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JOHN PAUL II, CATHOLIC VALUES, AND RUSSIA: BASED ON THE DOCUMENTARY FILMS BY TAMARA YAKZHINA

JAN PAWEŁ II I WARTOŚCI KATOLICKIE A ROSJA – NA PODSTAWIE FILMÓW DOKUMENTALNYCH TAMARY ELŻBIETY JAKŻYNY

Abstract

The author aims to show the work of Tamara Yakzhina, a Russian journalist and filmmaker of Polish origin, who for years collected materials about Pope John Paul II, with a view to bringing his personality and work closer to Russian audience. The paper concentrates on two documentaries: *Fear Not! I Pray for You!* (2005) and *The Pope Who Did Not Die* (2012). Karol Wojtyła is portrayed in both films as a figure seeking dialogue with followers of other religions, including the Orthodox Church. Moreover, the article brings to light John Paul II's conversations with the Russian, his command of the Russian language, and his passion for Tchaikovsky's music, Russian literature and philosophy. The author reveals that the Pope, when speaking about the most important matters, used quotes from the works of Dostoevsky. Following Yakzhina and the authorities that she mentions, the author speculates why the Holy Father never visited Russia, even though he was invited by the heads of the state. The author also shows the choice of topics the filmmaker made to accurately bring the figure of the 'Rimsky papa', or 'the Roman Pope', to Russian-speaking audiences.

Streszczenie

Celem, jaki wyznaczyła sobie autorka, jest ukazanie pracy rosyjskiej dziennikarki i reżyserki polskiego pochodzenia, która przez lata zbierała materiały o polskim papieżu, chcąc



przybliżyć jego sylwetkę i dzieła rosyjskim odbiorcom. Mowa jest zatem o dwóch filmach dokumentalnych: *Nie lękaj się! Modlę się za ciebie!* (2005) oraz *Papież, który nie umarł* (2012). Karol Wojtyła prezentuje się w obu filmach jako postać poszukująca dialogu z wyznawcami innych religii, w tym prawosławia. Traktują one o rozmowach Jana Pawła II z Rosjanami, o jego znajomości języka rosyjskiego, o zamiłowaniu do muzyki Piotra Czajkowskiego, literatury i filozofii rosyjskiej. Autorka wyjaśnia, że papież, mówiąc o sprawach najistotniejszych, posługiwał się cytataми z dzieł Fiodora Dostojewskiego. Rozważa za Jakżyną i przywołanymi przez nią autorytetami problem, dlaczego Ojciec Święty nigdy nie był w Rosji, choć zapraszały go głowy tego państwa. Pokazuje, jakiego wyboru tematów dokonała reżyserka-dziennikarka, by w sposób – w jej mniemaniu – jak najbardziej trafny przybliżyć rosyjskojęzycznym odbiorcom postać „rzymskiego papieża”.

Keywords: John Paul II, Tamara Yakzhina, Russian culture, dialogue, higher values

Słowa kluczowe: Jan Paweł II, Tamara E. Jakżyna, kultura rosyjska, dialog, wartości wyższe

The present paper will discuss two documentary films that resulted from a few-years-long effort of the Russian journalist and director Tamara Yakzhina: *Fear Not! I Pray for You!* (the first ever Russian-language documentary film about the pope), and *The Pope Who Did Not Die*.¹ The former production shows John Paul II not only as a pope, but also as a man who considered every single circumstance in his life, even the most tragic one, as a part of God's plan. What is especially worthy to note is the idea that what happened to Wojtyła during his lifetime was not accidental, in keeping with the Christian conviction that there is nothing accidental in the life of a believer. The narration is accompanied by photographs and archival footage from the period of his life at Wadowice, Cracow, Rome, the diplomatic visits paid by foreign officials in the Vatican, his missionary trips and encounters with artists and intellectuals. While making the films, Yakzhina's underlying tenet was that if you asked in Russia, 'Who is the country's greatest enemy?', the answer would be: 'John Paul II'. This stereotype was allegedly especially deep-seated in the Russian Orthodox milieu. As observed by Bohdan Kukharenko:

[...] Russian Orthodoxy has been noted for its unwillingness to acquaint itself with the other side, standing firm by stereotypes established once and for all, as well as for its – both religious and national – chauvinism. All of these characteristics of the Russian Orthodox Church, combined with the reason of state, were conducive to bringing up a generation

¹ *Fear Not! I Pray for You! A Film about John Paul II* [Rus. Не бойся, я молюсь за тебя! Фильм о Папе Иоанне Павле II], directed by T. Yakzhina, Moscow 2005; *The Pope who did not die* [Rus. Папа, который не умер; trilogy], directed by T. Yakzhina, Moscow 2012.

of Russian citizens who were deeply disapproving of Catholicism and Poland. A lack of change has been felt until now.²

Yakzhina does not emphasise this enmity; on the contrary: she shows sympathetic attitude towards Poland and the ‘Polish’ pope taken by numerous Russian citizens, including eminent figures from the cultural world and the spheres of diplomacy, politics and religion. It is a device that she has used deliberately. She speaks about facts, as do also the interviewed witnesses invited to participate in the film. In both pictures Wojtyła is shown as a person who has friendly attitude towards everyone, a diplomat looking for positive qualities in other people, one seeking to engage in a dialogue with believers of other religions, and having a deep understanding of the idea of ecumenism, understood as a search for common characteristics, and not an attempt to blur dividing lines.

Fear Not! is mostly a compilation of John Paul II’s works: his personal memoirs as well as his poetic and dramatic works. They signal, in a way, the subsequent stages in his life and creative output shown in the film: the long poem *The Quarry*, *The Roman Triptych*, or the prose poem with an anti-war message entitled *Deliver us, O Lord* (or *A Prayer for the Gift of Peace*). The film includes also a footage from the filmed version of *Our God’s Brother*.³ Yakzhina proves to be especially sensitive to poetry, music, as well as painting, therefore, a lot of space is devoted to the aforementioned *The Roman Triptych* – as a poetic illustration of the Biblical message (Book of Genesis), and ekphrasis of Michelangelo’s frescoes in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, presented in the film. In the other film, the beauty of the poem is further emphasised by the Polish actor Krzysztof Globisz who admits that every reading of *The Roman Triptych*, its every stage production, is in a way an act of profanation, since it can never measure up to the mystery concealed in the words of the poem itself (PWDND, pt 2, 54:18–57:37).⁴

The film *Fear Not!* is a picture strongly permeated by the words of John Paul II; furthermore, individual phrases appear as separate frames. The film was supposed to familiarise the public with the figure of John Paul II not only in his capacity as the head of the Roman Catholic Church and an eminent theologian, but also as a philosopher, philologist and erudite. Yakzhina presented his thoughts against a constellation of texts by his greatest authorities such as the authors of the four Gospels (FN, 52:34–52:50),⁵ Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, St John of the Cross, Immanuel

² B. Kukharenski, *Geneza stereotypu katolika i katolicyzmu w prawosławnej Rosji*, “Roczniki Humanistyczne” 2008, vol. 56, no. 2, p. 207.

³ *Our God’s Brother*, directed by K. Zanussi, Germany, Poland, and Italy, 1997.

⁴ The abbreviation PWDND, accompanied by the part number of the trilogy and time counter, denotes a reference to the film *The Pope Who Did Not Die*.

⁵ This abbreviation denotes references to the film *Fear Not!*

Kant, Edmund Husserl, next to Fyodor Dostoevsky, Andrei Sakharov, Vyacheslav Ivanov, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. John Paul II referred to Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* while formulating the message of his homily delivered in Cracow on 13 August 1991. In *Fear Not!*, Yakzhina included archival footage of this event in which the pope, in a paraphrase of a passage from *The Brothers Karamazov*, called out:

‘Let us live as if God did not exist. Yet, if God does not exist, then everything is permitted, Fyodor Dostoevsky says. We are beyond good and evil. What are we heading for, living as if God did not exist?’ (FN 44:18–44:59).

These words appear in the film between meditations on the notion of the person in the pope's teachings (personalism) and reflections on human responsibility. A person, a personality, is the highest value in human life: only human beings are capable of being responsible for others (see *Person and Deed*). This passage combines the thoughts of Dostoevsky (*The Brothers Karamazov*),⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche (*Beyond Good and Evil*) and John Paul II himself. Grzegorz Przebinda observed:

Because he was able to foresee the consequences of ‘secularism’ intended against God in twentieth-century Europe. According to the pope, this ‘secularism’ is an ideology whose proponents think and live ‘as if God did not exist’ (Veritatis splendor, 88). On 13 August 1991, in a homily delivered in Cracow, John Paul II said: ‘A programme for people living at the end of the twentieth century is as follows: “Let us live as if God did not exist”. Yet, it was already Dostoevsky who said: if God does not exist, then everything is permitted. We are beyond good and evil, Nietzsche adds. At the time when the twentieth century draws to its end, we have been through experiences, extremely powerful and horrible, that potently testify to what this Nietzschean programme means in reality. What are we heading for, when we are living as if God did not exist?’⁷

It may be added that John Paul II had expressed similar thoughts still earlier, in Salzburg, in 1988:

Europe's spiritual history of the recent centuries demonstrates how influential in calling into question the established moral order was a conviction that a life of an individual and the existence of humanity were merely meaningless episodes of no consequence [sic!] for the history of the Universe. One of the characters in Dostoevsky's novels utters the unforgettable phrase: if God does not exist, then everything is permitted.⁸

⁶ ‘Ivan believes that if God does not exist, everything is permitted’, J. Smaga, *Wstęp* [in:] F. Dostojewski, *Bracia Karamazow, Powieść w czterech częściach z epilogiem*, vol. 1, pt. 1 and 2, trans. A. Wat, ed. by J. Smaga, Wrocław 1995, p. XLVII.

⁷ G. Przebinda, *Rosyjskie lektury Jana Pawła II. Wojtyła czyta Dostojewskiego i Solżenicyna*. Available at: http://www.rubl.uj.edu.pl/pracownicy/fiszka.php?os=01_przebinda&jed=KKSW&opis=przeb_rzp8&w=1 [access: 24.02.2023].

⁸ Jan Paweł II, *Przemówienie podczas spotkania z przedstawicielami świata nauki i sztuki. Ażeby ziemia nie zamieniła się w pustynię*, p. 3 (26 June 1988, Salzburg, Austria), DZ, vol. 11, pp. 3, 262.

In the same film the pope noted that his words are related not only to Dostoevsky (directly), but also – indirectly – to his native Polish poet, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, and his dialogic long poem *Promethidion*. And while quoting the words of Prince Myshkin from Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, 'Beauty will save the world' ('красота спасет мир', FN, 46:30)⁹, he juxtaposes the phrase with Norwid's sentence, 'Beauty is to enthuse us | for work, and work is to raise us up'.¹⁰ This parallel comes from the address delivered in Salzburg as well:

At the same time, more than one visitor to Salzburg will recall Dostoevsky's words, 'Beauty will save the world'. Beauty is understood here as reflection of attractiveness, God's splendour. In the face of the depressing reality, one should perhaps expand this sentence to read: 'the good, goodness, and love will save the world'. A Christian understands this as God's love revealed in its fullest salvific form through Jesus Christ, and which exhorts everyone to imitate Him.¹¹

Yakzhina reads out the phrase from *The Idiot* juxtaposed with that from *Promethidion* in Russian, and her voice overlaps with the recording of the pope speaking in the Vatican about eugenic practices and abortion: 'these issues cannot be a matter of no concern to me. They must hurt me. They should hurt you, too' (FN, 46:17–46:40). A notion of responsibility for building the civilisation of life, and not that of death, goes hand in hand with recalling Norwid's (and Plato's) triad, consisting of goodness (love), truth, and beauty, and Dostoevsky's phrase about a salvific role of beauty in the history of humankind.

Next to conveying a peaceful message and underscoring the fact that people and nations should obey the Ten Commandments, an emphasis is placed on the following two moral values: compassion and mercy as 'the highest qualities in man'. A few minutes after the passage from John Paul II's speech about erasing God from people's lives, there appears a mushroom-cloud that forms after a nuclear explosion as a sign of the highest military danger for the humanity (FN, 45:40–45:52). The image corresponds to a reflection that in this way, matter takes precedence over spirit. It is also then that Yakzhina, in her role of narrator, recalls the teachings of the pope who

The abbreviation 'DZ' stands for: Jan Paweł II, *Dziela zebrane*, vols. 1–16, Kraków, Wydawnictwo M, 2006–2009.

⁹ For more on this subject see: E. Barilier, *Piękno zbawi świat*, trans. by M. Boutry, "Miesięcznik Znak" 2009, no. 648. Available at: <https://www miesiecznik.znak.com.pl/6482008etienne-barilierpiekno-zbawi-swiat-tlum-malgorzata-boutry/> [accessed: 10.02.2023]; A. Penke, *Piękno Słowa Wcielonego u Fiodora Dostojewskiego*, "Studia Gdańskie" 2007, vol. 21, pp. 101–112; C.M. Martini, *Jakie piękno zbawi świat?*, trans. from the Italian Z. Zwolska, "Ethos" 2000, no. 4, pp. 19–35. Available at: http://dlibra.kul.pl/Content/29548/32928_Martini--Carlo-M----_0000.pdf [accessed: 23.02.2023].

¹⁰ C. Norwid, *Promethidion. Rzecz o dwóch dialogach z epilogiem*, introduction and commentary by A. Zaleski, Warszawa, Czytelnik 1989, p. 70.

¹¹ Jan Paweł II, *Przemówienie podczas spotkania z przedstawicielami świata nauki i sztuki...*, op. cit., p. 261.

says that the essence of humanity is contained in culture. Following John Paul II, she repeats that nowadays peace is in deficit. Peace in the world depends on spirit taking precedence over matter. It is culture, not economy, that rules the world. And therefore it is people involved in culture who bear special responsibility in this regard. Those who discover that they have an exceptional talent, an artistic vocation, take at the same time special responsibility upon themselves.

Another speaker in the film refers to a statement of John Paul II that a battle is being fought between the civilisation of life and the civilisation of death, and every person, as a priority, should choose ethics above technology. In the face of the war has been fought by Russia with Ukraine since 2022, as well as the tragic death of Yakzhina herself (she died due to robbery), this thought becomes strikingly valid and is imbued with additional and deeper meaning.

The film *Fear Not!* is noteworthy also because of its final part, entitled *Pope John Paul II and Russia* (FN, 1:11:11et seqq.). The narrator informs that Tchaikovsky's music is often heard in the Vatican; that John Paul II knew and admired such Russian writers, poets, and philosophers as Aleksandr Pushkin, Vladimir Solovyov, Semyon Frank, Nikolai Berdyaev, Lev Shestov, Mikhail Bulgakov and others. He considered Saints Cyril and Methodius as the apostles of unity who linked the Slavs – the Christians of the Eastern and Western rites (FN, 1:17:46–1:17:59). Yakzhina recalls his encyclical, *The Apostles of the Slavs (Slavorum Apostoli)*, delivered on 2 June 1985 to commemorate a jubilee of their missionary work.¹² The Pope assured that he prayed for Russia every morning (FN 1:19:08–1:19:14), the fact confirmed in the other film, *The Pope Who Did Not Die*, by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz.

What might be considered a controversial topic in *Fear Not!* was an image of John Paul II laying flowers at a tablet commemorating Soviet soldiers (though in this context the pope did not use the word 'Soviet', but 'Russian', underlining in this way the value of each nation) who were killed during the Second World War:

Yet another memorial tablet. A chosen one. We know what nation is meant in the inscription. We are well aware of this nation's contribution to this horrible war, a war fought for the freedom of peoples. (FN, 1:12:40–1:13:40).

Yakzhina explains that, firstly, Karol Wojtyła had witnessed the liberation of Cracow by the Russian army in 1945, and therefore he appreciated the role of Russia in fighting the Germans. Secondly, there was also a personal strand: a Russian young man helped Wojtyła escape the quarry, in which he worked, during bombardment.

¹² *Encyclical epistle Slavorum Apostoli of His Holiness John Paul II: to the bishops, priests and religious families and to all the Christian faithful in commemoration of the eleventh centenary of the evangelizing work of Saints Cyril and Methodius*. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_19850602_slavorum-apostoli.html [accessed 22.02.2023].

Many years later that soldier, having recognised the same Karol in the newly elected pope, wrote to John Paul II. The pope responded immediately. He thanked the soldier for his help and assured him that he prayed for him daily (FN, 1:13:41–1:14:00). And thirdly – let us add – this gesture becomes more comprehensible when seen from an eschatological perspective, taking into account the concern about the salvation of every human being, regardless of religion and a course of life: at this memory site, the pope prayed for every single fallen soldier, anonymous and forgotten. The narrator underscored that Wojtyła had not been brought up in anti-Russian sentiment; on the contrary: he felt deep respect towards Russia, its nation and culture. Although well aware of the crimes committed in the Tsarist Russia, and later in the Soviet Union,¹³ and involved in fighting the Soviet influence in Poland still as cardinal, he denounced the evils of communism but never acted against people. Yakzhina notes his philosophy and practice of engaging in dialogue:

The pope had no doubt that people should find a common language and therefore he had always sought dialogue with the Protestants, Jews, Muslims and Orthodox Christians. As a Slavic pope, he was especially sympathetic towards Russia and Russian culture, and with great hope looked forward to some reaction from this country. (FN, 1:10:40–1:11:09)

The archival footage interweaved by Yakzhina into her films shows encounters of John Paul II with the Russian – both ordinary people (e.g. FN, 1:14:45–1:14:58 et seqq.) and important public figures, e.g. Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin – during their visits in the Vatican (FN, 1:15:45–1:16:42 et seqq.). She reveals a quite funny story about the icon of Our Lady of Kazan and Putin, which attest to a tremendous influence exerted by the alliance of the throne and the altar on the president of Russia, who holds the patriarch of Moscow in very high regard (PWDND, pt. 2, 25:40–28:14).¹⁴ She presents a footage of a direct satellite television connection established between Rome (Vatican) and Moscow on 2 March 2002. The viewers can witness how the Roman Catholic metropolitan bishop of Moscow, Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, invites the Bishop of Rome to come to Moscow:

¹³ For instance, he consecrated the foundation stones of Polish military cemeteries at Katyn and Mednoye. The basic documents related to the construction of the necropolis were signed at Smolensk on 25 March 1995. See *Białe plamy. Czarne plamy. Sprawy trudne w relacjach polsko-rosyjskich (1918–2008)*, A.D. Rotfeld, A.W. Torkunow (Eds.), Warszawa, Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 2011; A. Przewoźnik, subsection: *Proces odkrywania prawdy u upamiętnienie ofiar*, ibidem, pp. 316–317.

¹⁴ K. Chawryło, *Sojusz ołtarza z tronem. Rosyjski Kościół prawosławny a władza w Rosji*, “Prace Ośrodka Studiów Wschodnich” 2015, no. 54.

For his meeting with Putin, John Paul II, took the icon of Our Lady of Kazan. The president of Russia thought the pope would want to present him with the holy picture and he would have had to take it to Russia without being authorised to do so by the Orthodox hierarchs (the patriarch of Moscow in particular). The pope understood his distress and, in order to ease the tension, said: ‘Please, Mr President, I only wanted this icon to be present [at our meeting – D.K.]’, (PWDND, pt. 2, 25:40–28:14).

‘Спасибо, папа! Ждем в Москве. До свидания’ (‘Thank you, Holy Father, we await you in Moscow. Goodbye’). The – then already sickly – pope responded only: ‘До свидания’ (‘Goodbye’) (FN, 1:20:14–1:21:28). One could see that both the archbishop and pope were deeply moved, as both of them were well aware that an actual meeting was – because of the pope’s poor health, and for numerous other reasons, diplomatic, and others – rather impossible.

In the first part of her film trilogy, the director refers to the beginning of Krzysztof Kieślowski’s series, *The Decalogue*,¹⁵ which features a child asking about the sanctity and innocence of the pope. People from John Paul II’s closest circle of acquaintances was asked to speak about him, e.g. Jerzy Kluger, a Jewish-born childhood friend of ‘Lolek’ (as Karol Wojtyła was endearingly called in his youth) and Arturo Mari, his long-time personal photographer. There is also a moving recollection about Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński who, like Karol Wojtyła, also opposed the communist and socialist regime (see e.g.: FN, 54:04–54:10; 55:45). Both films feature the assassination attempt of 12 May 1981, and the pope’s comment on the event is quoted, e.g.: ‘God has sent his angel’, and ‘One hand pulled the trigger, another guided the bullet’ (FN, 1:01:35 et seqq.). Yakzhina notes an extraordinary detail: one of the pilgrims who were greeting John Paul II held in his hand a figurine of Our Lady of Fatima (FN, 1:01:40). The narration is constructed in the way that the viewer is supposed to guess that the ‘presence’ of the Virgin Mary was not accidental. Yet, Yakzhina does not mention that it is Russia that takes prominent place in the Message of Fatima¹⁶; she is also silent about Russia’s possible involvement in the attack. But evidence shows that it was mostly the authorities of the USSR who were involved in the assassination attempt. According to a testimony of the former KGB agent, major Victor Sheymov, Russians had planned to kill the Holy Father as early as 1979:

[...] According to his account, during a meeting held in the Soviet embassy in Warsaw in 1979, he witnessed a conversation of two KGB officers who considered the killing of the pope – an enemy of communism – as necessary.¹⁷

The first part of Yakzhina’s trilogy features also statements of John Paul II that might have alluded to Russia’s imperialist tendencies – be it in the Tsarist or in the Soviet period: ‘Never can one nation thrive at the cost of another’ (PWDND, pt. 1, 19:40–19:45). It is already here that portraits of important personalities living in Russia, including representatives of various religious denominations, who express their very favourable attitude towards the pope, appear. Yakzhina picked up such

¹⁵ *The Decalogue 1*, directed by K. Kieślowski, Poland 1989.

¹⁶ See e.g. J.-F. de Louvencourt, *Rekolekcje fatimskie z Franciszkiem i Hiacyntą*, introduction by bp A. Cosme do Amaral senior bishop of Leiria-Fatima, trans. by A. Kuryś, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo Księży Marianów PROMIC, 2005.

¹⁷ Ziemacki J., *Na celowniku Moskwy*, “Wprost” 2020, no. 8, 23.02.2020, p. 63.

authorities from various social spheres – religious, political and cultural – whose attitude towards John Paul II contradicts the stereotypical treatment of ‘the Roman pope’ by her compatriots. This group includes the Orthodox metropolitan bishop of Moscow, Ioann Sviridov, the chair of the Muftis of Russia, Ravil Gaynutdin, the chief rabbi of Russia, Adolf Shayevich, the director of Rome and the Vatican branch of the ITAR-TASS Russian news agency, Aleksey Bukalov, and many others. They are accompanied by Poles and Italians: the metropolitan archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Moscow Paolo Pezzi, Cardinal Roberto Tucci, Giorgio Telan – a poet who writes about the pope, the already mentioned photographer Arturo Mari; the journalist Gian Franco Svidereschi, and the most authoritative scholar on the Holy Father’s biography, the American George Weigel, among others. The film’s second part features interviews conducted by the director with the above-mentioned people as well as other personalities. Gabriel Turowski, Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz and Krzysztof Zanussi speak about John Paul II’s dream of visiting Russia. Zanussi admits that the Pope loves to listen to accounts about Russia, Siberia in particular, and that he had done everything in his power to meet with Patriarch Aleksey II, and to come to Russia. Zanussi adds that the failure was caused by enmity and lack of understanding of Catholicism, unnecessary prejudices and fears of the Moscow Patriarchate related, for instance, to misconception about the dogma of papal infallibility or alleged proselytising (see PWDND, pt 2, 16:21–19:25).¹⁸ Additionally, Yakzhina pays a visit to Gabriel Turowski, an author of a two-volume, illustrated book entitled, *A Timeline of the Great Pontificate 1978–2005*. He tells her a story about an almost metaphysical occurrence (PWDND, pt. 2, 19:50–21:35). When his wife spoke about Siberia, John Paul II said that he had been there. He explained to the astonished couple that he had travelled in his thoughts to these lands and prayed for deceased locals. Turowski called this ‘a geography of prayer’. A very valuable testimony was given also by archbishop Stanisław Dziwisz. In answer to Yakzhina’s question about why John Paul II never visited Russia, the cardinal said:

The presidents, especially president Gorbachev, persistently invited the Holy Father to visit Russia. And this invitation was accepted. Yet, the Holy Father never visited a country on an invitation of the state authorities only. [...] And he waited for the Orthodox Church, the Church of the majority of the nation, to open up and join in this invitation. He wanted to go to Russia as a pilgrim and visit above all the sites of the martyrdom of the Russian people. He did not accomplish that, and it is a great pity he did not, since, being a Slav himself, he had a deep understanding of the Russian soul and had held Russian culture in high regard. The Holy Father read the Scriptures in Russian. Once he had read the entire

¹⁸ See e.g. J. Mazur SVD, *Wyżebrać ludzi. Opowieść ks. bp. Jerzego Mazura, “W Drodze”* 2002, no. 7, pp. 47–60.

Bible; he read one chapter in Russian every day. He liked the Russian language. He was acquainted with the works of Russian writers; he was also familiar with the theology. [...] He was very well-versed in the history of the Eastern Church, too, and in the martyrdom of the Eastern Church, especially after the Russian Revolution. And he prayed, he did pray every day for the Russian nation and for the Orthodox Church [...] (PWDND, pt. 3, 36:30–39:12).¹⁹

The archbishop discussed also the problem of ecumenism, understood in keeping with the words of Christ himself: *ut unum sint* ('that they may be one'): 'if these Churches keep striving to come closer to Christ, they will be united in Christ'. According to Dziwisz, in order to achieve this goal, a deepened religious life and theological dialogue were needed (PWDND, pt. 3, 39'35–41'07). Then the actor Piotr Adamczyk speaks. He is happy that the film *Karol: A Man Who Became Pope* (2005), in which he played the future pope, toured the entire world, including Russia, and that – thanks to this film – John Paul II actually was able to visit that country, even if, of course, only in the metaphorical sense (FN, 25:01–25:50; PWDND, pt. 3, 25:25).

There is a very moving scene in the film trilogy, presenting a meeting of the Holy Father with the painter Natalia Tsarkova. An Orthodox painter, at that time living in Rome, she spoke about the pope in very lofty terms. Referring to John Paul II's phrase that Catholicism and Orthodoxy are like two lungs, she considered herself to be a bridge joining these two denominations. She painted numerous portraits of John Paul II, which evoke admiration by their beauty, painstaking realisation and a large size (see PWDND, pt. 2, 21:42–25:37). The motif of painting and of portraits of the 'rimsky papa', or 'the Roman pope', appears also in the first film, but there the portraits presented were works done by children from the Polish school in Moscow (see FN, 57:36 et seqq.). These images not only demonstrated the children's fondness of John Paul II, but also showed their perception of the pope as a warm-hearted person with a keen sense of humour (FN, 59'11). A presentation of the pictures is accompanied by the music by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov composed to Aleksandr Pushkin's *Flight of the Bumblebee* from the opera *The Tale of Tsar Saltan* (FN, 57:36 et seqq.). Yakzhina incorporates these pictures into short pieces of footage showing some amusing scenes from the pope's missionary trips.

Yakzhina's films are unique: the journalist had the courage to show her compatriots a phenomenon of the 'rimsky papa', or 'the Roman pope'. The narration in *Fear Not!* has been conducted, for the most part, from the pope's point of view, being based on his writings, or from the perspective of the inquisitive journalist. A few

¹⁹ See also G. Przebinda, *Większa Europa. Papież wobec Rosji i Ukrainy*, Kraków, "Znak", 2001.

themes were further developed in the second film, *The Pope Who Did Not Die*, yet the main difference between them is that in the latter production Yakzhina lets the people she interviewed speak. Most of them witnessed the life and work of John Paul II, were his close acquaintances or are considered to be authorities who hold the bishop of Rome in high regard. Yakzhina has clearly stated that the values that John Paul II professed were sacred principles: God hidden in the Blessed Sacrament, in the God's Word, and abiding in every human being. Wojtyła's personalism consisted in: compassion, responsibility, mercy modelled on the example of the Divine Mercy, abiding by God's commandments and the teachings of the Gospels, bringing and establishing peace, promoting dialogic attitude and internal development. Anti-war, peace-loving and anti-imperialist emphases, exhortations to recognise the existence of God and to respect His Word, as well as asserting the primacy of spirit over matter, of culture over economy – all of these values have assumed a new meaning in the light of the drama of History unfolding currently, almost right before our eyes.

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