

SUMMARY

The subject of this dissertation was the life and preaching of F.J. Sheen in "The Catholic Hour" radio programmes in the context of the teaching of the Catholic Church. For a good understanding of F.J. Sheen, his life was presented in the context of the era. The paper presents the social teaching of the Catholic Church at the time, and points out that this teaching did not begin with the emergence of Catholic social teaching as a theological discipline in the nineteenth century, but was always present, beginning with the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The American preacher was concerned about people and pointed out their dignity, which stems from the creation of man in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:27). He made his listeners aware of the need to build a true and lasting relationship with God and pointed to the need to care for the sacramental life. F.J. Sheen was an expert in the human soul and he could point to the deepest desires of human hearts, show the need to shape character, the role of work and formulate a "Catholic philosophy of life". He was firmly committed to marriage and the family, demonstrating the value of marriage and having children. He gave his listeners advice on what to do to make a marriage last and how to bring up children so that they develop holistically.

The great merit of F.J. Sheen was to speak about Christian values in a way that American society could understand. He brilliantly referred to the origins of the United States of America and the freedom aspirations of the Founding Fathers. He made his listeners aware that freedom presupposes dependence on God and his unchanging laws that he has given to every human being. He was able to combine American patriotism with Christian values. In this context, he explained that caring for the presence of Christian values in people's lives is caring for homeland. During the ongoing Second World War, he brought hope to his listeners, prayed and called for prayers for the imminent end of the war. He explained to his listeners what the origins of war are and when war is just. He explained why God is not to blame for war and why he himself will not stop it.

Much of F.J. Sheen's time was devoted to exposing the false ideologies of the 20th century, with particular emphasis on communism. He knew Marxist philosophy better than many communists. He made his listeners aware of how communism was created and what its philosophy was. He was not afraid to make a negative assessment of this ideology, because it threatened the dignity of man and the family and did not include reference to God. When discussing the prevailing ideologies, he did not limit his radio broadcasts only to the content

concerning communism, but he also presented the assumptions and consequences of two older ideologies: liberalism and capitalism.

The radio preaching of F.J. Sheen faithfully presented the teaching of the Church at that time. There were no heresies or unconsidered contents in his radio programmes. In his teaching he used the sources of the Bible, official Church teaching, liturgy and literature. The originality of his teaching consisted mainly in adapting his preaching to the context of preaching, i.e. to listeners living in the United States of America.

F.J. Sheen was a precise and insightful observer of the changes taking place. Thanks to that, he noticed errors in the emerging science that was psychoanalysis. Showing its errors, he made his listeners realise that Catholics did not need to use it because the sacrament of penance and reconciliation was much more effective. He did not deny all psychology, but Freud's psychoanalysis.

Evaluating the preaching of F.J. Sheen from the formal point of view it should be stated that he used the classical model of composition consisting of introduction, development and conclusion. Moreover, he gave a theme to each of his speeches. When delivering his broadcasts, he adapted the arguments to his listeners and used many classical ways of argumentation. The language of his preaching was understandable, although the issues were often not easy. The American preacher embellished the language of preaching by using many rhetorical figures that influenced imagery, dialogue, communicativeness, and those that expressed emotionality.

The presented contents of the radio programmes reflect the Catholic teaching of the past century addressed to Americans living in the first half of the 20th century. They contain universal values that are worth recommending to the contemporary reader. The most important message to come out of F.J. Sheen's teachings is a concern for the primacy of God and spiritual values in life, as well as a concern for marriage and family. This is the best way to defend ourselves against false ideologies that try to enslave people and rob them of their values.

This dissertation brings closer the figure of the American preacher because it focuses on more than twenty years of preaching, which reached hundreds of thousands of listeners. The analysis proves what a great personality F.J. Sheen was and how, thanks to his education and titanic work, he was able to faithfully convey the social teaching of the Catholic Church to his listeners.

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Ks. David Samol