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Editorial: Secularization in the Catholic Church

In 1958, a young professor from Ratzynbone, Joseph Ratzinger, a later bishop, cardinal and Pope Benedict XVI wrote a prophetic article entitled *Die neue Heiden und die Kirche* (The New Pagans and Church). The main thesis of Ratzinger's discussion refers to the disintegration of the Church from inside by Christians, who, in reality, are pagans. It was his attempt to indicate a galloping secularization in Church. Nobody expected then that his fears about the Church in Europe will soon become reality.

Unfortunately, European countries, especially Western ones, and the countries of North America have been profoundly experiencing the effects of secularisation. These implications are not only of religious and confessional nature but also of cultural, social and political dimensions. Moreover, it seems that this destructive process is gaining strength. Indeed, the above-mentioned countries have as long as twenty-century history and tradition of Christianity. Are all human expectations satisfied by galloping technological progress, nihilism and sybaritism sneaking into human minds as well as by considerable material prosperity? Undoubtedly, secularisation is not merely a theological and cultural issue, but, to a considerable extent, it is an anthropological phenomenon. There is a crisis of humanity and superficial humanism discreetly hidden beneath.

The main objective of this volume of “Horizons of Politics” is a critical consideration of external and internal causes of secularization and de-christianisation within the Catholic Church and among communities belonging to the Church. In what way and to what extent changes in the political, social and cultural areas affect the deepening of the secularisation and de-christianiation processes? Why does the Church seem to be losing its moral influence and authority in the public space? Is this an inevitable tendency, and if it isn't, how can it be prevented? These questions seem to be significant both from the view point of social, political and of broadly understood humanities. Therefore the authors who publish their thoughts and reflections on the subject represent various scientific fields and practical experiences.

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