

The financial management of the Catholic Church in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Poland, including the actions of a Polish Redemptorist from Toruń.

Klisiński Janusz

Abstract

The financial management of the Catholic Church in the Federal Republic of Germany is based on two pillars - taxation of the faithful, and state subsidies for public activities of the church. Catholic economic immigrants are also taxed. The German state cares for the Catholic Church. Which is why, neither the secularization of society nor the coronavirus crisis can disturb the finances of the church in Germany. The faithful of the Catholic Church in Poland can be generous as well but the vast majority of the finances of the church is based on their voluntary donations. That is why the Catholic Church in Poland is poor, and a reform similar to the German one is needed. The finances of the Catholic Church in Poland are based on voluntary donations of the faithful which is not conducive to the inflow of subsidies from the government. Such subsidies are mainly delivered to church environments which may influence the election results through their own Catholic media. A great example is the generous donation given by the government to the Redemptorists from Toruń grouped around Radio Maryja, Trwam TV, and Nasz Dziennik. The Catholic Church in Poland also requires greater financial transparency.

Keywords: immigrants, finance, catholic church

Introduction

Over the past 27 years, the number of Catholics in Germany has decreased by 18%. More than half of Germans are Christians, including Roman Catholics, accounting for 28%, i.e. 23 million. The greatest number of Catholics is in the federal state of Saar (63%), Bavaria (55%) and Rhineland-Palatinate (45%). The eastern federal states are occupied by people for whom god is not the most important thing in life. The Polish Catholic Church is poor compared to the German one. However, this assessment does not apply to the finances of the Polish Redemptorist from Toruń. Germany constantly accepts foreigners. Over a million annually, on average. The average duration of a foreigner's stay in Germany is 15 years. Foreigners come to work mainly from Europe. Most often they are Christians. In Germany, the faithful pay taxes for the church, as approved and instigated by the state. The German state urges people to pay for the church. Poland does not accept the influx of immigrants, with the exception of economic emigrants from eastern Europe, mainly from Ukraine. The finances of the Catholic Church in Poland are based on voluntary donations of the faithful, and the government does not pay regular donations to the church for the public services it provides.

1. The role of foreigners in the German economy

Today, there are 21 million foreigners in Germany, 11 million of whom already have German citizenship. In rich regions, the share of foreigners exceeds 40%. For Germany, an economic immigrant is considered to be a guest worker. Germany hosts foreign workers because the state needs them to perform heavy work in industry, mining, construction and agriculture, as well as in services. When an economic migrant reaches retirement age, he or she is encouraged to return to the homeland. Without foreigners, there would be no strong German economy. Today, there are over 1/3 foreigners in Bremen, Berlin or Hamburg. Foreign workers are 12 years younger than Germans, on average. The average duration of an economic foreigner's stay in Germany is 15 years. Romanian labour migrants stay in Germany for a relatively short time, 5 years on average, and immigrants from Turkey stay the longest, 30 years on average. The migration of economic immigrants is an example of a generational replacement. Older people leave and younger people come. Recently, 1 million guest workers have been leaving Germany and returning to their home countries. Germany also cares about its national interests, and grants German citizenship to selected foreign workers, if such is request. This is a group of 300,000 people per year. After 1990, German citizenship was obtained by almost 5 million economic immigrants. Every fourth inhabitant of Germany has foreign roots. The German state could not take good care of the finance of the Catholic Church without taxing economic immigrants who work in their country. [1]

2. Finance of the Catholic Church in Germany

A working Catholic pays taxes in Germany:

- "income tax" - usually 8% or 9% is charged,
- "property tax" - on average, 10% of the value (Grundsteuer),
- "General Church tax (allgemeines Kirchgeld) if earnings are above 8,820 Euro (not in all dioceses).
- "Special Church Tax" (besonders Kirchgeld). It is paid by persons who are not members of the Catholic Church, but who settle accounts jointly with the spouse who belongs to the religious community.

Tax receipts for the Catholic Church amount to 20 billion Euro. What is more, the state allocates approximately EUR 45 billion each year to Caritas and Diakon. A great deal of government subsidies is directed to Catholic kindergartens, care for the elderly, church schools and universities, monument conservation, etc. - tasks that the Catholic Church performs on behalf of the state. The state also pays money for church foundations, humanitarian actions, etc. Apart from the state, the federal states also

pay for the church. Part of the church income is not subject to taxation, it is excluded from taxation, and it is also a tribute to the German Catholic Church. The non-taxable sources of funding are:

- Contributions from the use of church institutions, e.g. kindergartens,
- Private income, e.g. real estate income,
- Contributions from communities of the faithful,
- Donations and collections,
- Fees for weddings, funerals, etc.,
- Statutory tax exemptions.

This secular German state needs the church. The expenses account for 15% for maintenance costs, 10% for buildings, 2% for cemeteries. On average, a parish priest earns 4,000 Euro gross, i.e. net 2800 Euro per month. What is more, he is given a free apartment, which is approx. 800 Euro a month, the full cost of reimbursement of journeys, and 50 up to 75% of the housekeeper's costs. Although priests live alone, they get a family allowance of EUR 130 per month. What is more, they are entitled to a paid monthly leave and a holiday pay of 5,000 Euro (Weihnachts geld). There are 12,500 parishes and parish priests. The hourly wage of the parish priest is 24.5 Euro. There are significant differences in earnings between parishes. In the most profitable ones, parish priests earn up to € 5,700 a month. Bishops are rewarded according to four classes. Their basic salary is from 9,000 up to 12,000 Euro monthly plus driver and extras. The archbishop of Munich has the highest salary - 12,000 Euro without extras. The Archbishop of Bamberg gets 10,600 Euro. The wealth of Christian churches in Germany is significant. Money and stocks are EUR 150 billion, real estate without church buildings is EUR 202 billion, foundations and other assets are EUR 65 billion. Together, this amounts to EUR 435 billion, excluding church buildings. The Catholic Church has 825,000 hectares of land, and the value of the various categories of land is as follows:

- Forests - 383.7 million Euro
- Forest and agricultural management - 6.3 billion Euro
- Rural construction land - 47.3 billion Euro
- Urban construction land - 120.5 billion Euro

Their value is estimated at 174.5 billion Euro.

The diocesan church owns the following properties:

35,350 churches - 44.2 billion Euro

30,500 presbyteries - 7.8 billion Euro

22,000 parish homes - 5.7 billion Euro

23,000 schools, kindergartens, nursing homes, hospitals and bookstores - 8.5 billion Euro

41,000 academies, meetinghouses, administrative and residential buildings, business facilities - 42 billion Euro.

Together, this amounts to 108.1 billion Euro, excluding church buildings.

Other properties:

3590 presbyteries - 4.9 billion Euro

109,500 presbyteries - 14.7 billion Euro

Charity - 62.2 billion Euro

The richest are the archdioceses of Munich and Freising - 5.9 billion Euro, the archbishopric of Paderborn - 4.1 billion Euro, and the archbishopric of Cologne - 3.4 billion Euro. The Church sells its real estate constantly, in quite large quantities, to be specific. [2][3][4]

3. Finance of the Catholic Church in Poland

In Poland, approximately 40% of the faithful attend the church and this is the highest rate in Europe after Malta. 87% of Poland's inhabitants are baptized in the Roman Catholic rite. The religiosity and catholicity of the Polish people is also manifested in religious movements and communities. Catholic lay groups undertake many initiatives integrating this environment and shaping their faith. However, the Catholic Church in Poland is poor compared to the German one. The financial system for the Church in Poland is based on voluntary donations of the faithful. They are provided as offerings during mass intentions, sacraments and sacramentals, or on the occasion of a pastoral visit (carols). Also, frequent special contributions made in parishes for the benefit of people in need, sick or experiencing various disasters and cataclysms, charity institutions and the maintenance of Catholic universities are also opportunities for donations. The income earned on this account amounts to 1.3 billion PLN per year. The budget subsidy awarded annually to the Catholic Church in Poland amounts to 1.9 billion PLN. These include tributes to Catholic universities, secondary schools, kindergartens, nurseries and military chaplains. In addition, the Catholic Church in Poland receives subsidies from the European Union in the amount of 1 billion PLN per year. The income of the Catholic Church is also the benefits of exempting church legal entities from tax collection in connection with the conducted economic activity. The amount of this yield is estimated at 3 billion PLN annually. On the other hand, 1% of income tax deductions made by the faithful for the benefit of church public benefit institutions amount to 350 million per year. 145 million PLN from the property commission annually affects the Church Fund. On the other hand, the lost tax benefits from the state to the Catholic Church amount to 5 billion PLN annually. Together, this amounts to 12.7 billion PLN. The legal basis for benefits for the Catholic Church is the Act of May 17, 1989 on the relationship between the State and the Catholic Church in the Republic of Poland [5]

The parish priest's salary ranges from the minimum wage to 6,500 PLN in the Warsaw parish. If the parish is in financial difficulties, some of the income from the "iura stolae" (baptisms, weddings and funerals) is also allocated to its needs, which should traditionally be treated as the salary for the clergy.

When it comes to "Christmas carols", from 10 to 50% of it is given to the parish fund. The income of the parish is 20,000 PLN per month. This is less than the average amount for one priest in Germany. The state's financial contribution for the Church in the field of works carried out for the benefit of society is much lower than the European average. Whereas, the support that the Church provides to the state, relieving it of various social, educational and cultural tasks, can be estimated at many billion PLN annually. The property of the church in Poland consists of 160,000 hectares of land, 1,240 kindergartens and primary schools, 417 secondary schools, 69 colleges and universities, 33 hospitals, 244 outpatient clinics, 267 retirement homes and nursing homes, 538 orphanages, 1,820 family clinics, 1,462 special educational centres, and 287 other charitable or educational institutions, 120 Catholic publishing houses, 300 newspaper and magazine titles, 50 radio stations and 17,533 Catholic temples. Only few parishes get additional revenues, e.g. from land lease, business activities and various subsidies (e.g. EU). The balancing of expenses for the maintenance of parish infrastructure (electricity, gas, food, repairs, salaries for employees) with simultaneous tax liabilities and donations for various intra-church services (fees for the curia and designated nationwide goals) create some serious challenges for parish communities. The analysis of budgets of church institutions shows that - apart from a few exceptions - they are rarely balanced when it comes to covering current activities, and finding funds for investment activities or more broadly understood development is a growing problem. The reduced donations of the faithful, as a result of coronavirus or a lesser degree of religious practices, may result in an economic failure of the current system of financing the church. Ways of church reform are required and sought for. The financial management of the Catholic Church in Germany could be an example to follow for the Catholic Church in Poland.[5][6]

4. Finances of the Redemptorist - priest Tadeusz Rydzyk from Toruń

The rulers in Poland have showed their generosity by giving donations from various sources to the redemptorist from Toruń, a powerful media tycoon, largely influencing the votes of the Catholics. Tadeusz Rydzyk is a Polish clergyman, a redemptorist, doctor of theological sciences, university teacher. Founder and director of the Radio Maryja station and Trwam TV, co-founder and president of the board of the Lux Veritatis Foundation, founder and former rector of the Higher School of Social and Media Culture in Toruń where he is the chairman of the Scientific Council and a lecturer. In 1987–1991, he stayed in Germany, where he learnt about the financial management system of the Catholic Church in that country. Initially, he stayed in Nuremberg and then worked as a chaplain in the nunnery of St. Oberstaufen. During his stay in the Augsburg diocese, he established cooperation with the local radio station - Radio Maria International - in Balderschwang, in which he got acquainted with the functioning of the media with religious activities in its message.[7] [8]

In 1991, after returning to Poland, he settled in a Redemptorist monastery in Toruń. In the same year, he founded Radio Maryja. During several years of his media activity, he also initiated the creation of mass media such as the daily newspaper "Nasz Dziennik" or Trwam TV. In 1998, he established the Lux Veritatis Foundation, in which he is the President of the Management Board. On 14 August 2001, he founded a non-state higher vocational school - the Higher School of Social and Media Culture in Toruń. He organizes fundraisers in Poland and abroad to ensure that a number of his initiatives related not only to the creation of Catholic mass media is well-financed. He also receives significant funds from public institutions on behalf of the Polish state. During the last 5 years of the rule of the united right wing, 217 million PLN has already been transferred to foundations, companies and other investments of the Toruń Redemptorist. Only in 2020, foundations related to Tadeusz Rydzyk and companies obtained a total of 903.200 PLN in subsidies from the Guaranteed Employee Benefits Fund. Benefits were granted under the so-called anti-crisis shields given during the coronavirus pandemic in Poland. At the same time, the John Paul II "Memory and Identity" Museum in Toruń received 60 million PLN from the state budget for one of the exhibitions that year. And what funds were transferred in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 to the Lux Veritatis Foundation, Termy Toruńskie Health Resort, Geotermia Toruń, Nasza Przyszłość Foundation and Nasza Przyszłość Company? In the period from 1 January 2016 to 25 September 2020, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister transferred grants as part of the reserve funds to the Lux Veritatis Foundation. The total amount of subsidies provided was 8 million PLN. The entire amount was allocated to the National Remembrance Park in Toruń, which was opened in August 2020. Its construction cost nearly 18 million PLN. In the National Remembrance Park there are 16,000 names of Poles who saved Jews from death during World War II inscribed on a hundred-three-meter-high pedestals set in a granite avenue, forming the outline of Poland. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided considerable funds as well. In total, in the years 2016-2020, the Lux Veritatis Foundation received nearly 724,000 PLN of subsidy. Most in 2016 - 416,000 PLN. 200,000 PLN of which was given for the implementation of the task: "Cooperation in the field of public diplomacy. A competition called "For the memory of them to last". 216,000 PLN was given in the competition: "Public Diplomacy 2017. Memory and Identity Project - International Information Center. In 2019, the Lux Veritatis Foundation received 96,000 PLN from the Ministry of National Defense. PLN for "Maintaining and popularizing the national tradition, cultivating Polishness and developing national, civic and cultural awareness under the name: "Grateful to Heroes - Indomitable Soldiers". In turn, 200,000 PLN this year for the implementation of public tasks in the form of support in the field of: "Maintaining and disseminating the national tradition, cultivating Polishness and the development of national, civic and cultural awareness - "Grateful to Heroes - Warsaw Insurgents". The Ministry of Agriculture also subsidized the activities of the Lux Veritatis Foundation. Four times over the last 4 years. This included: 50,000 PLN gross for the broadcast of a TV spot; 54,000 PLN gross for the broadcast of another spot;

70,000 PLN gross for an information campaign; 50,000 PLN gross for an information and educational campaign called Polish Product. In 2017, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education donated 118,000 PLN to the Lux Veritatis Foundation as part of the "Science Popularizing Activities". In turn, the former Ministry of the Environment (now the Ministry of Climate) donated 313,000 PLN to the Lux Veritatis Foundation for the implementation of a program entitled "Something is in the air". - As part of the project, 9 educational TV programs were produced and broadcast. The funds were also provided by a relatively new ministry - the Ministry of Funds and Regional Policy (established on 15 November 2019). For promotional activities of Father Rydzyk's foundation, 135,000 PLN. Not much less was given by the Ministry of Digitization. In 2020, it was 78,000 PLN for a service consisting in broadcasting a spot for the "e-Pole can do it" campaign from 8 to 29 February 2020 on Trwam TV. Whereas, the Ministry of National Education provided a subsidy to the "Nasza Przyszłość" foundation in the amount of 7,000 PLN in 2018 under the multi-annual program called "Niepodległa". The Ministry of Culture has been the most generous of all the ministries. The Ministry of Culture allocated a record-breaking subsidy for the construction of the Museum of Remembrance and Identity of John Paul II in Toruń. A total of 120 million PLN. The Lux Veritatis foundation is responsible for the investment. The Justice Fund, supervised by the Ministry of Justice, is also generous - it awarded the Lux Veritatis Foundation 6 million PLN for two campaigns - about historical truth and safety in the family - in 2020 only. What is more, 7.1 million PLN was given for the "Center for Protection of Christian Rights" project. The money comes from the Program for Counteracting the Causes of Crime for 2019-2023. [8][9]

Each of the subsequent investments of the Redemptorists from Toruń was supported by multi-million subsidies from the state budget.

Conclusions

The financial management of the Catholic Church in Germany can be an example to follow. The Catholic Church in Poland should live off obligatory taxes from the faithful and subsidies from the state budget, just as the church in Germany. It should be more transparent. If the Polish church would be more transparent, we would see its poverty. Dioceses in Poland should publish annual balance sheets to ensure financial transparency. The rulers should openly pay subsidies to the Catholic Church for the public services it provides, the same way as they pay subsidies to local government units. In turn, money and material property should be managed by secular parish councils. Such foundations of a true community of the faithful were formed by the Redemptorist community centred around Father Tadeusz Rydzyk in Toruń. The material situation of Polish parishes is becoming more and more difficult, and it will not improve in the face of the prolonged economic crisis. Meanwhile, the financial condition of the Church in Poland depends on the material condition of individual parishes. This is because the income from the

parish serves to maintain the entire church structure and various social, educational and charitable activities carried out by the Church.

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Note about Author: Associate Professor Janusz Klisiński, University of Bielsko-Biala, Department of Marketing and Entrepreneurship. (Bielsko-Biala, Poland) jkulisinski@ath.bielsko.pl