** includes two interviews devoted to the subject of old age: Krzysztof Hudzik interviews Fr. Prof. Jerzy Szymik, while Anna Truskołaska speaks to Zofia Zaorska, Ph.D., who is in charge of the Third Age Open University in Lublin.

In the standing-column entitled **T h i n k i n g a b o u t F a t h e r l a n d . . .** Zygmunt Kwiatkowski, SJ, presents his reflections on how the homeland was conceived of after World War II, and points to the pivotal role of the election of Karol Wojtyła to the Holy See for the understanding of the Polish identity.

The section **N o t e s a n d R e v i e w s** opens with a review by Dariusz Wadowski of L. Dyczewski, OFMConv's *Ludzie starzy i starość w społeczeństwie i kulturze* [The Elderly and Old Age in the Society and in Culture]. Jacek Frydrych in turn reviews a book by Fr. A. Siemianowski entitled *Śmierć i perspektywa nadziei* [Death and the Perspective of Hope]. Marek Marczewski discusses a monographic issue of the journal „*Vox Patrum*” (1996, No. 30-31) which concentrates on the question of charity in the Church of the early centuries. Beata Gryzio reviews a well-known book by A. Bloom entitled *Umysł zamknięty* [*The Closing of the American Mind*]. This section concludes with the standing-column **P r o p o s a l s o f t h e „ E t h o s .”**

In the section **R e p o r t s** Jerzy Umiasowski discusses the session devoted to the dignity of dying held by the Pontifical Academy for Life. Adam Dobrzyński reports on the 41st Philosophical Week at the Catholic University of Lublin, which was devoted to reflection on John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et ratio*. Then Andrzej Derdziuk, OFMCap, discusses a symposium on the 20th century Franciscan martyrs.

In the section **T h e P o n t i f i c a t e i n t h e E y e s o f t h e W o r l d** Leonard Górka, SVD, discusses John Paul II's 1999 pilgrimage to Romania, while Grzegorz Przebinda shows the ecumenical motives of the thought of John Paul II as they are seen in the works of the late Prof. Ryszard Łużny.

In the section **T h r o u g h t h e P r i s m o f t h e E t h o s** Mirosława Chuda writes that it is in the old age that life experience gives the fruit of wisdom which is the wisdom of the heart.

The volume concludes with a **B i b l i o g r a p h y** of John Paul II's addresses on suffering, old age and dying (by Maria Filipiak), followed by **N o t e s a b o u t t h e A u t h o r s .**