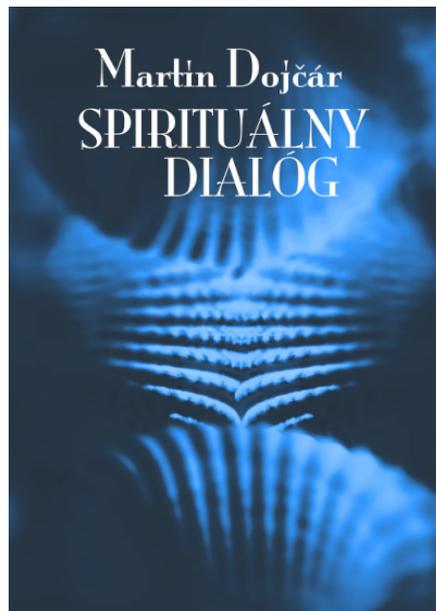

**Martin Dojčár, *Spirituálny dialóg* [*Spiritual Dialogue*],
Trnava, Faculty of Theology, University of Trnava,
2021, 118 p.**

Together with the pluralistic paradigm of postmodern culture, the fundamental ethical question of moral justification has resurfaced again. In the postmodern context, it is necessary to rethink the need to interiorize values of a moral nature, especially those concerning the way of life of both the individual and community and consequently also the interpersonal coexistence.

Doc. Martin Dojčár's monograph offers a synthesis of his decade-long committed research into a spiritual dialogue as a new and highly relevant form of interreligious dialogue. The author presents to the reader this fascinating form of dialogue. He does so not only through a thorough review of the vast body of scholarly literature but mainly through his own experience with it on an interpersonal and intra-spiritual level.

The author asserts that the fundamental factor of global coexistence is the moral aspect of culture, which relates to the way of life of an individual constituting the general conditions for peaceful and humane coexistence at the social level. Therefore, the author argues for a dialogical way of existence (dialogical ethos) as a way of life that exhibits a unique potential for peaceful and humane coexistence. Dialogue, as *the golden mean* between the extreme positions of indifference and xenophobia brings *hope* in contrast to *hopelessness and despair* brought about by the



current geopolitical and socio-cultural developments in many countries of the world. The symbol of this hope is the *encounter*. It seems that in dialogue it is possible for completely different people, be it ethnically, racially, nationally, culturally, socially, religiously or spiritually, to encounter one another as equal and find what they have in common. For dialogue does not emphasise what divides people, but what unites them. In religiously, culturally and ethnically pluralistic environment that makes up the modern world, dialogue is no longer just an option for interaction; it is a necessity. By presupposing a relationship - an interpersonal relation that can develop into friendship - authentic dialogue is an alternative to the confrontation and conflict that have characterized relations between followers of different religions for centuries. Dialogue offers a chance to end this legacy of confrontation and conflict when presented as a tool for mutual rapprochement and facilitation of common action - in the social, political, cultural, moral and religious spheres. Dialogue can be instrumental in facing up to the crisis of values manifested in the consumer mentality that has affected the entire globalising world.

Dojčár anchors his research efforts in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, at which the Catholic Church formulated and theologically justified, for the first time in its history, its attitude towards non-Christian religions in a doctrinally binding way. The affirmation of the autonomy and dignity of man in interreligious dialogue is an act of faith on the part of the Christian in the creation of man “in the image of God” - it is a recognition of man as the *imago Dei* - and it is also a witness to Christ, who is the “image of God” and the primordial model of man. In this sense, the dialogical mode of existence is a fundamental form of proclamation. The dialogical initiatives of the post-conciliar Church are unprecedented in history. They are unique both in content and scope. The broad spectrum of dialogical initiatives is presented in the context of the five major world religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity). Regardless of their form, dialogical-type initiatives represent an alternative to the confrontation and conflict that have accompanied interreligious contacts for centuries. The dialogical model of interreligious relations opens up a new perspective for common action, for example, against the crisis of values manifested in the consumerist mentality of contemporary societies and in the joint effort to rehabilitate values on a religious basis (*finality*) through encounters and cooperation of adherents of different religious traditions (*relationality*).

The appeal to relationality breaks through the boundaries, of a distinct individuality in all forms of dialogue that the author examined, including the spiritual dialogue. *Relationality* makes dialogue a sign of hope in our hopelessly divided world. Spiritual dialogue offers new ways of developing *relationality*, opening up new

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perspectives of mutual contact as it turns our attention from the periphery of our everyday experience (intentional experience) to its animating source - the fundamental mystical “experience” which is, by its very nature, a non-intentional “experience”.

Against the backdrop of major challenges of today (chap. 1 *Planetary Civilization*), the reader finds an outline of spiritual dialogue (chap. 4 *Spiritual Dialogue*) integrated into the overall picture of dialogue (chap. 2 *Dialogical Ethos*), the form of which is illustrated by the prospects of dialogue in the religious sphere (chap. 3 *Perspectives of Interreligious Dialogue*) and by portraits, or rather sketches, of some of its prominent proponents. The individual motifs of the author’s portrayal of spiritual dialogue converge in a central motif that, as the author asserts, is mysticism as a point of contact in the dialogue of spiritual experience (chap. 5 *Mysticism - the point of contact in spiritual dialogue*).

The message that Martin Dojčár intended to convey to his readers can be summed up in a few words: *it is an encounter and a common journey*. That is exactly what the book wants to be: an invitation to an encounter and a common journey of people of different religious and spiritual orientations.

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