

Crisis in the Life of Professionals in Pastoral Ministry

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Abstract

This article presents the topic of crisis in the context of prevention in pastoral workers. It points to the possibility of coping with crisis and thus offers a theological view of overcoming it. It is based on the theoretical points of view and practical experience of pastoral workers. Selected aspects, types, preventions and therapies of crisis at the psychotherapeutic or spiritual-theological level are presented in this paper.

Keywords

crisis; pastoral care; prevention; saturation in the pastoral professions

Introduction

A current topic in spiritual care is the ability to manage the various crises and variable triggers that can enter the lives of helping professionals. In spiritual care, attention is often given to those being ministered to, but less care is given to prevention and support for those engaged in ministry. Therefore, an integral part of the training of theologians to be in pastoral ministry should be self-experience, prayer life, working with one's own traumas, and prayer for healing and deliverance. Dealing with crisis from a position of spirituality goes beyond the psychological model, it goes further. It traces the relationship between the pastor and Jesus Christ in his unmistakable and original state and vocation. It points out that crisis is a kind of desert in which hidden motives, traumas, non-acceptance of self, exposure of inner blocks, insecurities, distrust of God, false ideas about God, etc., are revealed. The Christian approach to crisis does not therefore abandon the findings of other sciences, but shows what other possibilities and tools spiritual theology and hodegetics have.

Crisis and specific issues and perspectives for the life of professionals in pastoral ministry

A crisis is a situation, a way of dealing with a certain reality. A crisis is a person's condition, not an external reality, but a person is brought into or finds himself in a crisis relationship to it. A crisis is a human condition.

Psychospiritual crisis found in different religions, it is a specific experience with different spiritual experiences and contents. From the position of Christianity, it is appropriate to seek biblical discernment in accompaniment, or the cooperation of a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist is appropriate. Spiritual crisis can take different forms and trigger variable

themes or traumatic events, inappropriate family patterns or dysfunctional family, manifested in the following areas: loss of meaning in life, loss of faith in God based on a traumatic event, experience of abandonment by God, etc. Spiritual theology has its own method to bring the crisis to a positive effect. A person in crisis is someone unique, and therefore different methods must come together and integrate – to electively help view the situation without a reductive approach and find an effective solution. (De Fiores 2003, 435)

Rosseti (2021, 125) highlights important aspects of self-care and at this point it is important to mention at least the following: contact with one's own feelings, the ability to relieve oneself by crying, anger, to navigate ambivalent feelings, to respect the emotions of others. The important aims for crises prevention are: ability to share and communicate issues, feelings, doubts with other pastors or priests, study of the Bible, personal prayers, openness to creative solutions, deep development of one's own spirituality in Christ, acceptance of suffering in life and ability to sacrifice.

On options for overcoming crisis, De Fiores (2003, 435) states:

Realism – to place the crisis in its true dimension, one must beware of erroneous and misleading interpretations, one must know oneself and the quality of the crisis, then integrate this experience into one's life. *Sir 3:24 "Many people have been misled by their own opinions; their wrong ideas have warped their judgment."*

Optimism – believing that the crisis will definitely have a positive impact. The outcome of a true crisis is an arduous and harsh transition to a situation different from the one from which one emerged. It will not be worse, but it will be for the better. *1 Cor 10:13 "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it."*

Complexity – to perceive the crisis in its complex existential situation. As is the case with any subject, the crisis loses its intensity. It only presents us with its detailed manifestations and prevents us from seeing the whole. Such a reality can cause – confusion, delusional thoughts.

Spiritual life (Linch 2002, 59–69) is absolutely crucial for pastoral workers. Growing into Christ and following him brings the strength to handle all difficulties, crises or doubts in a different perspective Jesus empowers his servants by strengthening them, bestowing gifts and graces. It supports maturity and stress management. It frees from addictions and the Evil One. Christian service is an extraordinary area of the Holy Spirit's action and its manifestation in various services. Pastoral care is not psychology or psychotherapy, but offers Jesus and his salvation, which transforms and heals human being.

The motivation (Baldwin 2018, 157) to serve in the church should be hidden in God's unique calling of a person. God gives gifts, trials and challenges to build a person. It is the original image that God restores and shapes. The composition is thus a space for self-giving and a selfless approach to God and other people.

Every Christian is called to be a unique member of God's Church. But Miller (2010, 63) states this service can become painful if we do not have an inner calling to it. A crisis in the life of clergy can take the form of fear, doubt, uncertainty, the search for a new path, and in some cases also leaving spiritual service. It is necessary to understand service as a vocation and to be rooted in Christ, to trust in his choice and to ask for gifts. Every crisis can be overcome in Jesus, because he does not give tests beyond the limit of human possibilities. Relying on the Holy Spirit and biblical orientation is a fundamental investment for successful ministry and life fulfilment. The relationship with God is not a theory, but a love realized in God's concrete vocation of man. Each service is thus an original in the context of God's will.

Coping (Liguš 2024, 241) with a crisis in the Christian sense can be seen as a chance for a deeper decision for life in Christ. Whatever the origin of the crisis, it can always be offered to God and accepted as a chance to be free from negative qualities, unhealthy relationships or addictions of varying severity

A crisis can thus be a fruitful search for God, a path of self-purification and surrender into Christ's hands. A theological crisis is a difficult test, but at the same time an opportunity to sanctify one's life, searching for the essentials that influence our life decisions and patience in times of tribulation.

Crisis prevention – suggestions of the author

Psychological and spiritual-theological education is an opportunity for self-experience and individual accompaniment. This way can students more understand themselves. The university should give more opportunities for greater representation of practical subjects, including case studies within the university formation, and analysis of individual cases under the guidance of professionals from practice. Pastoral practice is built in connection with the development of experience and skills, exposure to various situations, meaning the individual gradually learns resilience and coping with challenging situations, and thus can better face potential crisis situations.

The actual spiritual life (Downs 2021, 211) is related to the internal vocation (the disposition of the candidate) and the external vocation (vocation based on the discernment of the church, community discernment based on the gifting of the Holy Spirit). It is necessary in the examination of motives for ministry: long-term discernment, searching for one's own intentions, treating one's own traumas, prayer life, life in the community of the church, reading Scripture as a basic spiritual and moral orientation, and at the same time reflecting objectively on the aspects and capacities for ministry in the context of cognitive, psychosocial and spiritual dispositions. Students of theology and pastoral counselling should be prepared for practice in the parish community with care about professional aims at supervision, pastoral counselling, communication skills and growth of Christian spirituality.

Conclusion

Crisis in the life of the clergy can take shape in different levels, emphases and contexts. In this article, selected aspects of crises and their types, the possibilities of crisis prevention and crisis

therapy in the psychotherapeutic or spiritual-theological level have been presented. In the context of the care of helping professionals in churches, it is necessary to view specific problems and difficulties in the light of the Christian tradition, while not losing sight of the findings of other anthropological sciences. Preventing crises in clergy has a significant impact on their quality of life, professional satisfaction, spiritual life and also on their overall attitude towards those they accompany. The orientation of spiritual Christian theology should lead the individual to accept his or her own life and task as a joyful responsibility in a Christocentric way, while reflecting on his or her own weaknesses and presenting them for healing. Crisis is a challenging moment in life, but it is also the moment of the greatest concentration of change. And this change may be reflected in the approach to clients, the approach to one's own life and relationships, one's own vocation, or in the awareness of one's own needs and a change of perspective.

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