

# Bocheński: Science and Faith<sup>1</sup>

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Józef Maria Bocheński, as a logician, tried to cure society of superstitions and, as a priest, he tried to heal the souls of people lost in the world. He died in February of 1995, at the age of 93. As a believer, he bequeathed his earthly remains to the University of Fribourg, so that medical students would not be short of material to study. Needless to say, this part of his will evoked some indignation. In Bocheński's opinion, the clause was merely a reiteration of his strong belief in life after death. We are interested in Bocheński's mortal life as a philosopher. In order to understand who he was and why he thought the way that he did, it is first worth taking a look at Polish philosophy in the 20th century.

## The Lvov-Warsaw School

When talking about Polish intellectual advances, we usually mention Nicolaus Copernicus, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, and Ludwik Hirszfeld. Meanwhile, in the 20th century, Polish scholars contributed to the world of science in the field of philosophy. This contribution is comprised of the achievements of a group of logicians and philosophers known as the Lvov-Warsaw School. It is thanks to this school that in the 20th century Poland became a philosophical power.

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The term “Lvov-Warsaw School” was first used by Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz at a philosophical congress in Paris in 1935. Since then, the achievements of Polish logicians have gained international recognition. No wonder that during the construction of the University of Warsaw Library, when it was decided that statues of four world-famous Polish scholars would be placed by the entrance, philosophers from this school were chosen, namely Kazimierz Twardowski, Alfred Tarski, Jan Łukasiewicz, and Stanisław Leśniewski.

It is difficult to explain how, at the beginning of the 20th century, Poles, who up until then had not had any strong or unique philosophical currents of their own, came to be the founders of a world-famous philosophical school. How much of it was due to the will of God, and how much was coincidence? Keeping in mind, of course, that God does not act directly but through people.

In the case of the school, it all began with Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938), who taught philosophy at Lvov University from 1895 to 1938. One might say that he was lucky to have talented students, as over 30 of them went on to become professors. In 1938, almost 80 scholars were part of the Lvov-Warsaw School. The members of the school differed in their views on many issues, but they shared something that could be called an analytical orientation. Today, the third generation of Twardowski’s students is active in Poland; we refer to them as proponents of analytical philosophy.

This school was not just made up of logicians and philosophers. Twardowski had a broader influence on scholars in many fields. His concepts of science were adopted by physicists such as Zygmunt Zawirski and Czesław Białobrzęski, mathematicians such as Stanisław Jaśkowski and Andrzej Mostowski, literary scholars such as Zygmunt Łempicki and Stanisław Łempicki, sociologists such as Maria Ossowska and Stanisław Ossowski, psychologists such as Władysław Witwicki and Eugeniusz Geblewicz, and lawyers such as Czesław Znamierowski. In short, Twardowski influenced not only philosophy, but the entire Polish intellectual scene. What is more, his influence continues to this day. Several generations of students have already used Tadeusz Kotarbiński’s logic and methodology textbook, Ajdukiewicz’s *Zagadnienia i kierunki filozofii* [Problems and Theories of Philosophy], and Władysław Tatarkiewicz’s *Historia filozofii* [History of Philosophy]. Therefore, it can be said without exaggeration that the works of the philosophers from this school have influenced the very way Polish intellectuals think.

It is worth adding that the views of the members of this school varied on politics and religion, for example:

- Tadeusz Czeżowski was the director in the Ministry of Education in the Second Polish Republic; during the war he hid Jewish people from the Germans;
- Łukasiewicz was the Minister of Education in Ignacy Paderewski's government in the Second Polish Republic;
- Kotarbiński and Ajdukiewicz had views typical of the left-leaning pre-war intelligentsia; in the Polish People's Republic, Kotarbiński was the President of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and Ajdukiewicz was the dean of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań;
- the group of Catholic thinkers within the school consisted of Father Jan Salamucha and Father Bocheński, as well as professors Jan Łukasiewicz, Bolesław Sobociński, and Jan Drewnowski.

Twardowski was not only a scholar but also an outstanding educator; he knew how to teach and how to organize academic life. He began to give lectures when Poland was still partitioned, when Lvov belonged to Galicia, a part of the Austrian empire of the Habsburgs. In 1904 he founded the Polish Philosophical Society in Lvov. In 1911, he also founded *Ruch Filozoficzny* [Philosophical Movement], a journal that exists to this day. He believed that through modern philosophy you could teach people to think properly, that is to say, with precision and without psychologizing. In his opinion, through the modern concept of science, we can and should change the way Polish people think.

What was the distinctive feature of this school? It is hard to say that there are any specific, distinguishing theses. As Bocheński emphasized in his essay *O filozofii analitycznej* [On Analytic Philosophy], the school is rather a shared research perspective, an orientation different from what had been previously encountered in science. The supporters of the school, even though they differed on many issues, believed that in scientific research one should above all follow these four principles or slogans:

- analysis – we are aware that the world is complicated, and so we reject great syntheses and conduct small analyses, which we use to build science;
- language – meaning one should express oneself clearly; philosophy, like any scientific discipline, is not a matter of playing with words or some lite-

rary description of the world; a man of science is someone who can explain his thoughts to others;

- logic – that is, scientific thinking must comply with the laws of logic, which is a type of universal language for every field of thought;
- objectivism – philosophy is to refrain from what is subjective; it is to help in the study of the world, and it is to guard reason; it is not about building an ideology or a vision; philosophy is not a worldview, it is not obliged to resolve moral dilemmas; philosophical analysis is to begin from the analysis of the world, not from the analysis of psychological human experiences.

What are the philosophers of the school famous for today, after several decades? I will list only some of their achievements:

- Łukasiewicz invented the Polish notation known as the Łukasiewicz notation; he also invented many-valued logic;
- Tarski invented a semantic definition of truth; he provided the definitions of logical investigation;
- Ajdukiewicz formulated the classification of reasonings;
- Leśniewski distinguished languages and metalanguages;
- Father Bocheński wrote the first history of logic from the perspective of contemporary logic; he built a logic of religion, proved the consistency of logic and religion, and he formulated the concept of analytical Thomism;
- Father Salamucha conducted a logical proof for the existence of God; he was a proponent of the use of modern logic in studying old questions posed in Christian philosophy, even those posed in the Middle Ages.

Each of these men is respected for what he wrote – clearly their works have stood the test of time. And time is the best judge for distinguishing what is fashionable from what is true and important in science.

## **Bocheński's Path to Faith and Science**

How did Bocheński come to his faith? In his memoirs, he openly states that he was not always deeply religious. Like many young people, he wanted to partake in life. At university, he changed his major several times; he was no stranger to the joys of student life, and he devoted a great deal of time to being active in student associations. He took his time studying because he was looking for his path in

life – for a long time he was searching for an answer to one question: what ought one do in life in order for it to have meaning? Of course, that is a difficult question to work through, and, what is more, it is one that everyone has to answer for themselves. Bocheński's life changed when he met a distinguished Dominican scholar, Father Jacek Woroniecki. He became an authority figure for Bocheński and convinced him that since there was an economic, political, and moral crisis in Europe, one should seek support in what is lasting. And in Europe that was Christianity. At the time, Europe was beset by a global economic depression, crises of democratic governments, and the fashionable ideologies of Bolshevism and Fascism. Bocheński was not convinced by either of these ideologies. As he recalls, he entered the seminary and the Dominican novitiate with weak faith; he was almost an agnostic. It was more of a rational choice than one of faith, after he had grown disheartened by the world. He would come to conscious faith slowly while in the convent.

What was Bocheński's intellectual path like? Thanks to his well-to-do parents, he was able to study whatever he wanted and for as long as he wanted. First, he studied law in Lvov, then economics in Poznań. In 1926, he entered the seminary and a year later the Dominican novitiate in Poznań. He studied philosophy and theology, first in Kraków and Warsaw, then in Fribourg and Rome. He earned his doctorate in philosophy in Switzerland in 1932 and in theology in Rome in 1935; he obtained his habilitation in logic in Kraków at the Jagiellonian University in 1938. Before the war, he taught at the Angelicum in Rome. After the war, he was a professor at the Catholic university in Fribourg and the rector of that university from 1964 to 1966. He published over 100 books, some of which had many translations and circulations of up to a million copies. His most famous books are *A History of Formal Logic*, *Contemporary European Philosophy*, and *The Methods of Contemporary Thought*. It should come as no surprise that he received several honorary doctorates. He was also the first Polish philosopher to have his works published in the prestigious "Biblioteka Klasyków Filozofii" [Library of Philosophical Classics] series during his lifetime.

What is the relationship between faith and reason according to Bocheński, a philosopher who became a world-renowned Catholic scholar, who was not ashamed to appear in his monastic garb at the most important international congresses in order to emphasize that there is no contradiction between science and faith?

For many centuries, faith and science were two spheres of life that developed independently of one another. For a long time, these areas were presumed to be in conflict. The fact that for many decades the Church did not recognize Copernicus's theory often serves as an example of that. It even condemned supporters of that theory, such as the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno. At times, condemnation meant being burnt at the stake. A statue of Giordano Bruno, which we can now see in Rome, in Trastevere, stands at the place of his death. He lost his life because he opposed the contemporaneous view of the world supported by, among others, the Church. Those times are long gone. We have witnessed a change in the attitude of the Church towards science.

### **Bocheński's Thesis**

According to Father Bocheński, when we consider the relationship between faith and reason, it is worth starting with a reflection on the situation of our epoch, on the intellectual climate that surrounds us. Faith concerns God, the world, and the values we are to live by. Our epoch is characterized by haste, change, and the improvement of everything. Meanwhile, for believers, the truths of faith are as important today as they were in the times of Christ. These values are not subject to fashion, they do not need to be replaced or changed in the way that you might need to replace an old fridge. One just needs to understand them in changing times. Undoubtedly, conclusions must be drawn from the fact that nowadays the majority of society is educated, that we live amid new problems and new schools of thought, and that, for example, atheists live among us. However, that only means that the oldest truths of faith must be spoken about in a different language – those old truths must be related to the modern world that we perceive through the prism of science and technology.

In Europe's history, there have been scholars and thinkers that have tried to separate science from classical philosophy and from faith. That was especially the case during the period of so-called radical positivism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. However, it soon turned out that such an attitude leads to the amputation of many problems of the humanities, that one then loses the possibility of metaphysical reflection and is reduced to a human being merely reacting to sociological and biological conditions. Today we know that

the period of naive scientism that was so hostile to religion, popular at the turn of the 19th and the 20th centuries, has passed. Today we know that science does not have all the answers, that most natural scientists reject materialism. An outstanding physicist, the discoverer of the uncertainty principle, Werner Heisenberg, often referred to Plato and Descartes. Bocheński stated outright that there is no conflict between science and faith, and if there are contradictions therein, they result from faults in our minds. The stronger our faith is, the more we should trust science. A true believer has no doubts and does not see any contradictions in the world, because – since the world is logically constructed – we only have problems that we have not yet managed to understand and solve. Going even further, one may say that most philosophers, especially those of the 20th century, are Platonists who admit that there is no possibility for serious reflection on the world without the Absolute, without recognizing that there is an ideal world independent of our minds.

Even Aristotle wrote in *Metaphysics* about the need for theology, that is, a separate science of God. St Thomas Aquinas wrote about the need for *doctrina sacra*. A Polish philosopher from the 19th century, Bronisław Trentowski, postulated a Polish term for theology. He proposed that this field be called *bożyca* (which roughly translates to *godology*), as it teaches about “Bóg” (God). Today, disputes between philosophers regard mainly the nature of God and not his existence. The only known exception, a 20th-century philosopher who denied the existence of God, was Jean-Paul Sartre.

What do I mean by Christian intellectual reflection? Father Bocheński answered this question in the following way: it is not about the fact that the writer is a believer. We can imagine a nonbeliever writing an earnest study on the Bible, on Christ, and on the history of the Church. Hence, it is not about the writer, but about the content of what is written. Reflection is not Christian because it concerns the problems of Christianity. First and foremost, Christian reflection is distinguished by its being developed within the framework of a particular worldview.

Bocheński emphasized that faith has two aspects. On the one hand, faith is a state of mind, an act of accepting certain sentences. On the other hand, faith is what we believe in. And we believe in certain sentences that Catholics call the *credo*. Bocheński thought that most people did not experience God directly – only the disciples of Christ, who knew him, as well as prophets and saints had this experience. The common man rather encounters the word of God through

Scripture. In prayer we address God, but there is no dialogue. We adopt the Christian worldview through an act of will, and it does not need to be justified with methods considered to be scientific, as faith is faith and we do not need to prove its truth. That being said, we can and should understand and analyze what we believe in.

The following sentence is key for Bocheński's approach: "There is no proof for the truths of faith, but I must believe what I believe in." Bocheński never claimed that we come to know God solely through reasoning, without the help of revelation. However, he maintained that rational knowledge about God is possible. One might ask what is so original about that, given that a few centuries earlier the First Vatican Council condemned fideism, emphasizing that one cannot come to know God independently of reason. The thing is that many generations forgot about that decision of the Council, and theology often developed in isolation from logic and the achievements of science.

I believe that Bocheński's contribution was the development of the argumentation for this position of the Council, formulated so long ago. When writing *The Logic of Religion* in 1965, he pointed out the usefulness of formal logic in studying the structure of religious statements. In writing that book, Bocheński took on not the role of a believer but the role of a logician. He often recalled the prologue of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word." Word is *logos* in Greek, which also means sense, reason, and logic, which, according to St John, were of God; therefore, they have God's sanction.

Bocheński studied the problems of religion without any fear of going beyond the bounds of science, as in his research he used modern logic, which embodies the ideal of exactness. Seeing that the world is built logically, the language of logic reflects it best. Hence, philosophical and religious arguments ought to be translated into the language of formal logic. It is then that we can see the validity of the reasoning involved and that we can better understand reality.

Bocheński stresses that there is no proof for the truths of faith; moreover, faith does not need any proof. But we have to know what we believe in. Thus, there is a need for analysis, and, therefore, faith needs reason – that is, logic. Sermons that provide directions on how to live in order to achieve salvation are one thing, analysis of our faith is another. Bocheński devoted a great deal of time to proving the usefulness of modern logic for the humanities. Father Bocheński was convinced, just like Łukasiewicz and Tarski, that, after the work of Bertrand Russell,



we cannot do science as we used to. Philosophy and theology should change as well. Traditional theological problems should be reapproached with the use of new scientific methods. According to Bocheński, that shift did, as a matter of fact, lead to a series of discoveries, for instance Russell's analyses concerning analogy or Tarski's definition of truth. This path was followed by several Polish thinkers before the war, namely by Salamucha, Łukasiewicz, Drewnowski, Sobociński, and Bocheński. They believed that the humanities could not develop independently of modern logic, that no science is above logic. They formed a group of Catholic thinkers within the Lvov-Warsaw School, called the Cracow Circle, and believed that Russell's critical attitude towards religion did not discredit his achievements in the field of logic.

The pro-scientific and pro-logical attitude of the Church was evidenced by Father Bocheński by reference to the works of Albertus Magnus or Girolamo Savonarola, but most often to St Thomas Aquinas, whom he considered to be an example for Catholic intellectuals. St Thomas is not important merely because of what he said but also because of how he said it. The *Summa theologiae* is an example of harmony between faith and science. His works have a solid, logical structure.

Father Bocheński began to propagate the use of logic in theology even before the war, with the publication of *Tradycja myśli katolickiej a ścisłość* [The Tradition of Catholic Thought and Precision]. His last public appearance was a lecture entitled *O współczesnym stanie i zadaniach teologii* [On the Current Status and Aims of Theology], delivered at the Warsaw Theology Academy in 1990, as part of his honorary doctorate award ceremony – a lecture that was later published by the academy.

Bocheński claimed that the new criteria of precision discovered in the 20th century needed to be applied to traditional theological questions. I propose to start with an analysis of classic works, for example, those by St Thomas. The correctness of the premises and the correctness of the reasoning should be examined separately. In the paper *O prostocie Boga* [On the Simplicity of God], Bocheński deals with Aquinas's way of reasoning. This article demonstrates that if we accept St Thomas's premises, his proof of the simplicity of God is valid and the thesis is sound.

As Father Bocheński said, God gave us reason, and, in the 20th century, he gave us the methods of formal logic, both of which were given to us to be used.

Thus, let us not be afraid to analyze the Bible and the catechism from the perspective of logic. Logic is not only for logicians – it is for everyone, just as typewriters, the English language, or computers are for everyone. After Bocheński's death, his life's work, *Logiczne studia na Summą teologiczną św. Tomasza* [Logical Analyses of St Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*], was published in German in 2003. It was the last book published by a representative of the Lvov-Warsaw School belonging to the first generation of Twardowski's students.

Regarding any thesis, the Catholic intellectual should ask two questions: what it means and why. Our faith has to be clear; it cannot be defended with a secret; it has to be defended with the use of logic. In his innovative book *The Logic of Religion*, Father Bocheński claims that if I believe, then I have to understand what I believe in, and I need to be able to communicate and explain my faith to others. A religious person cannot turn away from reason. For a Christian, the world is built logically; it is not chaotic. The world is like an encrypted text. By studying the world, science laboriously discovers and decodes it. That is why one of Father Bocheński's famous sayings is that beyond logic there is only nonsense. Bocheński combined his appreciation for logic with the conviction that, apart from the real world, there is also an ideal one.

Religious people often have certain complexes when discussing logic and faith. These complexes are unjustified. Believers should know that faith contains revealed elements (meaning that a Catholic considers them true because God has revealed them). It is worth mentioning here that, first of all, faith is not a science and it does not need to pretend to be one. Secondly, every science adopts certain concepts without proof, the so-called primitive notions. One might say that for a Catholic sentences given to us through revelation are such primitive concepts. In addition, in faith there are sentences that communicate dogmas, and they act as axioms, as in geometry, for example. We have accepted these dogmas because we believe those who received them to be prophets and saints, whom we consider authorities. Of course, dogmas are accepted only by believers. Theological conceptions, such as Thomism and Scotism, may also be considered axioms. Thus, in theology, in reflection on God, instead of the observation sentences that are found in the natural sciences, we have dogmas formulated by the Church.

According to Bocheński, the formal structure of scientific and religious thinking is similar. The theologian explains the meaning of dogma and organizes it with the use of theological concepts. Instead of observation sentences, he oper-

ates with truths of faith. The sentences that speak of our faith should not be examined with the senses, as in a biology or chemistry lesson, because religion concerns transcendental reality. On the other hand, the sense of religious sentences, their meaning and the consequences that result from them, should be studied. Coming from certain axioms, through reasoning we reach new claims; this is done, for example, by St Paul in his letter to the Corinthians when he uses the resurrection of Christ to prove the resurrection of the dead at the time of the Last Judgement. Thus, it is possible to simultaneously use logic and pose metaphysical and religious questions. The Christian worldview is not scientifically justified because it does not have to be. It contains a synthesis of reality, its evaluation, and answers to existential questions. It is adopted through an act of will. According to Bocheński, for a Catholic, that worldview is justified by a conviction that it orders our world, that without faith the world would be absurd and life would have no meaning.

Father Bocheński enjoyed quoting St Catherine who, as a mystic, experienced God and received a clue from him: think about me, Catherine, and I will think about you. Pray on your knees but do not think about me on your knees! One should pray to God and think about him, but one should think about God properly – following the best methods of logic. This, Bocheński claims, is the attitude of a true Catholic. That is how Christian thought avoids nonsense, unfounded sentences, and heretical statements.

## **The Position of John Paul II**

It was very satisfying for Bocheński when, 10 years after the publication of his book *Między logiką a wiarą* [Between Logic and Faith], Pope John Paul II raised this subject in his encyclical from 1998. It is worth considering how and why there was a change in the attitude of the Church towards science and scientists. It is known that John Paul II met with scholars and that he nullified the document condemning Copernicus's theory. The Pope stated time and again that there is no conflict between faith and science; what is more, this Pope did not want the two to exist apart as independent fields. He postulated treating faith and science as different, complementary ways of pursuing truth. In the first sentence of the encyclical *Fides et ratio* from 1998, he writes: "Faith and reason are like two wings

on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth.”<sup>2</sup> In a word, today a scholar like Copernicus would not have a problem with the Pope.

Now, it is worth asking how the Church treats the relationship between faith and science today, with science understood as a method of seeking truth. It is hard not to remember that during his pilgrimage around Poland, on 8 June 1997, John Paul II, when addressing scholars gathered in Kraków, revealed that during his studies he read and drew upon the works of, among others, Father Professor Jan Salamucha. In fact, Father Salamucha is a somewhat forgotten figure, even though he made important contributions to logic and Christian thought. The figure and the work of Salamucha were evoked by John Paul II not without reason. The reference to Salamucha was very significant, as John Paul II set this philosopher as a role model during his long pontificate. It turned out that he was particularly important to the Holy Father, for it was Salamucha who, before the war, along with Bocheński, Łukasiewicz, Sobociński, Drewnowski, and Konstanty Michalski, formed the Catholic part of the Lvov-Warsaw School called the Cracow Circle. They posed questions important to the Pope and conducted studies in a manner that was exemplary in the eyes of the Holy Father.

As I have mentioned, in the encyclical we repeatedly come across the thesis that there is no conflict between faith and reason. If a believer sees a contradiction here, then he is mistaken, because both faith and reason come from God, writes John Paul II. There is no competition between them; they are two different areas of reflection. The encyclical (para. 4) mentions that in philosophy there are certain permanently present principles, that there is a set of philosophical truths, for example, the principles of noncontradiction, purposefulness, and causality. In my opinion this is a recognition of the rules and categories of thinking, and so of the achievements of logic. The Pope again refers to this view (para. 75) when he reminds us that theology needs criteria of rationality and precision, that that is the guarantor of its results. The encyclical contains not only a general recommendation expressed, for instance, in the approval of the opinion of St Augustine, who wrote that faith does not exist without thinking; there is also practical, concrete advice in the encyclical. The role of logic is noted. And it could not be otherwise. If the Pope sees and recognizes the role of reason and thus the scien-

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<sup>2</sup> John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter “Fides et ratio” of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Relationship between Faith and Reason*, URL: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html).

tific method in theology and philosophy, that must signal the adoption of the best tools available to thought, that is to say, logic. Let us remember that in Latin *ratio* has two meanings: reason, usually associated with science, and calculation, that is, calculus. And the so-called propositional calculus in logic is the codification of possible deductive reasonings. Therefore, the title of the encyclical could be interpreted as faith and the classification of reasonings, forms of justification.

The Holy Father brought up Salamucha not merely as a sentimental recollection of his youth. It was how the Pope told us how to work, philosophize, and how to be a modern humanist. The answer is short: like Salamucha and other like-minded members of the Lvov-Warsaw School. According to the Pope, the philosophers of this school may be considered models for the modern humanities. The members of the Cracow Circle ignored the division of universities into disciplines and institutes; they read Aristotle and contemporary thinkers, they knew Greek and Latin as well as French and English, and they were solving classical philosophical questions formulated in antiquity using formal logic created in the 20th century.

## Conclusion

Using the example of Father Bocheński's writings and one problem, that is, the relationship between faith and reason, I have tried to present what the thinking of the Catholic philosophers of the Lvov-Warsaw School consisted in.

As follows from the analysis carried out by Bocheński, most of the sentences that we consider true in our scientific and everyday lives are not verified by us personally or sensorily. Most often, we adopt them by relying on experts in a given field. For instance, I trust my doctor, and so I consider what he says about my illness to be true. I think so because the doctor and his teachers have studied my illness. However, it cannot be forgotten that in life we encounter other ways of recognizing sentences as true – for example, a child trusts what their mother says and a lover accepts as true what he hears from his beloved. Here, trust does not result from the fact that someone is an expert and follows scientific procedures, but that they are reliable, becoming authoritative figures in our eyes. For example, believers recognize apostles, mystics, and prophets as having authority, and therefore they consider their testimonies valid. On the other hand, verification

of the sentences that are the object of our faith is logical in character, namely we prove that they do not violate the laws of logic.

Regardless of the philosophical considerations of the relationship between science and faith, we know that this is a problem that continues to evoke emotions in everyday life. In 2014, this issue was the subject of public debate in Poland with respect to the conduct of doctors who did not want to perform abortions. It suffices to trace how the content of the oath taken by doctors has changed. We know what the oath was before the war; it was different in the Polish People's Republic, and today it again has a different content. And there are countries where such an oath no longer exists. This is not the result of medical discoveries but a symptom of changes in thinking about man – changes that have occurred before our eyes. One may wonder whether this new outlook on man and life is really justified and sound. Many people probably do not remember that when the Nuremberg trials began in 1946, the first hearing did not concern Nazi dignitaries but doctors who experimented on people and helped kill prisoners. The conduct of those doctors was then considered so contrary to the norms of European civilization that their trials were scheduled first. I am not sure whether today those matters would be thought of as crimes.

There are currently ongoing attempts to redefine life, its beginning and end, in a very different way than it was defined 50 years ago. The laws regarding abortion and euthanasia adopted in many countries are very different, which proves that those changes have taken place under the influence of ideology, not science. It seems that in debates on these fundamental questions there should also be room for the voices and reflections of philosophers who understand the identity of our civilization and ethical issues better than others. The belief that many professions should be governed by something more than market laws and procedures can hardly be considered outmoded. For several generations it was thought that a good artist, scientist, or doctor is someone who can not only follow the procedures specific to their profession, that in these professions it is not enough to be a skilled tradesman, because when working in these areas we also realize a certain system of values.

The figure of a monk is usually associated with someone boring, isolated from life, who spends all his days in a church or library, reading old, dusty books. The figure of Father Bocheński completely contradicts such stereotypes. He was very active throughout his life. He fought in the war against the Bolsheviks in

1920, he enjoyed life as a student, and as a monk he passionately smoked cigarettes, travelled a lot, and always drove fast. When the war was approaching, he wrote a manual for soldiers entitled *De virtuti militari*. In September 1939, instead of sitting quietly in a monastery, he joined the army and fought under General Franciszek Kleeberg. After the invasion of Poland, using his documents as a professor in Rome, he left Poland for Italy. Then he joined the Polish Armed forces in the West. First, he was in Scotland, then he fought in the Polish Second Corps of General Władysław Anders. He received the rank of lieutenant colonel. After the war, following the will of his monastic superiors, he remained in Western Europe. In addition to his philosophical works, he published a lot on Sovietology. He was considered an eminent expert on Marxism-Leninism in the West and the founder of the Fribourg School of Sovietology. Due to these Sovietological achievements, in the Polish People's Republic it was forbidden to print Bocheński's works or even to quote him. The fact that six countries employed him as an advisor on the fight against communism is evidence of the international recognition he received. Thus, he undertook research in several fields. He never gave up his little joys in life. For example, at the age of 70 he obtained a pilot's license in order to fly himself to lectures across Europe, which he continued to give even after he was 90 years old.

I have tried to show that Father Bocheński and his thought are evidence that philosophy poses interesting questions, that one can be a monk and live with passion, that a Catholic philosopher can lead an interesting and active life, that by serving God with one's intellect, one may remain close to the most important matters of this world, and that we need philosophy.

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