

IN MEMORIAM



PROFESSOR MICHAŁ DROŹDŹ (1958–2023)

Professor Michał Drożdż—philosopher, theologian, media expert in media values, ethics and accountability research—passed away on June 15, 2023. A member of the Polish Communication Association (PCA) since 2009, who served on the Executive Board for four terms. Our friend and educator of several generations of social media scientists.

When speaking on behalf of the Polish Communication Association communities, during his funeral at St. Anne’s Church in Kraków, I told the congregation:

„The essence of the life of Father Professor Michał Drożdż was to serve people and science. He was extremely vigilant and sensitive to matters clearly perceiving needs, dreams, and real solutions. He never imposed his opinion, contenting himself with the joy of co-creation and companionship.”

“He embodied the highest ideals of ethics and morality, about which he wisely and expertly wrote in his scholarly articles and books. He was the authority for social science researchers. Above all, they could count on his support, understanding and kindness. Also, for students it was something beyond diploma thesis writing; it was about stimulating curiosity about the world and teaching tolerance. Good and cordial by nature, he showed with his life that it is worth enjoying your job and social meetings”.

Professor Michał Drożdż was born on February 19, 1958, in Nowy Sącz, Poland. He was ordained a priest in 1983, in which he also graduated from the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Kraków (he was a student of Professor Michał Heller). He also graduated in Journalism and Social Communications at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich. He obtained a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Innsbruck, and in 2007 – a postdoctoral degree at the Catholic University of Ružomberok. In 2020, he was awarded the title of professor of social sciences. He devoted his entire

scientific life to the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Kraków, where he served among others, as the director of the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication (2008–2018), and from 2019 – as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Thanks to his involvement, the Kraków media studies center has grown in strength, gaining the reputation of a leading media ethics center. An example of this was the organization of the annual international media ethics conference, which was held at the Pontifical University of John Paul II since 2006.

Professor Michał Drozdź held many honorable functions. He was a member of the Council of Scientific Excellence, the Committee on Social Communication and Media Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences (in the first, historical composition), the Scientific Council of the Polish Episcopal Conference, the Council for Media of the Polish Episcopal Conference, and the chairman of the Supreme Court of Journalism in the Association of Polish Journalists. He was a co-founder and one of the deputy directors of *Radio Dobra Nowina Małopolska* and the head of the Program Council of this diocesan radio station. He was a director of Biblios Publishing House and deputy chairman of the Polish Association of Media and Journalism Education. In 2019, he became the Archdeacon of the Collegiate Chapter in Nowy Sącz. In 2020, he received the „Media” Phoenix Award for his significant contribution to the development of Catholic media. On the eve of the Father Professor’s departure, the conference of the Polish Episcopate appointed him to the group of Consultors of the Council for Media and Social Communication. He was posthumously honored with the highest state decoration of the Republic of Poland – the Order of the White Eagle.

His scholarly academic legacy includes 15 authored and edited monographs as well as research articles in the philosophy of science, media philosophy, media theory, and media ethics. He is the author of the following books: „Osoba i media. Personalistyczny paradygmat etyki mediów” [Person and Media. The personalistic paradigm of media ethics], „Media. Teorie i fikcje” [Media. Theories and fictions], „Etyczne orientacje w mediasferze [Ethical orientations in the mediasphere], „Prawda w mediach – między ideałem a iluzją” [Truth in the media – between ideal and illusion], „Wolność w mediach – między poprawnością a odpowiedzialnością” [Freedom in the media – between correctness and responsibility], „Dobro w mediach – z cienia do światła” [Goodness in the media – from shadow to light]. His attitude as a scientist awakens respect.

The Father Professor was the initiator of the Axiology of Communication – one of the research sections at the Polish Communication Association. In Poland and among Central and Eastern European researchers, he was able to integrate a large group of specialists around media ethics, and more

importantly – students, adepts of the journalist profession. Research projects carried out in the section conveyed a clear message about the need for quality journalism. He was actively involved as a tutor to support the Forum of Young Researchers at the PCA.

He had very good relations with young people, as the director of the Academic Media Center to the Pontifical University of John Paul II. Many of his graduate students work in the media industries, and many continue scientific work at the doctorate level. He was also a great organizer. He was the founder of the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication and the hope for an autonomous Faculty of Journalism.

His successes would not have been possible without diligent work, responsibility and a sense of values and mission. And without the University authorities support and employees' faith in the sense of joint effort.

Father Michał was an understanding superior, open to arguments, eager to engage in discussions. Caring, friendly, tolerant, he created a team ready to take up the work he left behind.

Honor his memory.

Professor Iwona Hofman

PRESIDENT

THE POLISH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION