

According to distinctive sociologists such as Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, and a philosopher Michel Foucault monasteries may be understood as a source of modernity in terms social organization and economy. If modernity had been conceived in monasteries, what kind of new epoch is being worked out there today? Studies show that decreasing influence of religion goes hand in hand with increased social interest in monasteries and their “products” (cooking courses, sightseeing or offers of “spiritual spa”) (Jonveaux, Pace, Palmisano 2014). Moreover, crisis of recruitment goes hand in hand with – how Jonveaux, Pace and Palmisano call it – “period of innovation and experiments accompanied by unexpected popularity, as is evidenced by numerous films and publications [...] and monastic tourism” (ibidem). Hence, in secularized societies monasteries not simply disappear but rather transform.

The proposed project touches upon a vital contemporary issue, which is changing place of religion in society and influence of society on religion. The novelty of my approach lies in focusing on inner processes that take place in monasteries – I will seek to comprehend inner transformations of monasteries (social, cultural and economic) treated as symptoms of broader changes of religion in society. Hence, in contrast to proliferated studies on religion within the proposed project I will not scrutiny religiosity but I will focus on inner transformations of these crucial religion institutions and their inhabitants.

Empirically speaking, the proposed project (based on qualitative approach) will provide new, unavailable information on inner organizations of monasteries and their shifts, and influence of societal and cultural process on monasteries. Theoretically speaking, it will allow comprehending contemporary transformations of religion in society taking as a point of reference monasteries.