

**COMMUNICATION OF VALUES IN MODERN SACRAL ART.
EXAMPLE OF LATE 20TH CENTURY CROSIERS**

Katarzyna Bogacka

Department of Humanities, Warsaw University of Life Sciences

ul. Nowoursynowska 166 02-787 Warsaw, Poland

Abstract:

This paper is focusing on the adequacy of the forms and symbols used in modern religious art with reference to the emotional needs and understanding of the audience as well as their specificity. The form and decoration of some modern crosiers are strictly connected with the communication of moral values and personal models. In the context of considered issues the concept of value in the light of the current Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church is examined. The events of the second half of the twentieth century brought about significant changes in religious art. Crosiers made in this time, particularly at the end of the century, as works of modern art, show a diversity of styles, from conservative to innovative tendencies. Among the modern crosiers under consideration, those in which form plays a crucial aesthetic and symbolic role belong to the most prominent hierarchs of the Church.

Key words: value, Christianity, message, meaning, symbol, modern art, bishop, crosier

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious art has been developing in Poland for more than a thousand years in the constant search for ways of expressing important Christian values in a symbolic form. Recently (at least since the late twentieth century) we have witnessed the tendency to adopt modern (or even postmodern) aesthetics as a possible way of leading to spiritual goals. In this paper I shall be focusing on the adequacy of the forms and symbols used in modern religious art with reference to the emotional needs and understanding of the audience as well as their specificity. Episcopal insignia are a splendid example of works of art that are strictly connected with the communication of moral values and personal models. They are objects that are frequently used on public occasions and it is the mass media that contribute to their popularisation. This is particularly true of the crosier, which on account of its size and liturgical function is ideally suited to serve as a means of communicating significant matters regarding faith and morality.

The discussion below is based on some modern crosiers that were made in Poland in the second half, and especially in the last decade, of the twentieth century. The reason why so many of them were made at the end of the twentieth century is that Pope John Paul II founded fifteen new dioceses in the years 1991 and 1992, and six of the previously established ones and one established in 1991, were promoted to the rank of Metropolitan Archdiocese in 1992.³ Both the diocesan and auxiliary bishops

³ In 1991 the following dioceses were established: the Białystok diocese (in 1992 it became an archdiocese and the seat of the ecclesiastical province), the Drohiczyń diocese (in the Białystok metropolis); in 1992: the Kalisz diocese (in the Poznań metropolis), the dioceses of Legnica and Opole (in the Wrocław metropolis), the Warsaw-Praga and Łowicz dioceses (in the Warsaw metropolis), the Rzeszów and Zamość-Lubaczów dioceses

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appointed at that time ordered new insignia from craftsmen. Furthermore, a few crosiers were also made for the then Primate of Poland, Cardinal Józef Glemp, and also for the Archbishop of Wrocław, Cardinal Henryk Gulbinowicz, as well as for the bishops of the historical dioceses, including the Bishop of the Diocese of Pelplin, Bernard Szłaga. Some of these insignia were gifts commemorating, for example, the Great Jubilee in 2000.

The examples selected from among the several dozen contemporary works of art have been limited to those that can be considered innovative or representative of more general aesthetic tendencies and whose form and ornamentation alludes to theological contents, understood as spiritual values. It is worth noting that some of the contemporary pastoral staffs were purchased at shops selling devotional objects and, since they are not individual works, they shall not be discussed here.

2. VALUES

Value is usually defined as something valuable – objectively and/or subjectively – as a goal a person desires to strive for, in the hope that attaining it will bring benefits of a spiritual and/or material nature. (Expecting and then achieving a sense of fulfilment, satisfaction and positive emotions that accompany the attainment of a goal, is also a value.)

In examining the concept of value in the light of the current Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church (Catechism, Encyclicals), in the context of issues considered here, I would like to focus only on its basic aspects, without aspiring to a comprehensive understanding covering the wealth of all its meanings. Of primary significance here is to discuss the meaning of this concept in Roman Catholic theology and to show how the values that are the subject of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church constitute the basis for symbolic references. By following the basic division of values into objective and instrumental ones and assuming that they have their own particular hierarchy, I have focused on absolute values, which are connected with sanctity and which, according to Max Scheller, are at the top of this hierarchy, as well as on their symbolic meaning; whereas spiritual values, including aesthetic and cognitive ones, and even material values or those associated with prestige, which are lower down the hierarchical ladder, are discussed only if it is necessary so as to interpret the research material. The symbolization of more than one value can thus lead to pointing out their mutual relations in a particular system of values.

The teachings of Jesus Christ that have been undertaken by the Church for two thousand years, can be seen as passing on and communicating a particular hierarchy of values and as ways of implementing them in one's daily life. In Christianity, the main value, the truly intrinsic value, is God himself, who instils in man the desire to get to know Him and love Him. This desire leads man, in the eschatological dimension, to eternal salvation, understood as the ultimate union (*communio*) with God, in relation to which all the other values are relative. Salvation, which is achieved in this life, involves abiding by the commandment to love God and 'thy neighbour'. The Church bases on the belief that practising this first commandment guarantees attaining the goal in the eschatological dimension.

(in the Przemyśl metropolis). Also in 1992 new dioceses were established that were subordinated to the newly established ecclesiastical provinces: the dioceses of Elbląg and Ełk in the Warmia metropolis (with the seat in Olsztyn), the Toruń diocese in the Gdańsk metropolis, the Gliwice diocese in the Katowice metropolis, and the Radom and Sosnowiec dioceses in the Częstochowa metropolis; the Lublin ecclesiastical metropolis was also established at that time (see Nitecki 1992; www.catholic-hierarchy.org/dioceses.html).

Because man was created by God in His image and likeness, then, thanks to his senses and understanding he is capable of searching for Him; this, however, is restrained by his nature tainted by the original sin. God, however, in his desire for man to know Him and love Him, reveals Himself to him and endows him with His grace, so that he can receive this revelation in faith. (Catechism, pp. 31-6)

God's revelation was written down by the inspired authors of the Holy Scriptures; it is the subject of the Magisterium of the Church and part of the tradition that is passed down to generations. It was most fully manifested in Jesus Christ. The advent of the Messiah, God-Man, brought about salvation for humankind, and the Saviour's life on Earth became a turning point in the history of mankind. Jesus Christ was the embodiment of the extraordinary and perfect union of the goal (salvation as the primary and principle value), how to attain it and teach about it. This is why Christian scholarship and art constantly refer to the time of Christ's dwelling on Earth.

Christ acts in the Church and through the Church, which is defined in theology as His mystical body. The community can partake in Christ's perfection and thus purify itself so as to fully unite with the Saviour. Those whose free will has responded to God's grace, already become close to Him in this life, which is defined as sanctity in theological terms. Among people, the most perfect sanctity, preceded by the highest grace from God, was attained by Mary, the Mother of Christ.

Thus, the calling of man to sanctity, i.e. salvation, is achieved in the Church, which through the teaching authority of the Pope and the bishops teaches the faithful "the truth to believe, the charity to practice, the beatitude to hope for". (Catechism, points 2032-4). Bishops that have received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders (The Second Vatican Council, const. *Lumen Gentium*, 21), "by virtue [...] of the Holy Spirit who has been given to them, [...] have been constituted true and authentic teachers of the faith and have been made pontiffs and pastors". (The Second Vatican Council, decree *Christus Dominus*, 2) (Catechism, points 1557-8). Bishops have the pastoral care of the particular Churches entrusted to them, as parts of the Universal Church and therefore for her well-being.

The teaching of the bishop concerns the fundamental truth of Salvation and is passed on in communion with the Pope and the Universal Church. At the same time it points to ways of attaining the spiritual goal within the conditions and specificity of a given community. The insignia of the Episcopal office that are appurtenant to every bishop symbolically complement his teaching, which is above all universal but also has a community and individual dimension, since they reflect the spiritual charisma of their owner.

3. THE CROSIER AS A SYMBOLIC AND ARTISTIC OBJECT

The term insignia comprises several kinds of objects, together with several others that belong to the wider category of pontificals. In the strict sense, episcopal insignia (as well as abbatial insignia and those of authorized protonotaries apostolic) are the ring and crosier. There are several aspects to the symbolic meaning of the crosier. Its formal and ideological model is the shepherd's staff and for this reason this insignium symbolizes above all the bishop's spiritual leadership in his diocese. The curved top, called the crook, symbolizes the prelate's obligation to draw the faithful to the Church, the knob below, which supports the hand, stands for the strengthening of the faith, and the pointed ferrule at the base – for the chastising of the recalcitrant and defending against attacking enemies (see Bogacka 2004a, pp. 45-52).

There is also a symbolic meaning attributed to the material that was used to make the crosier. Traditionally, the upper part (the crook and the knob) was made of iron in the Romanesque period,

then of copper (the Limoges crosiers), and finally of silver, which was frequently gilded. The durability and nobility of the metal and its resistance to corrosion can be linked to the nobility of the bishop's office and to the timelessness of the Church's teaching (see also Forstner 1990, pp. 146-9). The gilding and gemstones contributed to the symbolism of great virtues and God's grace that irradiated the bishop's office. (The symbolism of gemstones has recently been discussed by Stanisław Kobiela SAC; Kobiela 2012).

The shaft of the crosier, which in mediaeval times was usually wooden, supported the ornamented upper part, in the same manner as the shaft of a processional cross or a gonfalone with the coat of arms. It denoted the link between heaven and earth. The wood itself symbolized the cross of Christ and the iron of the ferrule was a sign of the bishop's unbending stance in defence of the Church.

For centuries, the meaning of the crosier has been complemented by symbolic ornamental motifs: figural (human and animal), vegetal (including floral), architectural and abstract. Their occurrence on historic, mediaeval, modern and nineteenth-century crosiers corresponded to the canons of the currently prevailing style in art, as well as to the spiritual trend prevailing in the Church and the individual bishop's piety. One can point to examples of crosiers dating from the 1930s that were inspired by Cubism or Art Déco: with the geometrical forms of the crook and cubist-like figural ornamentation.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed events that significantly changed the functioning of the Church and its image in the contemporary world, and subsequently also brought about significant changes in religious art. The most important role was played by the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), the election of the Polish Cardinal, Karol Wojtyła, to the papacy (1978) and the regaining of independence by the countries of East-Central Europe. The key event for the Church in Poland was the aforementioned expansion of the diocesan structure. It should be emphasized that the Church in Poland underwent these changes in an atmosphere, unprecedented in its history, of intense contacts of the clergy and laity with the Holy See. The celebrations of the Great Jubilee in 2000 were the high point of those events (see Zieliński 2010). The events mentioned above set the context for the development of religious art, as observed in the last decade of the twentieth century.

4. CROSIERS DATING FROM THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AS WORKS OF MODERN ART AND MEANS OF THE SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION OF VALUES

When considering crosiers made in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly at the end of the century, as works of modern art, we notice a diversity of styles. Among them are works representative of conservative as well as innovative tendencies. The former refer, more or less literally, to the great art styles of the past, i.e. Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque, which became permanently associated with the development of sacred art. Their durability, or even the fact that they seem 'frozen' in time, enabled the creation of very popular artistic models (see Gołaszewska 2001, p. 255). For instance, in the insignia of the Bishop of Koszalin (1972-92), the Rev. Ignacy Jeż (1914-2000), the shape of the crook and the simplicity of its form is derived directly from the Romanesque crosiers (see Fig. 1.). The position of the figure of the Archangel Gabriel (in the style of 'simplified realism') attached to the straight shaft of the crook is a corruption of the Romanesque crosier ornamentations that were placed analogically, but on the outer side of the crook, and of the Gothic crosier ornamentations, where a figure, often that of an angel, was also placed on the front, but lower down, and supported the lower part of the crook. The crosier commemorates the bishop's participation in the Vatican Council at the time when he was still the Suffragan Bishop of Gniezno in Gorzów Wielkopolski (1960-7), which is confirmed by the inscription on the staff: "PRO MEMORIA

/ PRAESENTIAE / IN S. CONCILIO VATICANO II / IGNATI JEŻ / EPISCOPI AUXILIARIS / IN GORZÓW”.



Figure 1. Crosier of the Rev. Ignacy Jeż (1914-2007), Bishop of Koszalin (1972-92), Koszalin Diocese, residence of Bishop Ignacy Jeż. Photo K. Bogacka.

In some of the insignia one may notice the lack of reference to the styles of the past in the iconographical scheme. Even the traditional spiral form of the crook was abandoned in several cases. The figural representations are then simplified and even if they are deeply rooted in Polish tradition, as for example the icon of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, they are not identified with the Byzantine style of the original. The top part of the crosier of the Primate Józef Glemp in the Archbishop's Palace in Warsaw, is of a shape similar to that of a triangle with slightly convex sides and bears a round medallion made of transparent amber with an image of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa (see Fig. 2.). The figures of the Primate's three eminent predecessors are placed on the knob together with the appropriate inscriptions: the Archbishop Zygmunt [Szczęsny Feliński], the Primate August [Hlond] and the Primate Stefan [Wyszyński]. The inscription on the staff explains in detail the significance of the time when the insignium was made – the year 1999: “Józef Cardinal Glemp, Metropolitan Archbishop of Warsaw / Primate of Poland / thanks the Holy Divine Providence / for the 200 years of this diocese in the year of the fifth pastoral visit / of John Paul II to Warsaw, / the closing of the Second Plenary Synod, / the 20th anniversary of his bishopric, in entrusting the work of revival, reconciliation and evangelization to Mary.”



Figure 2. Crosier with icon of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, of Cardinal Józef Glemp, Primate of Poland (1981-2009), 1999, Warsaw Diocese, Borch Palace (Warsaw Metropolitan Curia). Photo K. Bogacka.

The iconographic scheme of this crosier reveals the priorities of the Primate's work, of which the most meaningful (as can be discerned in subsequent years) was undertaking the idea of building the Temple of Divine Providence in Warsaw as a votive offering of the Polish people for the regaining of independence (see Bogacka 2004b). Thus, in this context, the shape of the crook may be interpreted as a symbol of the Eye of Providence.

In the crosier of Jan Bernard Szlaga (05.24.1940 – 04.25.2012), the Bishop of Pelplin (from 1992 until his death) the crook is replaced by two arcs, with the concave parts facing each other and embracing an amber cross. The inscription engraved on the shaft of the crook reads: "TO THE DIOCESAN BISHOP / JAN BERNARD / SZLAGA ON THE [OCCASION OF THE] 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTHDAY/ PRIESTS OF THE PELPLIN DIOCESE / JUBILAEUM A. D. 2000" (see Fig. 3.). It explains that the crosier was a gift for his birthday, which fell during the 2000 Millennium celebrations. The amber cross alludes to the connection with Pomerania, both of the Bishop, who was born in Gdynia, and of his Church – the historic diocese of Chelmno (Chelmno was the capital of the bishopric from its establishment in 1243 up until 1825; see Nitecki 1992; catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dpelp.html). The shape of the top part of the crosier, which opens upwards,

symbolizes the focus on spiritual matters, whereas the cross placed within it unites Heaven and Earth, both visually and symbolically (see Kobiela 2000, p. 48). The abandoning of the traditional form of the crook is extremely rare throughout the entire history of the crosier. Earlier precedents concerned abbatial crosiers with the crook enclosed in a closed volute in the form of a circle.



Figure 3. Crosier of the Rev. Jan Bernard Szlaga, Bishop of Pelplin (1992-2012), 2000; Pelplin, Cathedral Treasury. Photo K. Bogacka.

Another issue is the diversity of crosiers with regard to their forms and ornamentations, as well as their mutual relationship. In some crosiers, the form of the top part, i.e. of the crook and, possibly, of the knob, is a dominant means of artistic expression and of communicating a symbolic message. The ornamentation is subordinated to it, or even altogether absent. In other insignia, it is the large scale ornamentation, figural or symbolic, enclosed within the space of the crook, that plays a leading role. (Among the examples of insignia under consideration, one can also point to instances of balance between form and decoration with regard to their meaning.) This distinction seems relevant from the perspective of a participant in religious celebrations who sees the crosier from a certain distance and tries to comprehend the essence of the visual message. For already at this preliminary stage of comprehension, it reveals the intention of the author of the iconographic scheme, who focuses on bringing out either the symbolism of the insignium itself or the iconographic scheme of its ornamentation.

The decorations on modern crosiers may be grouped into: figural (figures of Christ, the Mother of God, angels and saints), symbolic (the cross as a symbol of Christ and Salvation, the Eye of Providence symbolising God), floral, and heraldic. Occasionally they are complemented by inscriptions treated as ornaments.

5. FORM AS A VEHICLE FOR SPIRITUAL VALUES

Among the modern crosiers under consideration, those in which form plays a crucial aesthetic and symbolic role belong to the most prominent hierarchs of the Church.

The crosier of Cardinal Józef Glemp, the Primate of Poland (from 1981 up until his retirement in 2009) is the most extraordinary among them. It has the shape of a tall, gnarled pilgrim's crook, for, apart from the bottom metal segment, the whole top part and the shaft are encased in amber of varied shades and different levels of transparency (on a metal pivot). There are no ornaments on the curve and the knob is indistinguishable. In the middle part of the shaft, the crosier is embellished with the Primate's gilded coat of arms. The inscription informs us that the crosier was "A gift / from the amber craftsmen / and artists / of Gdańsk" (see Fig. 4). It was made in the workshop of the amber craftsman, Mariusz Drapikowski, in Gdańsk, according to a project created together with Professor Stanisław Radwański, a sculptor from the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk (www.drapikowski.pl). It is one of the several "amber" crosiers crafted by Drapikowski in which amber is combined with silver, and it is one of the two in which amber was used to encase almost the whole of the insignium (the crosier made for the Suffragan Bishop of Warsaw, Piotr Jarecki).



Figure 4. Crosier of Cardinal Józef Glemp, Primate of Poland (1981-2009), design: Mariusz Drapikowski, Stanisław Radwański, made by: M. Drapikowski, Gdańsk 1999, Warsaw Diocese, Borch Palace (Warsaw Metropolitan Curia). Photo K. Bogacka.

Wiesław Gierłowski traces this modern trend in sacred art, in which amber is used as the main material, back to Russia: an amber crosier (together with other insignia) was conferred on the Metropolitan Bishop of Leningrad in the late 1970s and on the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Alexy II in the mid 1980s (Gierłowski).

The organic form, which has no precedent among other insignia, is a direct reference to the simplicity of nature. However, any formal historical models, even of the simplest crosiers, were rejected along with any regularity, so that in the thousand years' history of these insignia in Poland, the only resemblance that may be noticed concerns two badly preserved medieval crooks. The curve of the crook is the only formal element that alludes to the Christian tradition and the symbolism of the crosier, with which, as if with a shepherd's crook, the bishop draws the faithful to himself.

The irregularity of the surface of the crosier and the lack of a knob is reminiscent of the corroded medieval crooks excavated from tombs: an iron one dating back to the thirteenth or fourteenth century in Poznań Cathedral (see Bogacka 2004a, pp. 93-4, cat. no. 9, Fig. 36) and, to a lesser extent, a lead one dating from the thirteenth century, from the collegial church in Tum near Łęczyca (Bogacka 2004a, pp. 89-91, cat. no. 7, Fig. 35). It should be noted that the resemblance pertains only to the general outline of the top part and results from the considerable damage to these metal crooks, i.e. due to the process of the disintegration of their original form.

In the theory of modern art, this 'shapelessness' is the ultimate stage of rejecting the old structures after dispensing with figurativeness and abstractness. It is interpreted as an ability to be structured. Every protuberance or spot of colour indicates a readiness to adopt structure, i.e. delineation (see Gołaszewska 2001, p. 255). The concept behind the Primate Józef Glemp's crosier, regarded as a work of artistic craftsmanship, can be compared with abstract expressionism sculptures. The 'original' form of this insignium conveys the message that God is the source of the bishop's power and that the bishop is to teach about God himself while carrying the crosier. There is nothing in the form of this crosier that would depart from this Truth and, at the same time, anything could be added to it. Thus, the message becomes unclear, which, from the perspective of the Church's teaching, poses the risk of error.

Thus, there is a vast difference between this crosier and earlier modern crosiers, which have a simplified ascetic form that alludes to Romanesque insignia. These are rare, and the example presented below dates from 1969 (see Fig. 5.). It is a crosier made entirely of oak with an iron knob in the form of a cross enclosed within a hexahedral form with the openwork letters: I X A Ω attached to it. This three-dimensional cross is a sign of hope and support stemming from faith in Jesus Christ, who is symbolized by the monograms of the Latin name *Iesus Christus*. The Greek letters A Ω stand for His words: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22,13). The motto: *Veni Domine Iesu* was engraved on one of the rings. The motto belongs to the Suffragan Bishop of Warmia (Olsztyn), Julian Wojtkowski (consecrated in 1969) and symbolizes his eschatological stand. The motto can be related to the Apostolic Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of the Second Vatican Council, about which Pope Benedict XVI says: "In the light of the centrality of Christ, *Gaudium et Spes* interprets the conditions of humanity today, human calling and dignity, and the ambits of human life: family, culture, economy, politics, international community. This is the mission of the Church, yesterday, today and always: announce and bear witness to Christ so that every man and woman may live their vocation to the full" (Benedict XVI).

In iconography, the hardness of iron represents changelessness and, according to tradition, defends against the forces of evil. Wooden crosiers are traditionally associated with abbots, who are obliged by the monastic rule to live in poverty. As far as bishops are concerned, renouncing silver and gold insignia represents humility. The simplicity of the entire insignium alludes to the staff with which Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd is portrayed.



Figure 5. Oak crosier of Bishop Julian Wojtkowski, Suffragan of Warmia (1969-2004), 1969, Olsztyn, Episcopal Curia.

6. THE IMPACT OF THE SYMBOLISM OF CROSIER ORNAMENTATIONS

An entirely different formal concept was applied in insignia in which the ornamentation of the crook plays the main role, as it is the main medium for communicating the ideological content. The crosier bearing a figure of the Resurrected Christ that belongs to the Rev. Marian Gołębiewski, the Bishop of Koszalin (1996-2004), later the Metropolitan Archbishop of Wrocław (since 2004), is an example of such insignia (see Fig. 6.). This crosier was made to commemorate the bishop's episcopal ordination in 1996, when he took office in his first diocese in Koszalin. It was a gift from the diocesan priests, as the inscription on the knob reads: "A gift of the priests / of the Koszalin-Kołobrzeg diocese // for His Excellency the Bishop M. Gołębiewski / on the day of his consecration 08.31.1996". A tall, lean figure of the resurrected Christ fills the inside of the delicate crook, formed into the shape of a thin acanthus leaf. Christ, rising gently up from the labarum and giving His blessing, was depicted in a way that is reminiscent of the elevated realism in Baroque representations. In a symbolic way, he

illustrates the bishop's individual charisma as manifested in his motto: *Ad imaginem Tuam*. The meaning of these words was explained by the bishop himself: "Being fascinated with the anthropology of John Paul II, I chose the words *Ad imaginem Tuam* – 'In Your own image' as the bishop's motto. It refers to the creation of man described in the Book of Genesis and reminds me that, as a bishop, I am to see, or restore, God's image in every man, as well as remembering that Jesus Christ is the supreme icon of God" (quoted after: *Biskupi polscy*, p. 106). The above example demonstrates the unity of the verbal and visual message that relates to the fundamental value in the life of a Christian.



Figure 6. Crosier with figure of the resurrected Christ, of the Rev. Marian Gołębiewski, Metropolitan Archbishop of Wrocław. Photo K. Bogacka.

Far more complex iconographic schemes based on symbolic representations in the crook as well as on symbolical and heraldic motifs on the knob, are present in the crosiers of two successive bishops of Drohiczyn: Władysław Jędruszek and Antoni Dydycz. Their formal similarity is due to the fact that both are the work of Aleksander Tyrąła - a goldsmith from Poznań. The crosiers combine a simple form with expressive ornamentations having a symbolic meaning. I have defined them as "iconographic insignia" due to the multiaspectual nature of the iconographic scheme that reflects the context in which the insignia were created (see Bogacka 2006).

7. CONCLUSIONS

When considering ways in which spiritual values are communicated visually in modern crosiers, one should point to a variety of pursuits and adequate ways of attaining this goal. The examples discussed here show that issues which are of the utmost importance to Christians, i.e. those relating to Salvation, accomplished through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, remain the centre of attention. This eschatological message is accompanied by motifs of a temporal nature, relating to the "here and now" of the bishop's office, which is directly manifested in the commemorative inscriptions. The spirituality of the diocese's leader is often clearly emphasized by displaying the bishop's coat of arms and his episcopal motto.

The latter elements, however, escape the attention of the participants in religious ceremonies, and it is the clearly manifested forms and symbols relating to Salvation, the sign of the Cross and the figure of Christ, that play a significant role in their perceptual field. When, as often happens in iconographic insignia, many symbolic elements compete with one another with regard to meaning, the message loses its clarity and is not actually addressed to the congregation at large, but to the theologically educated elite. It is therefore the appropriate composition of the insignium as a work of art that plays a significant role in allowing one to gradually interpret the symbolic message in its many aspects. A significant number of crosiers that were made in the last decades of the twentieth century are a clear illustration of such pursuits. Bishops themselves, as they usually have at least two crosiers at their disposal, can use them in accordance with the spiritual and psychological needs of the congregation.

"After the Second Vatican Council, in connection with the concept of the Catholic Church as God's people, much attention has been given to so called New Spirituality. It rejects all kinds of formalism, calling for authenticity in spiritual life. (...) Proponents of post-conciliar spirituality want to read and understand, interpret and apply the Gospel, liturgy, prayer and asceticism in their own ways; for they seek authentic experiences, inspired by internal needs rather than by commands or custom. One of the features of new spirituality is opening up to the world and all its earthly values" (Misiurek, Burski 2004, p. 10). This new individualistic spirituality of contemporary people is a challenge for effective communication in the sphere of religious signs and symbols. It also evokes the words of Saint Paul: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (Cor. 9,22).

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