

Among the big questions in life there are: what is the meaning of life and death?; what is the meaning and purpose of interpersonal relationships such as marriage?; can we discern in the natural and human world signs of the divine?; How does tradition inform and develop Christian identity? These questions and their answers are shaped by the tradition of the community, which raises these questions, and this tradition in turn shapes the identity of individual persons and their communities. In a multicultural and globalizing world the role of traditions in forming individual and communal identities becomes all the more important. At the same time the need is felt to engage one's tradition and identity with the demands of a rapidly changing world.

How did a medieval thinker, such as Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), deeply shaped by a rich variety of philosophical and theological traditions, engage these questions? How was he himself shaped by the tradition in which he was formed and in what way did he engage, on the basis of his tradition shaped identity, with new developments? Is it possible that readers of his work in the 21st century, despite the obvious societal differences, can learn something from him with regard to his answers to these big questions?

In order to investigate these questions we will study three sets of hitherto neglected texts of Aquinas regarding these big questions in chronological order. We will identify the sources Aquinas uses, analyze the arguments he draws from these sources and comparing the results with these three sets of texts. In doing so we will be able to discern if and how Aquinas develops his thought throughout his career. Having obtained these results we will confront them with contemporary philosophical and theological approaches in order to discern differences and similarities between them.

The specific outcome of the grant will not only be the creation of comprehensive sources of information which will be of great interest for international Thomistic scholars, showing how Thomas works with sources and how cites them (although not always directly but using paraphrases), but also the development of tools, both in terms of content and in terms of hermeneutics, for contemporary attempts in resolving the same philosophical and theological dilemmas. The results will be presented in a monograph which will research the and argumentative strategy of Aquinas based on *auctoritas* (tradition) from multiple perspectives. In the course of the project the first Polish translation (with the critical apparatus) of Aquinas's Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians will be prepared. This text perfectly reflects the manner of using sources by Thomas and the content of the Epistle itself refers to the building of identity: early Christianity was faced with the interpretation of its Judaic roots, on the foundation of which an new awareness of a specific Christian identity was built.

The novelty of the project lies in combining an historical and systematical approach to a series of medieval texts which have been overlooked so far from a variety of perspectives (exegesis, patristics, history, philosophy) in order to ascertain its contemporary relevance for society.