

## WHEN THE RELATIONSHIP BREAKS: THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE PROCESS OF COPING WITH DIVORCE

Divorce represents a frequent and common phenomenon in modern society. The number of partners who wish to divorce is either on the rise or on a constant high. Recent demographic data on marriages and divorces in the European Union shows that the number of marriages per 1000 residents decreased in the few last decades, while the number of divorces increased<sup>1</sup>. The number of couples who separate is certainly higher especially if we take into consideration that those who are not married or registered in civil unions are not included in the official statistical analyses.

### 1. The stressfulness of divorce

The dissolution of a serious relationship or marriage is one of the most stressful life events which can happen to an individual. According to some studies it ranks second or third place in the measure of the strain of stress, sometimes even higher than the death of a close family member or being imprisoned<sup>2</sup>. Many experts rank divorce as the second most traumatic life event that can occur (after the death of a child or parent)<sup>3</sup>. Experiencing circumstances accompanying a divorce is connected with an increased risk of one's lower psychological wellbeing and development

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat. *Marriage and divorce statistics*. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Marriage\\_and\\_divorce\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Marriage_and_divorce_statistics) (15.02.2015).

<sup>2</sup> T. Tasiro, P. Frazier, M. Berman, *Stress-related growth following divorce and relationship dissolution*, in: M. A. Fine, J. H. Harvey (eds.), *Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution*, New York 2006, Routledge, p. 361-384.

<sup>3</sup> H. Koenig, D. King, V. B. Carson, V. B., *Handbook of religion and health*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford 2012, Oxford University press, p. 257.

of various pathologies, including higher levels of depression, anxiety and substance abuse<sup>4</sup>.

Divorce is a complex situation that throws individuals out of their stable ways of operation and can influence their functionality. It can be viewed upon as a process that leaves its impact on both the social and economic-financial levels, while at the same time it causes internal, mental or psychological processes that can be detected in the experience of an individual, couple, child or whole family<sup>5</sup>. All these areas are interconnected, and complications in one area usually cause hard-to-solve problems in the others. Divorce has emotional, behavioural, social, physical and spiritual consequences<sup>6</sup>.

In most cases, divorce is a process that takes time. It is not simply a one-time event or a decision<sup>7</sup>. Numerous experts and researchers agree that the process of divorce has several phases and lasts approximately 36 months, although deviation is possible. In general, we separate the process of divorce into various phases. There are at least six phases: recognizing the collapse of the relationship or marriage, the decision to divorce or separate, preparation and planning of the break-up, the actual physical divorce, the legal and formal process, and the phase of establishing a family after the divorce<sup>8</sup>. All six phases of the family transformation can be addressed separately however they do frequently overlap in practice. While they do not necessarily take place in a certain order, there are often deviations and tranquil periods during the process. Sometimes there are even attempts at reviving the relationship. Transformation comes gradually and it is of a cyclical nature<sup>9</sup>. Specific challenges, with which family members must cope, mark every period.

Divorce is a tremendous challenge even for the most functional of individuals. They feel an overall loss; they have lost a partner, friends, their identity as a married person, family, and home. The loss endured during divorce can be compared with widowhood, just that the individuals do not mourn only their partner, but also lost dreams, expectations and the conviction upon which they had based their life<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> P. R. Amato, *The consequences of divorce for adults and children*, "Journal of Marriage and the Family" (2000) 62, p. 1269–1287.

<sup>5</sup> S. Margulies, *Working with divorcing spouses*, New York 2007, The Guilford Press, p. 3-5.

<sup>6</sup> B. Simonič, *Coping with divorce and relational family therapy*, "Family Forum" (2015) 4, p. 203-222.

<sup>7</sup> D. Ball, W. Hiebert, *Four predivorce marital typologies that aid clinical assessment*, in: C. A. Everett, R. E. Lee (eds.), *When marriages fail*, New York 2006, The Haworth Press, pp. 71-84.

<sup>8</sup> M. Robinson, *Family transformation through divorce and remarriage*. A systemic approach, London 1991, Routledge, p. 63-69.

<sup>9</sup> A. Carr, *Family Therapy: Concepts, Process and Practice*, Chichester 2000, John Wiley & Sons, p. 28-34.

<sup>10</sup> M. McGoldrick, *You can go home again*, New York 1995, Norton, p. 127.

Every loss requires adaptation. Adaptation to loss involves going through the process of mourning, during which the individual faces the reality of their loss and experiences all the painful feelings that emerge thereof. Several phases, marked by specific emotions and reactions, are traceable in the process of mourning. Many experience the feeling of being stuck in a single emotional state (which, following divorce, usually involves one of three major affective states: love, anger, and sadness)<sup>11</sup>. It is important that all these feelings come to light and are evaluated; this is how loss becomes integrated into everyday life. When this process does not happen, the individual cannot move on, and then dysfunctional symptomatic behaviour often develops, such as addiction, depression, anxiety etc.<sup>12</sup>. Adaptation to loss can be assumed to be as complete as possible “when individuals can acknowledge that they are saddened by the loss of their marriage, and that they are angered by all that has happened, and yet they can also experience some warm memories about the past and regrets about what might have been in the future”<sup>13</sup>. Functional adaptation to loss means to find a way that enables acceptance and integration of the loss into life, and then being able to move on.

Divorce induces numerous consequences for the partners, children and extended family. Furthermore, the consequences usually continue long after settlement of all the respective legal aspects of divorce. As such, divorce or separation is one of the more stressful and psychically exhausting challenges one can experience<sup>14</sup>, although some studies show it is also possible for divorce to relate to beneficial changes and personal growth<sup>15</sup>. Divorce reaches into the usual daily activities of a person and her or his daily lifestyle, shattering any or all expectations<sup>16</sup>. It is an event that causes true crisis, because the individual experiences it as a loss that threatens her or his integrity and feeling of security. One of the main psychical tasks for the family in the face of divorce is to overcome the way they have seen and developed themselves as a family up until then. This means that they have to change the beliefs they cultivate relating to family or family

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<sup>11</sup> D. A. Sbarra, R. E. Emery, *In the presence of grief: the role of cognitive-emotional adaptation in contemporary divorce mediation*, in: M. A. Fine, J. H. Harvey (eds.), *Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution*, New York 2006, Routledge, p. 553-574.

<sup>12</sup> B. Simonič, *Coping with divorce and relational family therapy*, “Family Forum” (2015) 4, p. 203-222.

<sup>13</sup> D. A. Sbarra, R. E. Emery, *In the presence of grief: the role of cognitive-emotional adaptation in contemporary divorce mediation*, in: M. A. Fine, J. H. Harvey (eds.), *Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution*, New York 2006, Routledge, p. 553-574.

<sup>14</sup> C. M. Lee, M. Picard, M. D. Blain, *A methodological and substantive review of intervention outcome studies for families undergoing divorce*, “Journal of Family Psychology” 8 (1994) 1, p. 3-15.

<sup>15</sup> P. R. Amato, *The consequences of divorce for adults and children*, “Journal of Marriage and the Family” 62 (2000) 4, p. 1269-1287; J. E. Veevers, *Traumas versus stress - A paradigm of positive versus negative divorce outcomes*, “Journal of Divorce & Remarriage” 15 (1991) 1-2, p. 99-126.

<sup>16</sup> M. McGoldrick, *You can go home again*, New York 1995, Norton, p. 127.

identity. Such a change can demand a reorganization of family attachment patterns, which have to be in a form that still ensures affiliation, despite of a different nature<sup>17</sup>. For some, psychological consequences linger long after the legal proceedings are over, often due to loss of resources (economic status, emotional support, social network etc.) and stressors due to the process of divorce itself. This exposure to prolonged period of emotional distress can make divorcees vulnerable to a wide array of psychological consequences<sup>18</sup>. Some longitudinal studies show that nearly all divorcees report divorce as distressing and experience problems in functioning in the year after divorce, followed by variation in patterns of growth or decline<sup>19</sup>. Even when divorce is desired, it is stressful. In the process of coping with divorce it is therefore crucial that the process is successful – it is shown as an ability of adequate (especially emotional) adaptation to change brought in one's life by divorce and its consequences<sup>20</sup>.

## 2. Coping with stress and spirituality

One's ability to cope with problems and stress is central to a successful life. Coping behaviour refers to the conscious, adaptive efforts that people use to manage stressful events or situations, and the emotions associated with the stressors. It is a process that begins with an appraisal of the situation (e.g. the nature of the stressor, intensity of threat, time necessary to deal with challenge, the degree of control over the situation). After that, one must enlist cognitive, affective, and behavioural strategies to manage the stress<sup>21</sup>. There are different styles or forms of strategies of coping with stress. Distressed persons usually use one of the three ways of coping: they try to change the environment, themselves or, to a certain extent, both<sup>22</sup>. An individual's characteristic style of coping is a dynamic process that changes in response to changing conditions. In order to understand how a person copes with a stressful situation, it is necessary to consider

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<sup>17</sup> M. Robinson, *Family transformation through divorce and remarriage. A systemic approach*, London 1991, Routledge, p. 68.

<sup>18</sup> H. Koenig, D. King, V. B. Carson, *Handbook of religion and health*. 2nd edition, Oxford 2012, Oxford University press, p. 259.

<sup>19</sup> K. Bursik, *Adaptation to divorce and ego development in adult women*, "Journal of Personality and Social Psychology" 60 (1991) 2, p. 300-305.

<sup>20</sup> G. C. Kitson, *Divorce and relationship dissolution research: Then and now*, in: M. A. Fine, J. H. Harvey (eds.), *Handbook of divorce and relationship dissolution*, New York 2006, Routledge, p. 15-40.

<sup>21</sup> B. M. Newman, P. R. Newman, *Development through life*, Wadsworth 2003, Thomson, p. 51-52.

<sup>22</sup> B. Spilka, R. W. Hood, B. Hunsberger, R. Gorsuch, *The Psychology of Religion*, New York 2003, The Guilford Press, p. 482.

the nature of the stressor, how it is perceived by the individual, and the range of resources that are available to address the situation<sup>23</sup>.

The approach to coping also depends on the values, beliefs, and goals of the individual or family members involved. Part of coping with stress is, to a higher or lower degree, also spirituality<sup>24</sup>. As part of one's general orientation system, spirituality<sup>25</sup> influences the way individuals perceive situations, act and develop goals they pursue<sup>26</sup>. Spirituality is an important dimension of life: it is of vital importance for everyday life and for being human. "From birth to death, spirituality is manifest in life's turning points, revealing mystery and depth during these pivotal moments in time. In crisis and catastrophe, spirituality is often intertwined in the struggle to comprehend the seemingly incomprehensible and to manage the seemingly unmanageable. [...] Spirituality can reveal itself in the ways we think, the ways we feel, the ways we act, and the ways we relate to each other. Paradoxically, the presence of the spiritual dimension can also be felt through its absence, in feelings of loss and emptiness, in questions about meaning and purpose, in a sense of alienation and abandonment, and in cries about injustice and unfairness. Spirituality is, in short, another dimension of life. An extraordinary dimension, yes, but one that is a vital part of ordinary life and what it means to be human. We are more than psychological, social, and physical beings; we are also spiritual beings."<sup>27</sup> Many distressed individuals turn to religion and use religious strategies of coping to regulate difficult affects<sup>28</sup>. Religious coping can be therefore defined as a process in which an individual - as a proactive agent in the process of coping with various challenges in different ways - includes religious or spiritual dimension<sup>29</sup>.

One of the most important researchers of religious coping, Kenneth I. Pargament<sup>30</sup>, specifies various forms of religious coping with stressful situ-

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<sup>23</sup> B. M. Newman, P. R. Newman, *Development through life*, Wadsworth 2003, Thomson, p. 52.

<sup>24</sup> K. I. Pargament, *The Psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, practice*, New York 1997, The Guilford Press.

<sup>25</sup> Although the concepts of 'spirituality' and 'religion' differ, in our presentation they are used to denote overlapping elements.

<sup>26</sup> K. I. Pargament, S. McCarthy, P. Shah, G. Ano, N. Tarakeshwar, A. Wachholtz, N. Sirrine, E. Vasconcelles, N. Murray-Swank, A. Locher, J. Duggan, *Religion and HIV: A review of the literature and clinical implications*, "Southern Medical Journal" 97 (2004) 12, p. 1201-1209.

<sup>27</sup> K. I. Pargament, *Spiritually integrated psychotherapy*, New York 2007, The Guilford Press, p. 3-4.

<sup>28</sup> K. I. Pargament, *The Psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, practice*, New York 1997, The Guilford Press.

<sup>29</sup> B. Simonič, G. Gojznicar, R. Cvetek, L. Mavrič, J. Sečnik, V. Janežič, *Religija kot vir pomoči pri soočanju s stresnimi in travmatičnimi dogodki*, "Bogoslovni vestnik" 67 (2007) 2, p. 261-280.

<sup>30</sup> K. I. Pargament, *The Psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, practice*, New York 1997, The Guilford Press; K. I. Pargament, *The bitter and the sweet - An evaluation*

ations: these vary from active to more passive ones, from problem-focused to emotion-focused, from positive to negative, from cognitive-behavioural to interpersonal and spiritual. All these ways of religious coping confirm the fact that spirituality or faith is not only passivity, defence or denial, but quite a significant element of successful coping with distress<sup>31</sup>.

Pargament and colleagues<sup>32</sup> identified three main strategies of religious coping, the most common being the **collaborative** strategy. It entails forming a problem-solving partnership with God. Coping is the process, which is aided by a loving, caring, and powerful deity who is active in the lives of individuals<sup>33</sup>. With this strategy, neither an individual nor God play a passive role in solving problems; rather, it is about a collaborative relationship from which one draws on guidelines for one's decisions. With a **self-directing** strategy, one relies on one's own initiative, not on God. In problem-solving one perceives oneself as somebody who has received from God enough capabilities and sources to solve problems. With the strategy of **deferring**, however, one relies on God, seeing him as the one who would control the situation and solve the problem. Further research<sup>34</sup> identified two more strategies: the strategy of **surrender** and the strategy of **active surrender**, where everything is surrendered to God's will in a way that one reduces one's desires and intentions in active search for solution following God's will.

All these strategies in their concrete forms are found within two dimensions: positive and negative religious coping. **Positive religious coping** includes forms stemming from a secure relationship with God, the feeling of connection with him as well as with the members of a religious community, a positive belief that it is possible to find meaning in life, and the feeling that we can learn from our experiences<sup>35</sup>. People typically perceive God as a partner who can help them in times of distress. They can turn to him for help, guidance, love and power, and, through this, their hope and the feeling of ability to cope with the situation increase<sup>36</sup>. **Negative**

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*of the costs and benefits of religion*, "Psychological Inquiry" 13 (2002) 3, p. 168-181.

<sup>31</sup> E. Emery, K. I. Pargament, *The many faces of religious coping in late life - conceptualization, measurement, and links to well-being*, "Ageing International" 29 (2004) 1, p. 3-27.

<sup>32</sup> K. I. Pargament, J. Kennell, W. Hathaway, N. Grevengoed, J. Newman, W. Jones, *Religion and the problem solving process - Three styles of coping*, "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" 27 (1988) 1, p. 90-104.

<sup>33</sup> A. P. Webb, C. G. Ellison, M. J. McFarland, J. W. Lee, K. Morton, J. Walters, *Divorce, religious coping, and depressive symptoms in a conservative protestant religious group*, "Family Relations" 59 (2010) 5, p. 544-557.

<sup>34</sup> A. Wong-McDonald, R. L. Gorsuch, *Surrender to God - An additional coping style?*, "Journal of Psychology and Theology" 28 (2000) 2, p. 149-161.

<sup>35</sup> K. I. Pargament, *The bitter and the sweet - An evaluation of the costs and benefits of religion*, "Psychological Inquiry" 13 (2002) 3, p. 168-181.

<sup>36</sup> J. B. Meisenhelder, *Terrorism, posttraumatic stress, and religious coping*, "Issues in Mental Health Nursing" 23 (2002) 8, p. 771-82; K. I. Pargament, J. Kennell, W. Hathaway,



**religious coping**, on the other hand, is marked by a frightened attitude to God, related to anxious view of the world and complicated searching of the meaning of life, frequent inner spiritual tension and internal battles with oneself, with others and with God or a transcendent being<sup>37</sup>. Such people are caught up in passive forms of religious coping, where they shift the responsibility for solving problems to God. God can also be experienced as distant and unresponsive to their calls, judgmental and punishing; consequently, they can feel disappointment, wondering if God cares at all or if he even exists<sup>38</sup>. We can expect that effective forms of coping will buffer maladjustment, while maladaptive strategies will exacerbate maladjustment<sup>39</sup>.

Generally, there is more positive religious coping than negative<sup>40</sup>, which is encouraging, since studies mostly confirm positive connection between positive spirituality and coping with hardships, both those psychological as well as physical. Positive religious coping offers many benefits to people facing an array of life stressors by decreasing emotional stress and increasing well-being<sup>41</sup>. Persons who use mostly positive forms of religious life and coping, experience lower stress and better mental health<sup>42</sup>, for example fewer depressive symptoms<sup>43</sup> and less anxiety<sup>44</sup>.

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N. Grevengoed, J. Newman, W. Jones, *Religion and the problem solving process - Three styles of coping*, "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" 27 (1988) 1, p. 90-104.

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- <sup>39</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Spiritual stress and coping model of divorce - a longitudinal study*, "Journal of Family Psychology" 25 (2011) 6, p. 973-985.
- <sup>40</sup> K. I. Pargament, N. Tarakeshwar, C. G. Ellison, K. M. Wulff, *The relationships between religious coping and well-being in a national sample of presbyterian clergy, elders, and members*, "Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion" 40 (2001) 3, p. 497-513.
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- <sup>44</sup> W. P. Kooistra, K. I. Pargament, *Religious doubting in parochial school adolescents*, "Journal of Psychology and Theology" 27 (1999) 1, p. 33-42; A. P. Tix, P. A. Frazier, *The use*

### 3. Religious coping with divorce

Some studies confirm that spirituality, too, has an important place in coping with the consequences of divorce and adaptation to these<sup>45</sup>. Although religion may promote positive divorce adjustment, exact mechanisms are not clearly understood yet. In general, researchers report spiritual mechanisms or forms of religious coping, which help individuals cope with divorce, can be positive or negative. All these different forms are mirrored in how successful adaptation to divorce is<sup>46</sup>.

In the process of coping with divorce, people mostly use positive forms of religious coping; the results of researches show that these forms are linked with higher levels of personality growth after the stress brought up by divorce<sup>47</sup> and lower levels of depression<sup>48</sup>. Among positive forms of religious coping with the challenges of divorce we can count relying on prayer, personal rituals or various forms of worship (important for transcending the feelings of anger, pain, and fear); searching for spiritual purification or forgiveness for eventual wrongs in the dissolved relationship (helps reduce the feelings of guilt or reinforce the feeling of integrity); searching for possibilities to increase the feeling of connectedness with a transcendent being (it reduces the feeling of being abandoned). According to its nature, positive religious coping can also be interpersonal, including searching for consolation through acceptance and care by clergy and members of one's religious community, or through searching for spiritual connection with others<sup>49</sup>.

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*of religious coping during stressful life events - Main effects, moderation, and mediation*, "Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology" 66 (1998) 2, p. 411-422.

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- <sup>46</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Divorce and the divine - The role of spirituality in adjustment to divorce*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 71 (2009) 2, p. 373-383.
- <sup>47</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Divorce and the divine - The role of spirituality in adjustment to divorce*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 71 (2009) 2, p. 373-383.
- <sup>48</sup> A. P. Webb, C. G. Ellison, M. J. McFarland, J. W. Lee, K. Morton, J. Walters, *Divorce, religious coping, and depressive symptoms in a conservative protestant religious group*, "Family Relations" 59 (2010) 5, p. 544-557.
- <sup>49</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Divorce and the divine - The role of spirituality in adjustment to divorce*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 71 (2009) 2, p. 373-383; E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Spiritual stress and coping model of divorce - a longitudinal study*, "Journal of Family Psychology" 25 (2011) 6, p. 973-985.



Negative forms of religious coping with divorce can be the following: experiencing divorce as a punishment from God; a perception that God does not have enough power or is incapable of preventing divorce – all these mark one's spiritual perception of the world and life, which is usually mirrored in inner spiritual conflicts (disappointment, bitterness, rejection, confusion, etc.); experiencing divorce as a loss of sacredness; experiencing spiritual and moral guilt for the dissolved relationship; experiencing conflicts and judgment within one's religious community due to divorce etc.<sup>50</sup> Negative forms of religious coping with divorce are linked to higher levels of depressive symptoms<sup>51</sup>, as well as to higher levels of dysfunctional conflicts with the ex-spouse one year after divorce<sup>52</sup>. We can conclude that persistent forms of negative religious coping predict lesser psycho-social adaptation after divorce<sup>53</sup>.

Religious divorced individuals mostly include positive forms of religious coping in the process of coping with divorce. These forms are related to personal advancement and posttraumatic growth<sup>54</sup>, and lower levels of depression and anxiety<sup>55</sup>. For believers, the relationship with God is an important personal relationship and God is an important person with the power of a live person<sup>56</sup>. In coping with the stressfulness of divorce, participants who cultivated a personal relationship with God experienced security and support. One of the main functions of religion for an individual is to provide the feeling of safety<sup>57</sup> and it is an important source to help cope with everyday existential hardships<sup>58</sup>. With positive forms of religious coping, participants actively seek for mostly inner sources of strength to cope with the reverberations of divorce. They experience that they can accept the situation in which they find themselves more serenely and comprehensively, and at the same time, they experience deeper inner transformation, since, in the experience of the relationship

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<sup>50</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Spiritual stress and coping model of divorce - a longitudinal study*, "Journal of Family Psychology" 25 (2011) 6, p. 973-985.

<sup>51</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Divorce and the divine - The role of spirituality in adjustment to divorce*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 71 (2009) 2, p. 373-383.

<sup>52</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Spiritual stress and coping model of divorce - a longitudinal study*, "Journal of Family Psychology" 25 (2011) 6, p. 973-985.

<sup>53</sup> B. Simonič, *Coping with divorce and relational family therapy*, "Family Forum" (2015) 4, p. 203-222.

<sup>54</sup> E. J. Krumrei, A. Mahoney, K. I. Pargament, *Divorce and the divine - The role of spirituality in adjustment to divorce*, "Journal of Marriage and Family" 71 (2009) 2, p. 373-383.

<sup>55</sup> A. P. Webb, C. G. Ellison, M. J. McFarland, J. W. Lee, K. Morton, J. Walters, *Divorce, religious coping, and depressive symptoms in a conservative protestant religious group*, "Family Relations" 59 (2010) 5, p. 544-557.

<sup>56</sup> B. Simonič, T. Rahne Mandelj, R. Novšak, *Religious-related abuse in the family*, "Journal of Family Violence" 28 (2013) 4, p. 339-349.

<sup>57</sup> E. Durkheim, *The elementary forms of the religious life*, New York 1995, Free Press.

<sup>58</sup> K. I. Pargament, *The Psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, practice*, New York 1997, The Guilford Press.

with God, they receive genuine affirmation, acceptance, value, and dignity. Just as an establishment of a safe empathetic relationship with a close person enables transformation of intrapsychic patterns and structures<sup>59</sup>, an authentic personal relationship with God, in which one feels seen and recognized by God, enables a discovery of new aspects of one's self-image and self-worth<sup>60</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusion

In order to better understand the way individuals respond and adapt to divorce, it is necessary to take into account the spiritual dimension(s) of this/in this life stressor. An awareness of the role of spiritual coping for post-divorce adjustment is necessary for researchers, therapists, and clergy with a more thorough perspective on divorce. Within psychosocial and spiritual help for individuals (especially religious people) who experience distress due to divorce it is necessary to be aware of the importance of including spiritual and religious sources, which can be of significant help with the regulation of difficult emotional states. It is important to encourage positive forms of religious coping and transform negative forms of religious coping, which, in comparison to positive ones, do not predict psychological wellbeing for an individual coping with the stress of divorce.

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<sup>60</sup> C. Thompson, *Anatomy of the soul*, Grand Rapids 2010, Tyndale, Salt River, p. 3.

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