

MARULIĆ'S PROPOSAL FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Abstract

In the first part of the article the author presents the main characteristics of Renaissance humanism, a movement that significantly flourished just at the time when Marko Marulić lived and worked. A fundamental feature of that period was the quest for a “universal man”, with the idea of recreating him through the revival of the wisdom of classical Greco-Roman culture. Marulić, along with other Christian humanists sought for the realization of the ideal “universal man” recognizing him in Jesus Christ, unlike others. For Marulić, true education is only Christian education that comes down from “above”, from God, and it is the only one that guarantees the achievement of ultimate happiness, which is what Christianity calls “eternal life”. In the last part of the article the author expounds Marulić's thought on raising children and points out that the humanist of Split, in harmony with the Holy Scripture, advises reward and punishment, praise and rebuke which supported by good and bad examples, enables him to synthesize the fundamental features of biblical and humanistic education.

Key words: *Marulić, humanism, humanists, Christian ethics, education.*

Introduction

Marko Marulić of Split (1450–1524), a world-famous humanist, wrote his verses and prose records in three languages, in Latin, Italian and Croatian. Due to his works, for example *Evangelistarium* and *De institutione*, written in Latin and translated in almost all major European languages as well as numerous publications, he gained fame and the respect not only of his contemporaries but also of future generations, until the beginning of the 17th century when he gradually fell into oblivion. Most of his works express his commitment of being a true Christian writer, concerned for the general social morals and for the eternal destiny of his contemporaries. The article deals with the socio-cultural environment of the period in which Marulić lived, its positive and less positive features.

The second part of the article focuses on the educational thought of this great writer of Split. In conclusion the author summarizes the writer's model on raising children.

1. The ideal of “universal man”

Marulić lived at the turn of the centuries and cultures. In terms of geographic space, his native town Split in which he spent most of his life fell under the influence and rule of Venice some twenty years before his birth, but at the same time the town remained vulnerable and exposed to Turkish attacks due to the vicinity of the Turks. In terms of time, Marulić lived in the late Middle Ages and at the time of flourishing movements of Humanism and Renaissance to which he contributed significantly. Although it is not easy to determine the specific nature and meaning of the Humanism and Renaissance movements, regarding the subject we are dealing with, it is important to point out that with Renaissance a certain novelty appeared in the perception of man and his realization, in the perception of society and its development, etc. At that time some humanists thought that, in pursuit for the realization of human life, i.e. in pursuit for the creation of universal man – *homo universalis*, it was no longer necessary to resort to the Church doctrine or to some divine Revelation, but that one should use the cultural and educational heritage that Greco-Roman culture had left to mankind. New, Renaissance man does not consider himself passive and subordinate to the order predetermined by the influence of the Church. On the contrary, he wants to be the one who manages the process of social development which affects his life. The first step towards a new order is to consider one's own current situation and to look for a way out of it by returning to the ancient classics. Historical process is seen as a cyclical process, as a return to the beginning, as a return to the golden age of man, and man himself is the one who has to realize it. The idea of Renaissance Humanism cannot therefore be simply reduced to admiring the ancient literary and artistic forms or to imitating the ancient classics. Considering the presence and significance of antiquity in Renaissance, a Renaissance man, a humanist reacts against the current state, which is static and gloomy, and, wishing to improve the future, he resorts to the past, to the ancient classics. Within the “darkness” of the present, antiquity seemed to the Renaissance humanists as a golden period in the history of mankind, a historical period in which man was free to determine his own figure. That is the reason why a strong desire arose to “revive” the lost golden age. The perfect expression of the image of man can only be achieved by establishing a new golden age which is already looming and coming after the dark period of medieval ignorance. Interest in antiquity, inspired by a new awareness of man, required new norms (based on the antiquity), since the old ones

could no longer be applied to the society that was changing. Therefore, we could say that it was not the study of antiquity, in terms of the search of the applicable norms of new life, which led to a new Renaissance man, but that new man resorted to ancient times.¹

At the end of the Middle Ages, i.e. in the whole 15th and the first part of the 16th century, man is in the focus of interest of most humanists. In fact, contemporary discourse on human dignity has its foundation in the Renaissance talk on *dignitas hominis*. Many humanists, along the lines of Cicero and teachings of the Church Fathers, draw up their own writings of human dignity and excellence.²

2. Christian humanism

In addition to the aforementioned features of the phenomenon known as the Renaissance and the attitude of a prominent part of the holders of this phenomenon (Valla, Ficino, and others) toward the Church and Church life, fortunately there were many positive aspects at the turn of the 15th to the 16th century. One of them is definitely Christian humanism, i.e. a trend of humanistic thought that wanted to offer a Christian response to the emerging problems and questions.³ A whole range of Christian humanists, like Petrarch, Dominitius, Pico Della Mirandola, Mantovano, Maffe Vegio, Marulić, Erasmus, and many others tried to “harmoniously unite the ancient element with the Christian in order to make fertile the intellectual attempts of antiquity in finding out the new thoughts and incentives for further development and deepening of

¹ Cf. A. Weiler *L'umanesimo cristiano del rinascimento e la scolastica*, in: *Concilium* (1967) 3/7, p. 45.

² So, for example, the Italian humanist Antonio da Barga writes his *Libellus de dignitate excellentia humanae vitae* on the basis of which another one, Bartolomeo Faccio, in 1448, writes his own writing *De excellentia hominis* dedicated to Pope Nicholas V, without mentioning Antonio of Barga. A few years later (1452) the work *De dignitate et excellenti hominis libri IV* appears, written by Giannozzi Manetti. There are also others who talk about human dignity like Lorenzo Valla, Marsilio Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, and others. On writings about human dignity in the period of Renaissance see: H. Baker, *The Image of Man: A Study of Human Dignity in Classical Antiquity, The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, Cambridge, Mass. 1947; reprint New York, 1961; E. Garin, *La 'Dignitas Hominis' e la letteratura patristica*, in: *La Rinascita* (1938), p. 102-136; E. Garin (ed.), *Testi umanistici sul "De anima"*, Padova 1951. It is to mention that not even Marulić avoided the theme of human dignity in his writing *Psichiologia de ratione animae humanae*, and it seems he was the first author to use the term “psychology”.

³ On Christian humanism see: F. Hermans, *Histoire doctrinale de l'Humanisme chretienne, I L'Aube*, Casterman, Tournai-Paris, 1948; E. Garin, *L'umanesimo italiano. Filosofia e vita civile nel Rinascimento*, Editori Latreza, Bari, 1994; F. Vandenbroucke, *La spiritualità del Medioevo*, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 1991, p. 456-472; A. M. Erba, *L'umanesimo spirituale, L'Enchiridion di Erasmo da Rotterdam*, Edizioni Studium, Roma, 1994, p. 15-31; J. P. Massaut, IV. Humanisme et spiritualité du 14^e au 16^e siècle, in: *Dictionnaire de spiritualité V*, p. 989-1001.

the existing culture".⁴ Christian humanists, like many others, were also enchanted by the treasure of antiquity and recognized the classics as the best intermediaries of culture. However they were aware of the dangers posed by a revival of ancient literature, especially in the historical circumstances in which they lived. Although man was at the centre of their thoughts, they did not forget that that man was redeemed and destined for eternal life. In other words, Christian humanists tried to realize a true transformation of anthropocentrism, distinctive in the initial stream of humanism, establishing a certain balance between theocentrism and anthropocentrism. Christian humanists did not find it strange to exalt at the same time human love and the beauty of the body as well as God's grace that enables man to be fully realized.⁵ They were not looking for the ideal of earthly life in ancient philosophy or in the lifestyle of Greco-Roman classics, but in Jesus Christ. Their programme became the programme of human nature and God's grace. Promoting the human values and fighting for human dignity they did not neglect the lasting values of Christianity.

In search of authentic Christianity, Christian humanists reject the scholastic hair-splitting, calling for the return to the Holy Scripture and Church Fathers, i.e. to biblical theology, since it enables a relationship with Christ from the Gospel. Christian humanists pointed out the need for a more heedful treatment of some aspects of theology, which the scholastics had failed to provide. They tried to develop a "positive" theology which was to insist on the necessity of a more direct and intimate contact with sources. For these humanists the role of theology was to establish the foundations of Christian doctrine, i.e. to return the theology researches to sources, to the Holy Scripture and to the Fathers.⁶ By returning to sources they wanted to propose more precise Christianity, i.e. the simplification of the rites, sincere devotion in which the absolute trust in God's charity will dominate. In view of the medieval devotions, Christianity, as suggested by the humanists, really seemed like a novelty. J. Pelikan writes: "Although they juxtaposed the novelty, *renascentia*, of their time with the barbaric decadence of the Middle Ages, in their admiration and devotion to Jesus they were equal to any representative of medieval theology."⁷

However, there was a difference. In the medieval period, in the centre of Christian life, theology, spirituality and piety was the figure of Christ, true God and true Man, who, on the one hand was adored and invoked as God, while on the other hand the believers' eyes were specifically directed

⁴ F. Olgiati, *L'anima dell'umanesimo e del Rinascimento*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 1925, p. 61.

⁵ Cf. F. Hermans, *Histoire doctrinale*, p. 15.

⁶ Cf. E. Vilanova, *Storia della teologia cristiana*, Borla, Roma, 1994, p. 52.

⁷ J. Pelikan, *Gesù nella storia*, Editore Laterza, Bari, 1989, p. 168.

at His humanity, particularly at two mysteries of Christ's life: the mystery of Christmas and the mystery of Passion. In humanistic thought, on the contrary, Christ was not observed through the mysteries of his life, but He was shown in an abstract way.⁸ For them, Jesus was primarily the teacher of true wisdom, a model to imitate, the author of salvation, the one who taught practical morality (*philosophia Christi*) by which, if daily lived, one can achieve the innate goodness of human nature, one can achieve salvation. Humanistic *philosophia Christi* is presented as the understanding and realization of evangelical principles; that's why it is present in human feelings more than in syllogisms, it is life more than disputation, conversion more than reasoning, and inspiration more than erudition. In short, *philosophia Christi* corresponds to the very evangelical teachings, so that humanists expressly define it as *instauratio conditiae naturae*, i.e. the restoration of the authentic, original and good human nature.⁹ But, just this is the reason why Christian humanists are criticized. Namely, as J. Aumann writes, "by their intensive study of Greek and Roman classics, a wrong opinion on the innate goodness of man was created, with the result that they did not care much about the effect of original sin or about the necessity of mortification and sacrifice".¹⁰

For Christian humanists, Jesus Christ, who is the only model and the only archetype of human behaviour,¹¹ should be sought and found primarily in the Gospels, and they are the key to getting to know Him. According to them, medieval theology (scholasticism) does not offer a true face of Jesus Christ, but the original texts show His true face, since they are the authentic sources of Christianity. Thus, the theology of humanistic period, understood as a research of the authentic meaning of divine message, coincides with scriptural exegesis, while its methodology nearly comes down to philology. In this regard, some humanists are the forerunners of various forms of historical-critical method in researching the Holy

⁸ A good example of that abstract understanding of Christ can be seen with Erasmus of Rotterdam who writes: "Do not believe that 'Christ' is an empty word: He is nothing else but love, simplicity, fullness, purity, in short everything that he taught" (*Enchiridion, Fourth Canon* in: A. M. Erba, *L'umanesimo spirituale*, p. 155).

⁹ Cf. E. Orlandini Trevano, "Introduzione", in: Erasmo da Rotterdam, *La formazione cristiana dell'uomo*, Rusconi, Milan, 1989, p. 53-54.

¹⁰ J. Aumann, *Sommario di storia della spiritualità*, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 1986, p. 276. Marulić here deviates from the aforementioned teachings of Christian humanists. However, he also writes about human innate goodness (cf. *Evangelistarium I/III, 4/*, Književni krug, Split, 1985, p. 271), nevertheless he points out the frailty of human nature, insisting on mortification and strict asceticism as the necessary means to strengthen it, giving priority to God's grace.

¹¹ Erasmus, for example, writes that "the spirit of the one who yearns for Christ should be different from the actions and opinions of the crowd and the model of devotion should be sought nowhere else but only in Christ. He is, namely, the only archetype and if someone walks away from Him just by a single step, he is moving away from the right path and taking the wrong one" (*Enchiridion, Sixth Canon*, p. 191).

Scripture that developed in the first decades of the twentieth century. While studying the Gospel and literary methods of philological erudition, applied by some humanists to the texts of classical antiquity (L. Valla), the reader was able to reveal a true meaning of the Gospel and, accordingly, learn the “words of life” that Jesus spoke. Naturally, the aim was to discover the authentic Christ of the Gospel. Because of that, Christ’s life and teachings were studied on the basis of original sources, written in Greek. It still required a methodological and critical study of both, texts and history. This “positive” theology had reverberations also with those who studied it. A true theologian is not the one who just discusses the principles of Christian faith, but the one who live by them, practices them daily and transfers them to others. To seek for the real face of Christ means to imitate him. In short, if one lived according to the *philosophia Christi*, he might be reborn in Christ, i.e. in himself he might reproduce the image of his Creator, which ultimately means that one might embody the ideal of universal man. J. Pelikan notes that “the term *universal man*, which was the slogan of Renaissance and which the humanists not only used but embodied, summarizes what Renaissance thought about Jesus and arts expressed, i.e. that He was a “special man” and a “unique man” in a complete sense of the word”.¹² Arts also, for its part, tried to show the embodiment of Jesus himself, “no longer in a hagiographic and mystical way, but utterly naturalistically, including the physical elements: the nudity of the Child and the Crucified is not a lack of respect, but the affirmation of the full truth about God-man”.¹³ To sum up, for Christian humanists, including Marulić, the central place of human history belongs to Christ, whom they perceive as the axis of the whole human history. We can say that this was true for their personal lives too. At least we can say that this was true for Marulić.

3. Marulić's Christian humanism

Due to his works and the influence on his contemporaries and future generations, Marulić is certainly one of the leading Christian humanists. Actually, the fact that he considered himself a “Christian” or rather “Catholic” humanist, encouraged him to public engagement, to defend and spread the Christian faith so that he became a true “*propagator fidei acerrimus*”.¹⁴ His main aim was to present and justify the necessity of Christian doctrine, as the only one that leads to eternal life. His works are

¹² J. Pelikan, *Gesù nella storia*, p. 168.

¹³ B. Secondin, *Allaluce del suo volto, 1. Lo splendore*, Edizioni Dehoniane, Bologna, 1989, p. 230-231.

¹⁴ This is how Wilhelm Eysengrein in his *Catalogus testium veritatis* call Marulić (Dilingen, 1565, p. 197).

often of apologetic character (against Jews, against Christian humanists intoxicated with ancient classics, against the sceptics, etc.), but at the same time they provide a model and call one to live the authentic Christian life according to his understanding based on the Holy Scripture, on the work of the Fathers and his own spiritual experience.

In several of his works Marulić expresses criticism towards some humanists, his contemporaries, who put man and his dignity in the centre of everything, exclusively using the thoughts and experience of classical antiquity.¹⁵ On the other hand, he presents himself as an inheritor and representative of traditional, Catholic, theological anthropology. Marulić's *philosophia Christi* is in fact identical with Christian teachings which he primarily finds in the Holy Scripture.¹⁶ For him, Christian education or Christian ethics, as he names his own *philosophia Christi*,¹⁷ is the highest of all sciences, as it is the only one that can put the Christian life in order and help man to achieve his final goal, the eternal happiness. Marulić is explicit: "... above all sciences rises the one that is called ethics because it deals with the regulation of human behaviour. Namely, since there is nothing more praiseworthy in man than virtue and nothing more disgusting than vice, what then may seem more admirable and more valuable to embrace but the science that instructs and educates man how to turn away from the evil and cling to honesty?"¹⁸ Christian ethics is a given and gift to man, it cannot and mustn't be created at one's own discretion; it goes beyond man.¹⁹ Obviously, for Marulić, a desirable human life is only

¹⁵ In *Evangelistarium* it says: "It is useless, philosophers, to knowingly and shrewdly meditate if your life is not blameless and pure. Neither will you, orators, have any benefit of speaking eloquently and ornately if your life is not decorated with virtues. And neither will you who dream on two-headed Parnassus have any benefit of being equal to Homer or Vergil, if you do not throw away the abominations of vices and keep the purity and whiteness of bearing. Therefore, focus your desires and efforts on honesty; rather choose honesty without scholarship, than scholarship without honesty, if it is not possible to have both, education and virtue. But if you have faith, hope and charity, you will receive the prize of blessings that God will generously give to you." (*Evangelistarium II, /VII, 33, Književni krug, Split, 1986, p. 360-361*).

¹⁶ Marulić's *philosophia Christi* is most completely presented in his *Evangelistarium*. He writes in the preface: "I have firmly decided not to stray from the Law or from the Gospel, but to collect, while going through the vast expanses of both Scriptures, all that seems most necessary. Nothing alien will be included, so that we do not appear to need somebody else's." (*Evangelistarium I, Književni krug, Split, 1985, Preface, p. 46-47*). Here "alien" generally refers to non-Christian doctrine, especially to before-Christ philosophical opinions.

¹⁷ Marulić does not use the expression *philosophia Christi*, unlike, for example, Erasmus who, along with the expression Christ's philosophy also uses as synonyms the expressions: Christian philosophy and evangelical philosophy (cf. L.-E. Halkin, *Erazmo i kršćanski humanizam*, KS, Zagreb, 2005, p. 143).

¹⁸ Ev. I, *Preface*, p. 45.

¹⁹ Writing about Marulić's understanding of Christian ethics, that is of morality, Drago Šimundža points at the transcendence of the moral order that goes beyond man and to

a virtuous life. Virtues are the focus of his interest, not theoretical or speculative, but practical and existential. That is the reason why he is writing his *Institution*, as an illustration of the doctrine previously presented in his *Evangelistarium*.²⁰ Specifically, in it he presents the examples of those who lived certain virtues that are, according to him, necessary for the realization of Christian life, and thus the eternal happiness. He says that "nobody would chose to live in poverty, humility and moral purity, nobody would watch, fast or physically bother, even assuming that all people would glorify it – if there were no one who has already adhered to that".²¹ Therefore, the ideal is a virtuous life, not the virtue for its own sake, but only if it leads to Christian holiness, i.e. to Christ. Therefore, Marulić does not agree with the teachings of those who, along the lines of stoicism, claim that "a wise man is always blessed because he is happy with the virtue itself as it is enough to him." He, on the other hand, argues that Christians know that "virtue itself is not a blessed life, but it is the heavenly and eternal happiness immanent to virtue if that virtue is united with true faith." Therefore, he invites his readers: "Let us reject the pagan stupidity, let us adopt the wisdom given to us not by man but by God."²² True ethics is not something invented by mankind and it cannot be changed at one's own discretion. It goes beyond man because its source is in God and, therefore, it is the highest of all sciences. To accept the divine philosophy and to live in accordance with it, guarantees the ultimate realization of life, i.e. the eternal life.²³ Marulić does not offer any definition of virtue, but simply states: "The very virtues are a gift of God."²⁴ He does not make difference between the acquired and inspired virtues, between

which man should subject, and concludes: "In this way, by absoluteness of morality, Marulić directly opposed, at the height of Renaissance rush, to all subjectivist and relativistic concepts of moral principles and life practice" (Opći pristup Marulićevu *Evangelistaru*, in: M. Marulić, *Evangelistar I*, Književni krug, Split, 1985, p. 32).

²⁰ It is true that, according to the preserved editions, *Institution* (Venice, 1506) was published before *Evangelistarium* (Venice, 1516). But nonetheless, according to archival data, it seems that *Evangelistarium* was written and published before *Institution*. Namely, some historical sources state as the year of the first edition of *Evangelistarium* the year 1487, and as the year of the first edition of *Institution* the year 1498. (Cf. P. Runje, O ranim, nepoznatim izdanjima 'Institucije' Marka Marulića, in: Marulić, 25 (1992) 6, p. 705-709; P. Runje, *Evangelistar Marka Marulića – Inkunabule*, in: Marulić, 26 (1993) 1, p. 58-62).

²¹ *Institucija I*, Književni krug, Split, 1986, *Inscription*, p. 57.

²² Ev I / III 6/, p. 278-279.

²³ In the *Inscription of Institution*, and he inscribes it to Jerolim Ćipiko, Marulić presents a kind of summary of Christian view on saints, on their role in the Church and their veneration. Saints have achieved holiness because they lived divine philosophy: "Those who relied not on human but on God's doctrine, those who did not follow the earthly philosophy but philosophy from above, they ascended to heaven where that philosophy had come from." (*Institucija I*, *Inscription*, p. 58).

²⁴ Ev II / IV, 9/, p. 56.

natural and supernatural, probably because Marulić did not find a clear difference in the sources he used, i.e. in the Holy Scripture and works of the Fathers.²⁵ Of all virtues he is writing about, he explicitly mentions and emphasizes the theological virtues, because “these three virtues are the strongest bond that connects and unites us with God, who we will never leave if we have luck to end our life in them.”²⁶ All other virtues are aids to spiritual life and should be observed in the light of theological virtues. It should be noted that Marulić divided his *Evangelistarium* into seven books, and three parts, dedicating the first part (book I) to faith, the second part (book II) to hope, and the third part (book III–VII) to charity. In fact, not many chapters are directly dedicated to theological virtues.²⁷ A great part of *Evangelistarium* (over 190 chapters) deals with various virtues, vices and aids to spiritual life.²⁸

Marulić exalts the virtuous life and puts it not only above the human innate talents (*Dialogue on the Praise of Hercules*), but above all human knowledge, above all human arts and sciences, since the eternal life depends on our virtuous life.²⁹ Marulić looks at the earthly life “sub specie aeternitatis”. He is worried about man’s eternal destiny. He writes: “I really do not know if there is anything more useful for a Christian but to remember what will be at the end and keep it constantly in mind. It diverts us from vices, encourages a virtuous life ... to despise what is transient and yearn for what is eternal.”³⁰ Every Christian should take care of his life and lead it guided by the thought: What benefit do I get from this for the eternal life? Eternal salvation is the motive of every human activ-

²⁵ In *Preface of Institution* he writes that his intention was to expose “the examples of evangelical virtues, that is of Christian perfection” (Inst. I, p. 63). Then, in five books, and in a total of 54 chapters, he gives examples of various virtues.

²⁶ Ev I /II, 26/, p. 253.

²⁷ Ev I 1-3: *On the expression of faith to God; On steadiness and strength of faith; On faith without deeds; II, 1: On hope in forgiveness; IV, 1-3: On love of God; On love of neighbour; On love of enemies.*

²⁸ It is difficult to say after which key Marulić divided the matter of particular chapters. B. Lekić writes that: “Marulić must have had a deeper reason for such systematization, though he had nowhere explained it... I think I won’t be far from the truth if I say that this is the reason: Marulić is the opponent of pagan ethics. That ethics seems to him entirely insufficient. Christian, supernatural ethics is a real and full doctrine of how to live. Because of that he probably thought it was insufficiently Christian to discuss individually and particularly the natural moral virtues. ... Those natural virtues are not a mere pendant to the supernatural. They become super-naturalized in the Christian alone, in the way that whatever a Christian does, he acts under the influence of grace” (*Život i djelo Marka Marulića*, in: *Dobri pastir*, (1974) 1-4, p. 188).

²⁹ Cf. Lj. Schiffler, Marko Marulić i filozofija u svjetlu enciklopedizma, in: *Dani hvarskog kazališta XV – Marko Marulić*, Književni krug, Split, 1989, p. 275.

³⁰ *The sermon of Marko Marulić on Christ’s last judgement* in: M. Marulić, *Latinska marja djela I*, Književni krug, Split, 1992, p. 163-164. He also writes in Ev I / I, 18/, p. 109-113, and in Inst. III /V, 9/, p. 164-172.

ity and the main human concern. Man can reach his own fullness only in absolute Being, in God. In accordance with Christian tradition, Marulić sees in God a practical norm, a supreme and main criterion of spiritual and entire Christian life. God is at the beginning of human existence, and at the end as the last man's goal. In God's eyes man is the highest on earth. Everything on earth is subjected to man, and man is subjected only to God.³¹

3.1. Christ: source and model of virtues

Evangelical virtues are at the heart of Marulić's interest; they are in service of man's moral and spiritual life, i.e. of his union with Christ. Basically, a pronounced Christocentrism is one of the main features of Marulić's work.³² Christ is in the centre of Marulić's theological thought, not only as a particular research subject of some of his works (*On Imitation of Christ; On Humility and Glory of Christ*), but He is the axis around which everything revolves, even the author's life itself. Christ is the beginning and end of man's spiritual life. Marulić does not talk about Christ in a speculative and abstract way, but presents Him through the mysteries of the incarnate man. Christ is the perfect man (*homo universalis*), an ideal after which the Christian thread of Renaissance and humanism aspired. Along this line Marulić writes that "we get from our Saviour and Lord both a lesson and an example of all virtues and holiness, so that we can reliably ask for them from Him and, better than elsewhere, calmly muse on them with Him."³³ In short, Christ is the model of every virtue. Namely, as He is the truth, He does not sin; as He is goodness, He does not deceive; as He is the wisdom, He knows everything; as He is the power of God, He is almighty; as He is the salvation of His people, all He has done and everything He has said relates to the salvation of all of us.³⁴

Christ has become man to bestow his divine life upon mankind and to liberate man from the tyranny of devil. Christ's incarnation concerns every man. Therefore, in his works, especially in his *Evangelistarium* written for all people, Marulić treats every area of human life and holds that the man who follows Christ can transcend himself. To imitate Christ, i.e. to follow Him,³⁵ is the basic idea of Marulić's spirituality proposed for all life classes. Everyone should, stepping in the footsteps of Christ,

³¹ Cf. Chapter *On providing charity in order to be like God* (Ev II / V, 21/ p. 176).

³² More on this see: M. Parlov, *Otajstvo Krista – uzor kršćanskog života prema Marku Maruliću*, Književni krug – Marulianum, Split, 2001. The second part of the book (p. 51-134) is dedicated to the mysteries of Christ in Marulić's thought.

³³ Ev I / III, 24/, p. 329.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ Just mention that the expressions "to imitate" and "to follow" are not identical and that there were discussions about them between the Protestant and Catholic theologians.

i.e. practising a virtuous life, become increasingly similar to the Master. Using this thought Marulić forms a kind of spiritual axiom: “As much as one reaches the likeness of Christ imitating Him in this world, so much he will be closer to Him in the kingdom of God.”³⁶ This final likeness with Christ, which is the goal and aim of life on earth, will be achieved only if life itself is founded on the rock, on Christ. “Therefore, to achieve a better and perfect life, we will put the foundations of future building only on top of the hardest rock, on Christ.”³⁷ The call to follow Christ is the call to live a truly authentic Christian life, and that is the life filled with all the virtues. Marulić is explicit: “He demands that the one who decides to follow Christ is abundant in all virtues. Actually, the one who follows Christ tries to take off the old and put on the new and become a new man, to replace arrogance with humility, anger with gentleness, non-abstention with sexual purity, in short, to replace vice with virtue.”³⁸

For Marulić, as well as for other Christian humanists of his time, true faith is reflected as an effort to become like Christ, true morality as a rejection of earthly goods, and true devotion is to follow Jesus Christ, God who has become man.³⁹ For Marulić, Christ is the “Teacher of true virtue”⁴⁰ and to the one who wants to follow Him Marulić proposes vari-

Marulić, on the line of the Fathers, uses these terms as synonyms (more on this see: M. Parlov, *Otajstvo Krista*, p. 137-141).

³⁶ Ev I /I, 20/, p. 119.

³⁷ Ev I /I, 1/, p. 58. At another place he will write that Christ, on the contrary, is not present with vicious man: “Christ will not be able to live in a heart where deception has made its dwelling... Christ has no rest where fox scams reside and where man’s pride rises to the heights like a bird” (Ev I /I, 15/, p. 97).

³⁸ Ev I /I, 14/, p. 93. In a chapter of *Evangelistarium* (III, 24: *We need to be moulded into Christ*) Marulić briefly exposes the virtues that he considers to be necessary for a Christian to be molded into Christ: humility, obedience, patience, modesty, poverty, charity, purity and prayer. The program of spiritual life that Marulić offers requires a daily spiritual battle, which leads to a permanent progression to a virtuous life (*profectus virtutum*). This was also one of the main features of the spiritual movement *devotio moderna* which Marulić himself belonged to (more about this see in: M. Parlov, Teme ‘Devotio moderne’ u misli Marka Marulića, in: *Religijske teme u književnosti*, Zbornik radova međunarodnog simpozija održanog u Zagrebu 9. prosinca 2000, ed. Ivan Šestak, FTI, Zagreb, 2001. p. 39-59).

³⁹ On the features of religiosity of Christian humanists see: R. Romano – A. Tenenti, *Il rinascimento e la riforma (1378-1548). Parte seconda: la nascita della civiltà moderna*, Unione Tipografica – Editrice, Torino 1972, p. 294; M. Petrocchi, *Storia della spiritualità italiana. I. Ilduecento, trecento e il quattrocento*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 1978, p. 100-101.

⁴⁰ Ev II /VII, 6/, p. 279. Writing about arrogance which even saints have sometimes fallen into, Marulić says: “Even the Disciples of Christ sinned when an argument among them arose about which of them was the greatest. But the Teacher of true virtue rebuked them saying that it is inherent to pagans, not to Christians, to yearn for honours and to look magnificently.” And he concludes: “The one who, even when appointed to a prominent position, provides the inferiors with what is necessary for salvation, i.e. gives lessons of virtue or a suitable support to sustain life, this is the disciple of Christ, contrite and

ous means necessary for the authentic Christian life. Virtues, especially theological virtues, need to be followed by the “deeds of righteousness”.⁴¹ Though, not even these deeds, no matter how exalted, would be sufficient to deserve the eternal life, unless they were followed by divine grace, i.e. by the merits of Christ. Marulić writes: “Our cleansing is not enough, that is, refraining from sin; if Christ’s merits are not added to it, we will not deserve to enter the kingdom of God.”⁴² The search for the ideal of human life in general, in Marulić’s vision of Christian life, becomes the search for the authentic image of Jesus Christ, for God-man, for the universal Man. Saints are the example how to follow Christ, but they are also a call to Christians to imitate them, because to imitate them means to imitate Jesus Christ. And this is the aim of his *Institution*. Following the true heroes of human race, Christian saints, we achieve the union with Jesus, and by that we realize the deepest meaning of human life on earth.

3.2. On raising children

As we have mentioned, Marulić is interested in concrete human life, with all its joys and sorrows, problems and difficulties; he gives advice trying to help people in everyday, concrete life to become true Christians. His concreteness includes the family life too, with all its complexity. Thus, for example, Marulić dedicates some chapters of his *Evangelistarium* to marriage (Ev, 5, 6), to the choice of a wife (Ev, V, 9), to love for a woman (Ev, 5, 8), to duties of husband and wife (Ev, V, 7), to the management of family and raising children (Ev, V, 10). When it comes to raising children Marulić summarizes the centuries-old Catholic pedagogy in one sentence, based on human and religious education as presented in the Bible: “The duty of father and mother will be not to raise children for luxury but for modesty, not to spoil them with babbling but to keep them on a tight leash with punishments, to teach them piety and faith, to beat them if guilty, to

humble, though respected for his dignity, not caring for his own benefit but for the benefit of others” (*Ibidem*, p. 279-280).

⁴¹ Ev I /I, 3/, p. 63. Marulić says that “faith is the root of virtues” (*Fifty stories*, 2 in: M. Marulić, *Latinska marja*, p. 332), i.e. he stresses the importance and role of faith in spiritual life (cf. also Ev I, 1-2: *On the expression of faith to God; On steadiness and strength of faith*.) But he is aware that there can be faith without good deeds (cf. Ev I, 3 – *On faith without deeds*) Therefore, he warns his readers: “Namely, though invited to the wedding of faith, if one comes without wedding garment, i.e. unadorned with virtues, he will be expelled from the house over the threshold, and what is worse, with his legs and arms tied, he will be thrown out, into the darkness” (Ev I /I, 3/, p. 64).

⁴² *On humility and glory of Christ*, Književni krug, Split, 1989, p. 86. It is similarly written in *Evangelistarium*: “Blessed are those who wash the stains of their sins. But they need to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, because repentance would not help at all if Christ’s blood had not redeemed those who had been sold into the slavery of damnation. Therefore, those are washed in the blood of the Lamb who, believing in Christ, cry out for His mercy, repenting and hoping” (Ev I /II, 11/, p. 200).

commend them if they have behaved well and obediently, to discourage them from what is evil by reprimands, threats and canes, to encourage them for virtues by incentives and promises, to present them the examples of other people's lives in order to avoid bad examples and imitate the good ones, to worry more about their behaviour than about their health."⁴³

In accordance with what the Holy Scripture and also patristic tradition talk about human and religious education in general, Marulić advises reward and punishment, praise and rebuke, education for virtuous life substantiated with examples, because "words encourage and examples attract." As a diligent reader of the Scripture he was able to discover that God educates his people teaching them to seek virtues, and scolding and punishing them if they do not seek betterment and conversion.⁴⁴ Marulić connects the classic, stoic ideal of education, i.e. education in modesty, with biblical aim of Christian education, i.e. the education for virtues. One can see that Marulić is a very realistic man, aware that children can be easily spoiled and that parents mostly take care about their children's health, and less about their behaviour. In his educational and pedagogical approach, as Drago Šimundža points out, "Marulić holds that prize is an important motive, but punishment is also sometimes necessary; in fact, though it is not emphasized enough, he advocates for the ethics of love."⁴⁵ Referring to Christian virtue ethics grounded in theology, and its ultimate aim-*telos*, i.e. the eternal life, Marulić presents himself as an interesting and genuine writer of our time, too.⁴⁶

Conclusion

At the end of the Middle Ages, on the horizon of the European civilization, a complex phenomenon of Humanism and Renaissance appeared, still unexplored to the end, which brought a new view of man and society. One of the novelties was a desire for the autonomy of morality and development of society, irrespective of the Church and its doctrine. Social life was intended to be built on the foundations of what the Greek-Roman culture offered, as it was understood as the golden age in the history of mankind. Marulić, together with other Christian humanists, proposed

⁴³ Ev II /V, 10/, p. 134.

⁴⁴ Cf. X. Leon-Dufour, Odgajanje, in: *Rječnik biblijske teologije*, Zagreb, 1980, p. 750-757.

⁴⁵ D. Šimundža, Opći pristup Marulićevu Evanđelistaru, p. 30.

⁴⁶ This is the statement of the leading, world famous Croatian moralist Ivan Fuček: Marulić fra i moralisti croati (1450-1524), in: *Colloquia Maruliana IX* (2000), p. 165-178. Fuček concludes his article about Marulić among Croatian moralists with the following words: "E' vero che la composizione di Marulić, lo stile, il linguaggio, gli esempi, le applicazioni concrete, e via dicendo, portano il sapore del suo tempo. Ma l'idea, il suo criterio architettonico, nell'odierno contesto conflittuale e in questa tendenza 'post-moderna', ci appare proprio come una *profezia* per il nostro tempo, cioè quello del 2000" (There, p. 177).

the return to the sources of Christian ethics, i.e. return to the Scriptures and to a healthy church Tradition, which he would find primarily in the works of the Fathers. Marulić holds that morality, and thereby Christian education as well, cannot be something autonomous, something controlled at one's own discretion. Christian ethics comes from above, from God, so that man must be subjected to it, and exactly that subjection, summarized in the imitation of Jesus Christ, guarantees the realization of what man longs for, to achieve a happy life, i.e. the blessed life. Marulić always looks toward the actual life and manifests himself as an excellent didactic teacher and spiritual master who even today has much to say.