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MAISTO, TEISĖS Į MAISTĄ IR MAISTO SAUGUMO PRASMĖS PAIEŠKOS: PRELIMINARŪS FILOSOFINIAI BEI TEOLOGINIAI SVARSTYMAI

Between Grassroot Initiatives and a Large Institutional Agenda:
Seeking Subsidiarity Approach to Food Security

SUMMARY

The article looks into the meaning of food in the framework of sustainable development. The first intention is to show that this approach is fully in line not only with some latest policy documents (Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security) and a 'standard' interpretation of the subsidiarity principle in the Catholic social teaching but also with a broader hermeneutical (both philosophical and theological) reflection of the meaning of food in our everyday experience. Philosophical assumptions of food security are highlighted with reference to the concept commonly used in international policy documents, such as those of the United Nations. Three philosophical insights into the meaning of food paved the way for its brief reflection from the viewpoint of Christian theology.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama maisto prasmė darnios plėtros kontekste. Pirmiausia norima parodyti, kad šis požiūris visiškai atitinka ne tik kai kuriuos naujausius politinius dokumentus (Hirosimos veiksmų programą dėl maisto saugumo užtikrinimo) bei „standartinį“ subsidiarumo principo aiškinimą katalikų socialiniame mokyje, bet ir platesnį hermeneutinį (filosofinį bei teologinį) maisto reikšmės mūsų kasdienėje patirtyje apmąstymą. Filosofinės maisto saugumo prielaidos aiškinamos, atsižvelgiant į tarptautiniuose politikos dokumentuose, pavyzdžiui, Jungtinių Tautų, dažniausiai vartojamas sąvokas. Trys filosofinės įžvalgos apie maisto prasmę paskatino apmąstyti maisto svarbą, išryškėjančią žvelgiant iš krikščioniškosios teologijos pozicijų.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: maistas, teisė į maistą, maisto saugumas, filosofiniai apmąstymai, teologiniai svarstymai.

KEY WORDS: food, right to food, food security, philosophical reflection, theological reflection.

INTRODUCTION

One of the notable results of the recent Hirošima G7 Summit is quite a robust statement about food security.¹ The message of the *Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security* may not be especially new and attractive to the specialists and ideological partisans, but it points to key moral pressures which both politicians and ordinary citizens are struggling with today.²

What is definitely positive about the Hiroshima Action Statement is that it is much more modest in its claims than widely recognized UN Millenium Goals or 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It does not make any new grand promises guaranteed by a particular date but, with a certain degree of 'biblical realism', it rather counts with the fact that the hungry and the poor 'will always be with us' (Mt 26, 11). The HAS also resists the temptation to treat food security as an abstract static global quantity lost in the labyrinth of bureaucratic newspeak and out of its historical context.³ The document rather attempts to solve it simultaneously in *three different time perspectives*: 1. as a complex response to an immediate security crisis, 2. as a medium-term prevention of such crises, and 3. as a long-term strategy of food security resilience in line with the principle of 'the global nutrition for all'.⁴

Next, the Hiroshima Action Statement does not present its proposals as final ideological answers but rather open-ended fragile human enterprises. As a result, it partly escapes a *seemingly 'irreconcilable' war* between *left-wing utopism* expecting, e.g., total elimination of world

hunger within a few years, and *right-wing pragmatic cynism* which tends to consider any development aid as automatically doomed to failure. On the one hand, the document demands 'a substantial increase in humanitarian and development funding' and 'more concerted effort' of international food security agencies, on the other hand, it calls for 'rule-based, open, fair and transparent international trade' and permanent responsibility (Area 1 – Responding to Immediate Food Crisis).⁵ The medium-term Area 2 *combines* the strategies of '*prevention from above*' (more effective sharing of data, research and warning systems of large organizations, such as FAO or the World Bank) *with 'prevention from below'* accenting more concrete', 'targeted' and 'cost-effective' approaches to food security.⁶

The most elaborated Area 3 focusing on long-term transformation of nutrition and food systems seeks a *compromise* between *productivity* (but also sustainability and resilience) *of large centralized* food security programmes usually guaranteed by public authorities and *free engagement of small stakeholders* including local farms, creative innovators, academic researchers, high-tech companies, safety nets, media platforms, indigenous peoples, and civil society associations.⁷ When the document calls for *free initiative*, it makes direct *ethical claims*, such as, 'to seek *meaningful outcomes*', '*develop a shared understanding*' of food security actions (medium-term Area 2) and, especially, *make agriculture and food systems* not only more sustainable, resilient and environmentally-friendly, but also *more inclusive*.⁸

Much stronger tension between 'left-wing' and 'right-wing' approaches to food security (and human development in general) is reflected in *current theoretical debates*, especially among economists. In the last few years, 'the left-wing' position promoting large-scale, centralized, and redistributive solutions has been mostly represented by *Jeffrey Sachs*, an American macroeconomist, a former advisor to some CEE governments in their transition to market economy, and, later, one of the main protagonists of the Millennium Village Project, UN Millennium Project (2002–2006) and UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015).⁹ In his crucial book *The End of Poverty* (2005), Sachs associated food security with the so-called *poverty trap*, which can be mainly (although not exclusively) overcome by *global mobilization of investment and collective political effort* (often referred to as '*the Big Push*') (Sachs 2005: 20; 226).¹⁰ Sachs describes the poverty trap even more concretely when he connects it with '*the lack of capital*' that can be used not only for human survival (subsistence) but also for saving and future investment (Sachs 2005: 56).¹¹ Although Sachs also admits other factors, such as government failures, cultural barriers, lack of innovation, demography, and even some kind of 'geographical determinism', he considers the poverty trap the main cause of world hunger, especially in rural areas. Here, food productivity is its '*most important determinant*' (Ibid, p. 69).

'*The right wing*' position is usually connected with the former World Bank analyst *William Easterly* and his book *The White Man's Burden* (2007). For Easterly,

helping the poor is not just a matter of mobilizing power and resources by external authorities or the 'coordination' of large donors, governments and development agencies. Giving large unrealistic promises realized solely by collective actors risks a great deal of inefficacy, ignorance, irresponsibility, and waste (Ibid., p. 17–22).¹² It is much better to count on *small local initiatives* launched by *poor people themselves* or on *concrete, focused and feasible projects solving complex problems step by step*. Those who make this effort Easterly calls '*seekers*' and their activity '*homegrown development*' (Easterly 2007: 16–23). Easterly also provides a number of examples how enormous progress in the fight against poverty has been achieved completely without external aid or just with the one which was purely decentralized and based on *permanent feedback and personal accountability* to its target group (Ibid, p. 23–24).

While Sachs' 'generational pledges' of international aid often sound dangerously naive and overbearing, Easterly's rather productive scepticism becomes dogmatic at the point when it leaves the rescue of the poor entirely up to themselves, especially when they face *crushing pressures of unregulated financial speculations* (e.g. during the Global Economic Crisis of 2008–2009), *agricultural and pharmaceutical monopolies* (in the period of COVID 19), *political imperialism* (China's role in Africa) or the brutal '*weaponization of food*', which is vividly demonstrated in the current Russian war against Ukraine (see Easterly. 2007: 14–37; Deaton. 2013)¹³ What makes the G7 Hiroshima Action Statement more

promising than these partisan theoretical positions is *a non-ideological combination of contrasting perspectives, setting its proposals in concrete historical contexts, and some degree of real political power to implement them.*

Nevertheless, what is still missing in this political document is, firstly, a *deeper* philosophical, ethical and even theological *insight into* what the food (that is to be 'secured') *can mean* in our everyday lived experience (a more nuanced *hermeneutical reflection* which also feeds back into practical policy), and, secondly, *an exploration of a fragile 'space of social in-between'* ('the middle-ground zone') in which 'large' robust interventions of global market and politics *intersect* with concrete personal and group initiatives (see Collins. 2007).¹⁴ Such approaches can grasp food security issue with greater complexity and flexibility.

However, the main goal of this paper is not to reach a formal 'diplomatic' compromise between the 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to food security.

FOOD, RIGHT TO FOOD AND FOOD SECURITY (A PRELIMINARY PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION)

Although securing food for everyone is primarily a practical (economic and political) task, we cannot settle here only for ready-made technocratic answers of experts, but we also have to ask some more general human questions about *the meaning* of this task. There are basically *four discussion areas* which official documents on food security usually leave aside but whose exploration has a direct effect on practical policy, if it is to reach

It is rather to *explore already existing opportunities for human subsidiarity* in this field and the *overlapping networks of human initiative across different levels of social life*. One, but definitely not the only, contribution to this task is an attempt at a *renewed interpretation of the subsidiarity principle in Catholic social teaching*, which will be further enriched with a *more general hermeneutical enquiry* into the mundane and festive meaning of food in our lives and with *modest 'prophetic' critique* of food production and distribution systems in our time. In the final part of the paper, I will offer a very brief outline of some practical applications of *subsidiarity approach to food security* at different levels of human social coexistence (interpersonal, municipal, regional, national and international). This approach, understood not as sectarian but broadly dialogical, can be a surprisingly rich source of inspiration for considering food *both as a commodity and a symbol, the first ethical soil of human existence open up for spiritual transcendence.*

reasonable outcomes. What adds urgency to these questions is deeper ethical dilemmas which emerge from them and are not relevant only for the management of agriculture but *for human existence* in general.

The first area concerns *the meaning of food* in human life and it involves the questions, such as: Is food just 'a matter', a physical substance, an object among objects, used only for (often violent) sei-

zure and digestion, for drawing forces against forces of others, or is it rather 'a crop', 'a yield' in which human toil and care combine with the mysterious power of nature to which we are always *bound* and which is (despite all our technical abilities) still rather unpredictable? Is human eating just an 'urge', 'an animal drive', an immediate and unintentional gratification of our instincts regardless of others and our limits, or is it rather a tireless but never sufficient *defiance against the necessity of death*, human finitude, which also implies some degree of *responsibility*, self-control, judgement, and outlook for the future? (Patočka 1992)¹⁵

To what extent can we (under the conditions of 'industrialized agriculture', 'urbanized landscape' and globalized food chains) still experience 'harmonious consonance with nature', 'native heath' or 'original soil'? Can we rely on 'anachronic returns' or rather 'bourgeois agricultural alternatives', such as, the Slow Food Movement or farmer markets, which can enrich our lifestyles but whose connection with hardships of farming is only loose and questionable? Does 'land cultivation' and real origin of food still have any meaning for our daily lives or are they ultimately at the margins of our perception and conscience? Do we still understand nature as an unbridled and *inexhaustible* power or rather a *powerless victim* of our random frantic interventions, which can be partly saved only by another highly sophisticated human artefacts?

No less complicated is the experience of our own and especially other people's *hunger*. Watching extremely starving children in remote poor countries rightly

provokes our outrage and compassion, but it definitely does not mean to understand this experience in its core. Extreme hunger (both individual and shared) is definitely a *limit situation* (Jaspers) which throws human beings into the heart of the drama and bare truth of their existence. Therefore it always raises questions that cannot be answered in advance and with ultimate validity. Is starving, in any way, still compatible with human dignity, freedom and hope (with questioning the meaning of being), or should we rather admit with 'consistent' materialists that a person, from a certain point of its degradation, can alienate so radically from itself that it becomes only 'a thing among other things'? (see Levi 1947)¹⁶ Starving is undoubtedly one of the deepest insults to humanity both for its victims and for those who cause it or watch it only indifferently. Nevertheless, if I see myself or the other only as a total 'biological necessity', 'object' or result of 'the iron law of history', I am lost not only as 'a moral being' but also in my purely instinctive programme of physical survival (see Lusseyran 1953).¹⁷

We all definitely know some moments when we blindly and without restraint throw ourselves only into our immediate desires. But even in these moments, almost impossible to be captured by human words and signs, or even in the absurdity of starvation, a human person cannot be absolutely indifferent to its existence and, at least in this minimum sense, be *responsible* for it (see Milchert 2012).¹⁸

The *second* controversial *area* is the 'right for food', i.e., the meaning, validity and range of this claim, and possibilities

of its practical (especially legal and political) implementation. In his book *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), a libertarian philosopher Friedrich August von Hayek writes: 'Above all, [...] we must recognize that *we* may be free and yet miserable. Liberty does not mean all good things, or the absence of all evils. It is true that *to be free may mean freedom to starve, to make costly mistakes, or to run mortal risks.*' (Hayek. 1960: 68–69). According to Hayek, 'a liberty', a human right properly understood, belongs to the class of 'negative concepts' which 'describe the absence of a particular obstacle – coercion by other men'. '/Liberty/ does not assure us of any particular opportunities, but *leaves it to us to decide* what use we shall make of the circumstances in which we find ourselves' (ibid, p. 70). While for many leading current development experts the right to food is 'a *social entitlement right*', for Hayek, it can be legally enforced only at a certain *necessary minimum* (which ethicists usually call *subsistence*) or when the state, through intentional or unintentional unavailability of food, seriously 'endangers or harms lives of its citizens' (Küppers. 2021: 151–161).¹⁹

We may, of course, argue legitimately that such a right is *universal* (because it is a necessary condition of human existence and dignity) and that it should be also more positive and robust. However, in practice, almost any access to food is based on the burden of human work and private *non-political contracts*, so *no direct provision of food* on this ground *can be automatically guaranteed*, and even when it is, *it must definitely not be unlimited*.²⁰

Such controversies definitely call for adoption and justification of some common *ethical criteria* for how the food right can be applied and even legally enforced both in everyday and critical situations. If, in the most extreme case, the universal food right was applied strictly to all people even *against their will*, any kind of *voluntary fasting*, whether motivated by religion, health, protest or ecological lifestyle, *would become impossible* (or at least illegal).²¹ Fasting practices may be not used as a systematic policy and be so robust as they were in the past but they are still a legitimate part of a universal, especially Western, human cultural heritage, which points to *the limits of the present-day progressive overlegalistic understanding of human rights*.²² Many historical examples of 'starving out of justice or solidarity' also show that the character of human rights is never only individual (self-promotion) or general (granted only to everyone or no one) but also *historically concrete, socially-shared*, and often *demanding personal sacrifice*.²³ Neither *automatic delivery of social welfare* nor the *use of force* (even when it is necessary and limited by law) is *human right's last word*.

Other critics might claim that Hayek's position can be applied only in rich societies, whose experience with hunger is typically a matter of choice and not externally imposed and long-term necessity. However, the reality shows that *well-set ethical criteria for the public provision of food* are *as important in poor developing countries* where unjust practices in this field often lead to severe dependence of the whole populations on highly corrupt politicians rather than permanent elimi-

nation of poverty. The greatest paradox of applying the universal right for food is the fact that in the present-day complex globalized world starving and insatiability can always appear side by side.

In short, the right for food remains a fundamental and universal right but it is neither ethically nor legally more important than personal and civic-political freedom (Weil. 1952: 9)²⁴ „Physical“ and civic-political rights rather make a *complex circular relationship*, in which they presuppose each other. Respect for freedom of all human persons must be (mandatorily but not exclusively) expressed by satisfying their earthly (bodily) needs, while meeting our bodily needs *must be transformed* into our care for freedom and dignity of others, *including* both general and concrete *food justice*.²⁵ In case of extreme escalation of the conflict between the right for food and freedom (‘the right to have rights’ at all), freedom should be given some (out of historical context hardly pre-definable) *priority* (Arendt 1949: 24–37).²⁶ In everyday historical reality, the food right should be understood not only as a legal (although not unconditional) entitlement but also as *an obligation to concrete hungry persons and communities, which ‘imposes different attitudes and actions depending on different situations’* (Weil 1952: 10). For the purpose of this study, this stance on the right for food can be called a *moderate liberal-solidar approach*.

The *third area* of our philosophical reflection is *the very concept of food security*. Although it seems a typical product of bureaucratic logic constructing artificial terms to be used almost for any purpos-

es, there are, surprisingly, some theoretical ideas in its background. For example, the first broadly accepted definition of food security introduced by the World Bank in 1986 (‘Food security is access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life’) (Conway. 2012: 66), is directly influenced by the Indian economist and philosopher *Amartya Sen*.²⁷ Sen, who combines a classical Aristotelian concept of ‘human flourishing’ with some buried ideas of modern economists (William Petty, Adam Smith) *redirects development policy from its means* (food resources, income or GDP) to its *ends*, namely to the key concept of *capabilities*, i.e., *real opportunities* to choose a life *human persons have reasons to value* (Sen. 1999: 74).²⁸ Sen’s *flexible* approach to development, which is *on the way* between the right-wing ‘negative freedom’ (removing undesirable barriers, coercion or interference) and the left-wing ‘positive freedom’ (access to resources, goods and welfare), can be judged from two perspectives: of capabilities and functionings. While *capabilities* refer to ‘things a person *can* (or is free to) *be or do*’, *functionings* describe those ‘a person may / *actually/ be or do*’. (ibid, p. 75). The prominent example is the distinction between a rich person who decides to fast and a poor person who is forced to starve. Although both have the same ‘functioning achievement in terms of eating or nourishment’, they don’t have the same ‘capability set’ because only the first of them has a free choice (ibid).

The limit of Sen’s capability approach (and of any practical policy inspired by it) is quite a vague concept of freedom

which seems to work both as its 'result' and 'prerequisite'. A logical response to this indeterminacy is expert obsession to introduce more and more *indicators* for measuring what 'capability' means, which undermines Sen's original idea that specific content of this term should be left to open personal scrutiny and 'public reasoning' (Sen 2005: 151–166).²⁹ An alternative approach to capability has been elaborated by the philosopher *Martha Nussbaum* who established the concept of 'combined capabilities' (*connecting 'internal preparedness with external opportunity'*). Nussbaum considered freedom in relation to *responsibility* and *moral self-constraint* and made the list of the '*minimum core capabilities*' which are a condition of personal dignity and 'a decent society.' (Nussbaum 2011: 33–34).

In the meantime, the capability approach has become a typical model of international development policy and, as a result, food security claim must be also understood within this framework. Nevertheless, in both Sen's and Nussbaum's perspective, food security does not mean direct and unconditional supply of food (as a physical good) to everyone, but rather providing free, meaningful and just *opportunities* for earning a living and society-wide recognition of human dignity.

The *fourth* and the last *area* of our reflection concentrates on *theological assumptions of food, hunger and agriculture*. Almost complete detachment of major current lifestyles from the real experience of farming obscures a spontaneous traditional intuition that food is never only a matter of bare necessity and survival, but also of *human culture* and *spirit*. What

connects human cultures almost universally despite all differences in their myths, symbols and value systems, was glorifying the work of a peasant who, with humility, peace and toil, transforms the unbridled nature into a world capable of *human inhabitation*.³⁰ Harmonizing with cyclical rhythms of nature and keeping order in the unstructured abyss of chaos also indicates rich connections between the everyday and the festive, the earth and the sky, and the human and the divine. No less ambiguous and tied to the modern process of '*de-agriculturalization*' is the tendency for the *secularization of food and eating* (see Üngör 2013).³¹

The first assumption of a theological view of food is a hunch of nature ('earth') as a *power* that is *partly beyond human control* and which, yet, or rather for that very reason, makes it possible to win our bread and harvest our crops. This *transcendent power* from which we ourselves arise and to which we return can be *both creative and destructive* and it is a *source of ongoing movement and change*, which encompasses but is also encompassed in human history. Earth is full of wealth, fruits and beauty we can enjoy, but also snares, threats and trials in which we must stand. Earth shows itself as being hidden, yielding when we yield to it, defiant when we defy it, and definitely *full of contradictions*. And just like that, in all its unpredictable but still reasonable complexity, it is granted to us as a *gift*.³²

To see food as a gift, especially in Christian perspective, reveals completely new hermeneutical aspects which can be found neither in merely compulsive cycles of self-gratification nor in the breadwinning self-discipline and reshaping

ing the world with human labour. Firstly, the gift of food is never fully owned by its 'farmer' or consumer. It is a *sign of Donor's favour*, care and generosity which cannot be taken for granted.³³ Secondly, because a gift is not a reward for merit, it cannot be fully measured or forcibly exacted, and, therefore, the food always demands some form of *gratitude* from those who receive it.³⁴ Eating is not only temporary and cyclical forgetting for our mortality but it also reminds us of God who saves our lives and keeps it in his eternal memory. Third, since the world food resources are limited and God can grant 'fruits of earth' to anybody, any form of greed or waste is against both the order of Creation and human justice. Fourth, *physical satisfaction*, safety or welfare are legitimate hu-

man needs ('Give us this day our daily bread', Mt. 6:11) but they are *not the only or the last concern* of Christ's disciples (Dt. 8, 3, Mt. 4, 4). Fifth, food is not intended only for personal self-satisfaction but *also for sharing and feast*, which often *establish a community* both with God and other people (see particularly the biblical concept of the *covenant* in Gn 26, 30, 2 Sam 3, 12–13:20–21, Iz 23, 6–8, Iz 55, 1–5 and especially in the Gospel of Luke, where dining becomes a *symbol* of early coming of the Messiah and 'God's Kingdom') (Lk 22, 16; Lk 22, 30). The ultimate theological meaning of food is the Christian mystery of the Eucharist. Just as Christ gives his whole life to us in the simplest piece of bread, giving life for others becomes an imperative to all his true disciples. (see Patočka. 1992: 249-251).³⁵

CONCLUSION 1

The main goal of this paper was to show that food security is not a purely pragmatic (or technocratic), but a very complex human issue which cannot be addressed without a broader insight into its ethical, philosophical and even theological backgrounds. The exploration of this problem can also not avoid more practical debates between 'the top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to international development, which was, in our case, mainly represented by the polemic of Jeffrey Sachs' strategy of 'the Big Push' and William Easterly's 'homegrown seeking'. These two strategies were critically reflected from the third, 'middle-ground', position of the Hiroshima G7 Summit of 20 May, 2023, which seems to offer some combined and more balanced solutions.

Nevertheless, our priority in the first part of the paper was to address the issue of food security by a much more nuanced *subsidiarity approach* referring (rather loosely) to the Christian (especially Catholic) *ethical interpretation* of this principle, which was described as 'the exploration of a fragile space of social in-between' where small community-based initiatives and robust interventions of business and politics *flexibly support each other*.

Our first intention was to show that this approach is fully in line not only *with some latest policy documents* (Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security) and a 'standard' interpretation of the *subsidiarity principle in the Catholic social teaching* but also with a broader *hermeneutical* (both philosoph-

ical and theological) reflection of *the meaning of food* in our everyday lived experience.

Our preliminary reflection takes *four directions*. The first reveals agriculture as a form of an *existential bond with nature* (a 'native heath') which, regardless of all its robust human transformations, still remains a partly *unpredictable power* not fully kept under our control. This aspect also involves a certain dialectic (or rather a circular relationship) between food and hunger which shows eating not only as a blind biological instinct but a *part of a universal ontological dynamics of 'human responsibility, acceptance and care'* (Patočka, Heidegger). The second line of thought also raises the question of *the meaning and ethical justification of the right for food*. Partly following the libertarian polemic of Friedrich August von Hayek against progressive (hyperlegalistic) interpretations of the food right as an automatic and unlimited entitlement, we seek *some more balanced ethical criteria for just public distribution of food*, which also have to *respect moral and economic limits*, and, especially, *real conditions of human dignity and freedom* (a nexus between the right for food and civic and political rights).

The third point of our reflection concerns *philosophical assumptions of food security* as the concept commonly used in international policy documents, such as those of the United Nations. The roots of this concept can be found especially in Amartya Sen's theory of *capabilities*, i.e., 'real opportunities to live a life which persons are free and have reasons to value'. This theory (further developed by the Aristotelian ethicist Martha Nuss-

baum) does definitely not call for direct and unconditional supply of food (as a physical good) to everyone, but only for *providing meaningful and just opportunities to earn a living as a part of a broader demand of human dignity and equality*.

Three philosophical insights into the meaning of food paved the way for its brief reflection from the viewpoint of Christian theology. The biblically inspired theological mediation shows nature (Creation) as a *transcendental power* that is both *conducive to life* and *full of contradictions*. The food in its context is *simultaneously the simplest fact of nature and a continuous miracle* (Benjamin Franklin), which calls for *constant human sharing and gratitude*. Due to this ambiguity, the meaning of food (in both religious and non-religious sense) is never trivial but reveals through a remarkable variety of *symbols, regards, customs and rituals* and eating cannot be only a routine simply taken for granted. This *sacred dimension* of food going beyond human capabilities points towards an *inexhaustible mystery of life* granted by a generous Giver who himself becomes 'the flesh and blood' of a fragile human being. This is also why we can meet Him and ourselves most deeply in *breaking the bread of love*, of which the Eucharist sacrament is only the ultimate source and expression (Lk 24, 30).

The Part 2 of this paper, which is to be published in the next issue of this journal, will show how our preliminary philosophical and theological reflection can be applied in our proposal of the so-called "subsidiarity model" of the current food security policy and practice.

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Endnotes

- ¹ If we follow the definition of the United Nations, food security is both a *lived historical reality* (a horizon of chances and threats) to be analysed and an *ideal* we should strive to achieve although we are always short of it. The urgency of the ideal follows from the urgency of the lived experience and vice versa. From this dual and yet synoptic perspective, food security can be defined as an ability of persons (on a local, regional, national, and even a global scale) 'to get physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which [...] meets their needs for an active, healthy /and ethically speaking also a good/ life'. [06-06-2023]. This definition is a slightly developed paraphrase of the definition presented by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) directly inspired by the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS). See [06-06-2023]. <https://www.ifpri.org/topic/food-security#:~:text=Food%20security,%20as%20definejd%20by,an%20active%20and%20healthy%20life> and the official agenda of the CFS

on the website : <https://www.fao.org/cfs/en/>. Compare also with the concept interpretation within the UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially the SDG 2 called Zero Hunger. [06-06-2023]. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

- ² The document was released on 20 May, 2023 and its full text can be found, for example, on the White House official website. [06-06-2023]. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/hiroshima-action-statement-for-resilient-global-food-security/>.

- ³ One of unintended burdens of current global development politics is that the tangle of its statements and overlapping documents is becoming almost incomprehensible even for its most competent experts.' Johannes Wallacher. Für eine menschengerechte Ordnung der Weltwirtschaft. Anstöße von Fratelli tutti'. In: *Amosinternational* 15, 2021, 1, p. 37?

- ⁴ See the main structure of the document, especially its three major axes here: [09-06-2023]. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/>

statements-releases/2023/05/20/hiroshima-action-statement-for-resilient-global-food-security/. The claim to 'the global nutrition for all' directly refers to *the universal right to food* which is already defined by international law, especially by the General Comment 12 of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. According to this committee, the universal right to food is fulfilled 'when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.' OHCHR Fact Sheet No. 16 (Rev.1): The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. [09-06-2023]. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FactSheet16rev.1en.pdf>. However, there are still lively and polarized debates about how this right should be understood, applied and enforced and how far it claims may reach. Some proponents claim it can be reduced only to 'a minimum ration of nutrients' which is necessary for human subsistence. Others argue that it should meet further, more demanding, criteria. For example, the document of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights The Right to Adequate Food (published in April 2010) sets three major criteria: *the criteria of food availability* (the food has to come from natural resources, either in the form of farming, fishing, hunting or gathering, and be easily obtained from markets and shops), *the criteria of food accessibility* (the food should be economically and physically affordable for everyone including the vulnerable ones), and the *criteria of food adequacy* (the food has to satisfy the dietary needs of persons with regard to their age, living conditions, health, physical and mental development, and cultural habits). For a detailed study of the material see [09-06-2023]. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/FactSheet34en.pdf>. Such formal claims and paper definitions are, of course, far from real behaviour of actors in everyday situations. These usually require attention to detail, flexibility, empathy, resoluteness and prudence. For the FAO experience with practical implementation of the right to food see also: [09-06-2023]. <https://www.fao.org/3/ca6140en/ca6140en.pdf>.

⁵ [09-06-2023]. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/>

hiroshima-action-statement-for-resilient-global-food-security/.

⁶ [09-06-2023]. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/20/hiroshima-action-statement-for-resilient-global-food-security/>. Three main 'thematic lines' of the document are not explicitly called 'areas'; they are only numbered.

⁷ Churches and religious communities can also be included, although they are not explicitly mentioned. The document also requires a *coordination* of food security activities and methods at all levels of 'social hierarchy', i.e., at the local, regional, national, international and global one.

⁸ It is, however, fully legitimate to ask if vague terms 'engagement' or 'inclusion' are really meant here as synonyms of *free and responsible participation* of those who are affected, or just their 'external encompassing' into something which is not of their own!

⁹ For a rather positive review of the Millenium Village Project see: [13-06-2023]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20091204230808/http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2573.pdf>. For critical scrutiny of the project results and evaluation methodology see: [13-06-2023]. https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/Clemens-Demombynes-new-transparency_2.pdf. For critical analysis of the ethical/value background of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, see, for example, [13-06-2023]. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/political-impact-of-the-sustainable-development-goals/planetary-integrity/147A3264C1C585FF83CA3E27FB0550B3>. Compare also: [13-06-2023]. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/political-impact-of-the-sustainable-development-goals/sustainable-development-goals-as-a-transformative-force/284F3919F81EEAF4F3DAC476F22DA3D6>.

¹⁰ By 'a poverty trap' Sachs means the *inability of the poorest to get on the way of economic development* ('to get a first foothold on the /development/ ladder') *only by themselves*. From this point of view, a poverty trap is a kind of 'structural challenge' which gets predominantly *beyond their individual choice and free will*. Jeffrey Sachs.

¹¹ Sachs speaks not only about a *physical* (financial), but also a *human and natural capital*. Therefore, with some important reservations, his poverty trap might partly remind us of traditional CST concepts of the 'structural sin' and 'just wage'.

- ¹² Compare also with critical analyses of international development aid in the study: Raghuram G. Rajan – Arvind Subramanian. *Aid and Growth: What Does the Cross-Country Evidence Really Show?* [23-06-2023]. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2005/wp05127.pdf>. See also a recent report about the suspension of international food aid to Ethiopia due to enormous theft by local officials and fighters. [23-06-2023]. <https://apnews.com/article/ethiopia-humanitarian-food-aid-theft-us-un-c129b6942663cbfc44c6605fed97928b>.
- ¹³ For a more detailed criticism of Sachs' approach (and even of a certain part of the UN development agenda) see Ann Swanson. Does Foreign Aid Always Help the Poor? October 23, 2015. [09-06-2023]. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/10/does-foreign-aid-always-help-the-poor/>. On Russian blocking of Ukrainian ports and destruction of grain silos and delivery infrastructure, see, especially: [09-10-2023]. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/07/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-odesa-ports.html>. For Russian termination of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, see: [09-10-2023]. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/17/russia-black-sea-grain-deal-putin-ukraine-crimean-bridge-attack/>.
- ¹⁴ For example, the authors of the popular book *Empires of Food* (2010) Evan D. G. Fraser and Andrew Rimas plead for a 'blended' or 'glocal' model of agriculture which combines a rich variety of 'rather small food systems providing customers with products at not a very large distance' with 'their connection to the worldwide commercial network'. Evan D. G. Fraser – Andrew Rimas. *Empires of Food: Feast, Famine, and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations*. London: Free Press, 2010. Another 'medium-approach' to food security is supported by the former director of the World Bank Paul Collins in his work *The Bottom Billion* of 2007.
- ¹⁵ For example, the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka places the satisfaction of basic human needs into the broader framework of the so-called 'first movement of human existence', by which he creatively develops Heidegger's ontology of 'care' (our 'non-indifference to being') through Aristotle's concept of movement (*dynamis*) as 'free realization of possibilities which we already are'. 'The first movement' refers not only to the paradoxical tension between our individual separation and ongoing attachment to the earth (*rooting*,
- anchoring*) but also to mutual 'acceptance' of adults and the new-born both in an intimate and general human family. Jan Patočka. 'Přirozený svět' v meditaci svého autora po třiatřiceti letech ('The Natural World' in the Meditation of its author after 33 years).
- ¹⁶ This question has been asked urgently in the most horrible moments of human history. See, e.g., the memoir of the Italian Jewish prisoner of Auschwitz (Monowitz-Buna).
- ¹⁷ According to the French Resistance Movement group leader Jacques Lusseyran, those who wanted 'only to survive' in the Nazi concentration camp and were not solidar with others, died the first.
- ¹⁸ According to Heidegger, our being (Dasein), even at its most animal level, always includes a moment of practical 'pre-understanding of our possibilities', the relation to the end and death, which throws us back into the urgency of the present historical situation, and is a minimum ontological condition of *conscience* and *meaning*. Martin Heidegger: *Sein und Zeit. (Erste Hälfte)*. In: *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*. Band 8, 1927. For Christian interpretation of Heidegger's philosophy of death.
- ¹⁹ For further interpretation of this debate, see, e.g. Arnd Küppers. In this context, we may also refer to the practice of the so-called *subsistence agriculture* used 'only for survival' (of farmers and their families) with almost no surplus or investment ambition. See: Tony Waters. *Farmer Power: The Continuing confrontation between subsistence farmers and development bureaucrats*. [27-06-2023]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20160527053917/http://www.ethnography.com/2010/12/farmer-power-the-continuing-confrontation-between-subsistence-farmers-and-development-bureaucrats/>.
- ²⁰ Setting reasonable *limits* to the right for food certainly does not absolve us from responsibility to improve, systematically and with maximum effort, the situation of the hungry and vulnerable. However, for the sake of *justice* and *efficiency* of this effort, we have to consider, at least, available food resources and production capacities, real needs and opportunities of those we want to help, powers and interests of potential stakeholders, fair balance of benefits and costs between donors and recipients, strategies suitable for concrete local contexts, practically

- verified procedures to ensure accountability and feedback, focusing food aid on concrete justified priorities and target groups, etc. The range and interconnectedness of these standards is what makes the application of the universal right to food an extremely challenging, almost impossible, mission.
- ²¹ The French philosopher Simone Weil (1909-1943), who was an extremely fragile and ill intellectual, probably killed herself by hunger because she wanted to be solidar with the suffering inhabitants of German-occupied France. In one of her philosophical works Weil claims: 'The effective fulfillment of a right does not come from the one who has it, but from others who recognize their obligation to him.' Susan Weil. *L'enracinement: Prélude à une déclaration des devoirs envers l'être humain*. Paris : Les Éditions Gallimard, 1949, p. 9. [27-06-2023]. http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/weil_simone/enracinement/weil_Enracinement.pdf. [27-06-2023]. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070209204326/http://www.newcriterion.com/archive/20/mar02/weil.htm>.
- ²² In this context, Christians are almost obliged to remind ongoing validity of the Christ's statement: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' Mt 4, 4. For alternative English translations of this statement see here: [16-09-2023]. <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Matthew%204:4>.
- ²³ The Czech evangelical theologian, dissident and Charter 77 signatory Jakub Trojan describes this attitude as follows: „Not wanting to promote oneself, serving the development of the entire community, demands self-denial. Such freedom does not shy away from struggles and is often met with misunderstanding, even injustices and displeasure. In the farthest horizon, even the sacrifice of one's own life, as witnessed by those who dedicated themselves to this supreme freedom.“ Jakub Trojan. Svoboda a spravedlnost. In. *Křesťanská revue* 2, 2016, 26. [27-06-2023]. <http://www.krestanskarevue.cz/Spravedlnost-asvoboda-Jakub-S-Trojan.html>.
- ²⁴ At this point, our position is quite critical and different from otherwise very inspiring interpretation of Simone Weil who grants the food right a unique priority over any other rights, which she even marks as it's 'analogies'. See Simone Weil.
- ²⁵ 'The role of food in fostering freedom can be an extremely important one. On the other side, freedom may also causally influence the success of the pursuit of food for all.' [...] What may superficially appear to be rather remote connections between food and freedom can be seen to be, in fact, central in importance and extremely rich in the variety of influences involved, operating in the two respective directions, from food to freedom, and from freedom to food.' Amartya Sen. *Food and Freedom*. Sir John Crawford Memorial Lecture Washington, D.C. October 29, 1987, p. 1-2. [29-06-2023]. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/132695911.pdf>.
- ²⁶ The temptation of insatiable tyrants to exchange 'a little grub' for the freedom of the soul is as old as human history. The concept of 'the right to have rights' understood as a precondition for protecting any human right was formulated by Hannah Arendt in her study. Although Arendt could hardly predict the scope of international codification and implementation of human rights in the new millennium, her basic intuition that *permanent and systematic guarantee* of human rights *requires some form of sovereign legal and political authority* (typically a liberal constitutional democracy, now possibly more and more extended to a transnational and even global level) is still valid and stimulating for further discussion. Human rights, including the right for food, always *transcend* any political authority but they *cannot exist in a non-political vacuum*.
- ²⁷ The World Bank. *Poverty and hunger: issues and options for food security in developing countries*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 1986, p. 1. See Gordon Conway. Sen's work had also a strong effect on the *Human Development Index* (introduced in 1990) considered as one of the cornerstones in history of the UN development policy. Elizabeth A. Stanton. *The Human Development Index: A History*. February 2007. [30-06-2023]. https://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1101&context=peri_workingpapers.
- ²⁸ Elsewhere in the book, capabilities are defined as 'relevant personal characteristics that govern the conversion of primary goods into the person's ability to promote her ends.'
- ²⁹ For the current pressure to 'quantify' and 'operationalize' development policy including food security see, especially: Keith Dowding – Martin Van Hees – Paul Anand – Graham Hunter – Ian

- Carter – Francesco Guala. The Development of capability indicators. In. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 10 (1), 2009, p. 125-152.
- ³⁰ Analyzing concrete examples of this cultural-anthropological constant from the Egyptian and Babylonian mysteries through ancient culture to the Jewish and Christian Bible goes far beyond the scope of this study.
- ³¹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165176513000700>.
- ³² This passage takes some inspiration from *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's Hymn to Matter*. Jersey, 8 August, 1919 and the spiritual reflection of Carlo Caretto in Carlo Caretto. *E Dio vide che era cosa buona*. Roma: An Veritas Editrice, 1988. <http://media.sabda.org/alkitab-2/Religion-Online.org%20Books/deChardin,%20Pierre%20Teilhard%20-%20Hymn%20of%20the%20Universe.pdf>
- ³³ One of the US Founding Fathers Benjamin Franklin calls the food *a continual miracle*, which is 'wrought by the hand of God [...] as a reward for his innocent life and virtuous industry.' Benjamin Franklin. Positions to be Examined, 4 April 1769. [18-09-2023]. <https://founders.archives.gov/?q=Positions%20to%20be%20Examined%2C%204%20April%201769&s=11113-11111&sa=&r=9&sr=>
- ³⁴ 'Gift by its nature goes beyond merit, its rule is that of superabundance. It takes place in our souls as a sign of God's presence in us, a sign of what he expects from us.' Benedict XVI. *Caritas in veritate* 34.
- ³⁵ 'Man brings as a gift to God the deeds that he freely performs and with which he creates his life. He is therefore realistically and in the true sense both the one who sacrifices and the sacrificed gift.' Benedikt Mohelník. Eucharistie jako oběť (Eucharist as sacrifice). In. Pavel Dokládál (ed.). *Eucharistie: Smlouva nová a věčná* (Eucharist: new and eternal covenant). Ústí nad Orlicí: Martin Leschinger – FLÉTNA, 2017, p. 87–88. The motive of both God's and human 'kenósis' based on the passage of Phil 2, 5-11 has been a great challenge for many modern theologians. For example, Hans Urs von Balthasar, just in the context of the Eucharist, calls it '*mutual expropriation*' or '*pro-existence*'. Without direct reference to theological debates, the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka describes this fundamental Christian attitude as '*the life of surrender*' and contrasts it with the slavish submission to earth, survival instinct and technocratically understood 'objective reality'. Jan Patočka. 'Přirozený svět' v meditaci svého autora po třiatřiceti letech ('The Natural World' in the Meditation of its author after 33 years).