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SAINT AUGUSTINE'S 80TH HOMILY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.
TEXT ANALYSIS AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE ON
UNDERSTANDING BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION

The influence of the Hipponite theologian Aurelius Augustinus on the thinking of Martin Luther is evident. For example, on 18th May 1517 Luther wrote: "Our theology and Augustine's make great progress and – God be blessed – they both rule at our university, while Aristotle is receding"¹. The reason is clear. The influence of Augustine's works in the Middle Ages is undoubted. Luther met Augustine, thanks to the theologians of his order² and then especially via his personal studies. He tried to compare readings of Augustine with the medieval tradition presented by Duns Scotus, or more precisely by Gabriel Biel. According to Leif Grane, Luther searched in Augustine the inspiration in interpreting Apostle Paul³.

In 1537 Martin Luther cites in the Schmalkand articles the passage from the third paragraph of Augustine's Commentary on the Gospel of John and writes:

Baptism is nothing else than God's word in the water according to Lord's appointment and precept or, as Paul says, "washing in cleansing water with a form of words" (Ef 5:26) or as Augustine writes: "The word approaches the element and becomes sacrament". Thus we do not teach as Thomas and Dominicans, who forget the Word and say that God inserted to the water a spiritual force, which washes sins by water, because God's will is present in it; thus that this washing comes only from God's will and by no means from the word or water⁴.

¹ M. Luther, Edition de Weimar (=WA) Briefe (=Br) 1,99, 1ss, n. 4.

² Cf. H.A. Oberman, *Headwaters of the Reformation, Initia Lutheri, Initia Reformationis: Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era. Papers for the Fourth International Congress for Luther Research*, Leyde: Brill 1974, p. 40-88; H. A. Oberman, «Tuus sum, salvum me fac!» Augustin réveil zwischen Renaissance und Reformation, in: *Scientia Augustiniana. Mélanges Adobar Zumkeller*, Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag 1975, p. 349-394.

³ L. Grane, *Divus Paulus et S. Augustinus, interpres eius fidelissimus. Über Luthers Verhältnis zu Augustin, Festschrift für Ernst Fuchs*, Tübingen: Mohr 1973, p. 133-146.

⁴ In The Small Catechism we can find a similar definition: „Baptism is not just plain water; but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word". In: J. Filo, *Ekumenický dialóg*, Prešov: Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška 1997, p. 98.

Augustine's influence on Luther's understanding of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of Baptism, cannot be denied.

This study is the first complete Slovak translation and analysis of the whole of Augustine's 80th homily on the Gospel of John; hence, this study will not deal with the problem on who understood correctly the Hipponite theologian. It must also be mentioned that in this paper the term, "Catholic Church" is used in the context of Augustine's theology and not in the context of the controversy in the 16th and 17th century.

AUGUSTINE'S TEACHING ON THE SACRAMENTS

Augustine's teaching on the sacraments is not systematic. This character is caused by the fact that in his works the Hipponite theologian responded to the concrete and immediate impulsions and never had an occasion to provide a systematic view on the sacraments. The majority of his works, where Augustine explained sacraments, comes from the period of his struggles against the Donatists.

In the later part of the post-Augustinian period, the theology of sacraments of the Hipponite Bishop was dealt by the representatives of antonymic opinions. One of the examples is the period of Reformation and Counter-reformation, when Augustine's positions were mentioned both by the Catholics and the Protestants⁵. Here, the debates revolved more around the understanding of the Eucharist⁶ rather than Baptism, because with regard to the former, Augustine's approaches, highly compact and matured in his struggles with Donatism, were readily available⁷.

However, some texts whose exact understanding is not evident until now, remained. This regards mainly of the role of faith and word in the sacrament of Baptism – which is the topic dealt by Augustine in the 80th homily and is found in *In Ioannis Euangelium Tractatus CXXIV*. This short homily, mainly the last – third – paragraph, is reputed to contain Augustine's thoughts on sacramental theology.

Reformation, counter-Reformation and post-Tridentine theologians referred rather too often to the said 3rd paragraph of the 80th homily. However, their interpretations were influenced by their own specific theological standpoints whether they were Catholics or Protestants. Interestingly, even though the text was cited very often, only few scientific studies of it have been attempted⁸.

⁵ Cf. J. Calvin, *Institutio christianae religionis* IV,17,28, Berolini: G. Eichler 1846, p. 421.

⁶ Cf. A. Sage, *L'eucharistie dans la pensée de saint Augustin*, in: *REAug.* 15, 1969, p. 209-240.

⁷ Cf. M. Lichner, *Kontextuálny pohľad na sviatosť krstu v sermones svätého Augustína*, 1. vyd., Trnava: Dobrá kniha 2015.

⁸ Cf. E. Hocedez, *La conception augustiniennne du sacrement, d'après le Tr. 80 in Joannem*, „Recherches de Science religieuse” 10 (1919), p. 1-29; K.H. Zur Mühlen, *Zur Rezeption der Augustinischen Formel «Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum» in der Theologie Luthers*, „Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche” 70 (1973), p. 50-76; tiež, L. Villette, *Foi et sacrement*, vol. I.:

80TH HOMILY IN THE CONTEXT
OF *IN IOANNIS EUANGELIUM TRACTATUS CXXIV*

The 80th homily on the Gospel of John is a part of Augustine's sermons⁹. In this collection of homilies on the Gospel of John, we have 124 commentaries, covering the whole gospel text. Some of them were presented during the liturgy while others were written only to complete the commentary and were supposed to be presented later. M.-F. Berrouard categorized them to some units chronologically, namely, 1-16; 17-19; 20-22; 23-54; 55-60; 61-92; 93-124. These sermons come from the years 406/407 through 422/423¹⁰.

The 80th homily is a part of the unit of the last 70 homilies, dictated by the Hipponian bishop at the beginning of 419 and written not later than the end of 423. In the newly recovered letter 23A* we can read, that Augustine wrote these commentaries during the night of Saturday and of Sunday¹¹. It is thus a dictated text, which was supposed to be presented later in the homily by Augustine. The period between 419 and 423 is marked by the end of the struggle with Pelagianism and the beginning of polemics on the understanding of predestination and faith in the relationship with undeserved gift of grace. True to its context, the 80th homily highly reflects the intellectual treasure of the struggle with Donatism (role of the minister and recipient of the sacrament of Baptism) as well as with Pelagianism (baptism of the children).

The Latin text of the 80th homily represents a short dictated text (less than 3 standard pages) containing three interconnected short paragraphs. Augustine exegetically explains one verse after another of the Gospel of John 15, 1-5. It is evident, that this is not a dogmatic tractate, but is a commentary to the Holy Scripture.

De Nouveau Testament à saint Augustin, Paris: Bloud & Gay 1959, (coll. Travaux de l'Institut Catholique de Paris 5), p. 217-326; H.U. Delius, *Augustin als Quelle Luthers*, Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt 1984; P.-T. Camelot, *Sacramentum*. Note de théologie sacramentaire augustinienne, „Revue Thomiste” 57 (1957), s. 440-443; M.-F. Berrouard, *Le Tractatus 80,3 in Iohannis Euangelium de saint Augustin. La parole, le sacrement et la foi*, REAug. 33 (1987), p. 235-254.

⁹ Under the term *sermones* we understand the works *Sermones ad populum*, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus*, *In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos*.

¹⁰ 1-16: recited between December 406 and June 407 (*Introduction*, in: *BA*, 71, p. 36); 17-54: these 35 *sermones* had been recited before Augustine received *sermo arianorum* in 418 (*Introduction*, in: *BA*, 72, p. 34). This bigger group is divided into: 17-19 and 23-54: summer 414 (regarding the recitation of these 35 *Tractatus*, cp. *Introduction*, in: *BA*, 73/A, p. 12); Berrouard later extended the date to summer and autumn 414 (*Introduction*, in: *BA*, 74/A, p. 34); 20-22: this represents an independent group of *sermones* that were apparently recited around 421-422 (*Introduction*, in: *BA*, 74/B, p. 18 and comment 47); 55-60: dictated, probably written during the last three weeks of November 419 (*Introduction*, in: *BA*, 74/A, p. 25, 49); 61-92: dictated, started in 419 and finished between 422-423 (*Introduction*, in: *BA*, 75, p. 8); 93-124: dictated, started in 419 and finished between 422-423 (*Introduction*, in: *BA*, 75, p. 8).

¹¹ *ep. 23A*3, CSEL 88*, p. 123: „[...] Iam sex dictaui; noctes enim sabbati et dominici ipsi proprie deputaui”.

As far as the last and third paragraph of the dictated text is concerned, it is necessary to analyze it in the context of the whole of the 80th homily and sometimes it even necessitates to take into account the whole of Augustine's work.

A BROAD VIEW ON THE 80TH HOMILY IN EU. TR.

In the first paragraph of the homily, Augustine interprets John 15:1 – “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser” – with reference to 1 Tim 2:5 in which Apostle Paul talks about Christ as the “mediator between God and humanity, himself a human being, Christ Jesus”. According to Augustine's interpretation, Paul is talking of Christ as the head of the Church, of which we are the members. It is thanks to His human nature that the Son of God is the Head of the Church. Subsequent commentaries of Augustine emphasize, that the adjective “uera” – “true”, added to the term “vine”, needs to be understood in connection with the false vinedressers. These thoughts favour an explanation of both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

In the second paragraph of his homily, the Hipponite Bishop elaborates ideas from the first paragraph and adds Trinitarian ideas emphasizing that various statements about Christ are needed to be applied either on his human nature (John 14:28) or on his divine nature (John 10:30). The third verse of the 15th chapter of John's Gospel, “You are clean already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you,” is brought to unfold the argument, explaining that Christ is a purifier of the branches as His Father and thus they are equal within the Trinity. In the Holy Trinity, represented by the vinedresser, Jesus is equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the God who gives growth (1 Cor 3:7).

Augustine subsequently reminds that to be clean is not a concluded state and that disciples can be still cleansed to bear more fruit. Against the background of this statement, we can observe the whole of Augustine's polemics against the Pelagian movement which held on to the possibility of constant holiness already during our terrestrial life. This, however, was always strictly denied by our author, citing always 1 John 1:8-9¹².

Then comes the third paragraph, in which Augustine cites John 15:3 again and provides deeper thoughts in the area of sacramental theology; and because of this reason we need to study this paragraph more closely.

Augustine cites John 15:3 ten times in his entire work: in *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2, 50 (4x), *Contra Cresconium* 2, 15 (1x), and then in *In Ioannis euangelium tractatus* 80, 2 and 3 (5x). However, only in the 80th homily on the Gospel of John can we find the whole exegesis of the said biblical verse.

¹² *Io eu tr.* 80,2.

The third paragraph can be divided into three integral and interconnected parts. First, Augustine explains the role of word in the framework of Baptism; then he adds Biblical arguments on behalf of his statement; and ends with pointing out the liturgical practice of baptizing of children to support his assertion.

THE ROLE OF WORD IN THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

After citing John 15:3 [“You are clean already, by means of the word that I have spoken to you”¹³], Augustine puts it into contraposition with another verse of John’s gospel: “Jesus told him whoever has bathed is entirely clean. He doesn’t need to wash himself further, except for his feet.” (13:10) In fact Augustine had already understood this verse in relationship with Baptism as can be deciphered from his 56th homily on the Gospel of John¹⁴. Subsequently Augustine asks, why does Christ ascribe the pureness of the disciples to the word and not to baptism that they have undertaken? Are these perhaps contradictory biblical verses?

However, Augustine was sure that the Holy Scripture cannot be contradictory; and thus, according to him, the verses 15:3 and 13:10 are complementary in the sense that in the case of Baptism also, it is the word that cleanses and purifies (*in aqua uerbum mundat*). Under such an argument, there exists only an interpretational complementarity between John 15:3 and John 13:10. Augustine then adds that without the word, water would be just a common material capable of cleansing only the outside. According to him, “The word is added to the basic element and so becomes a sacrament, which is also as visible word”. Both water and word are thus needed to compose a sacrament. For this reason, Augustine, in his 15th homily on the Gospel of John says, “What is thus the baptism of Christ? Cleansing water with a form of words (Eph 5:26)¹⁵. Remove water, and there is no baptism anymore. Remove the word and there is no baptism anymore”.

This thought can be found in other places of the Augustinian corpus also, especially when he explains the sacrament of the Eucharist. For example in Sermon 234 Augustine says: “It is not any bread, but a bread that is blessed by Christ, that becomes the body of Christ”¹⁶.

¹³ Augustine had several Latin codexes available that contained various translations, because in some cases he uses the term *sermo* and in some cases *uerbum*, in equal sense.

¹⁴ *Io. Eu. tr.* 56,4, *CCL* 36, p. 468: „Dominus dicit, ueritas loquitur, quod opus habeat pedes lauare etiam ille qui lotus est. Quid, fratres mei, quid putatis? Nisi quia homo in sancto quidem baptismo totus abluitur, non praeter pedes, sed totus omnino [...]”.

¹⁵ *Io. eu. tr.* 15,4, *CCL* 36, p. 152: „Quid est baptismus Christi? Lauacrum aquae in uerbo. Tolle aquam, non est baptismus; tolle uerbum, non est baptismus”.

¹⁶ *S. 234,2, PL* 38, 1116: „Non enim omnis panis, sed accipiens benedictionem Christi, fit corpus Christi”.

The word is thus necessary in creating sacraments, because it is added to the material element so that the sacrament is as “visible word” (*uerbum uisibile*)¹⁷. This term is important also because the Hipponian theologian used it already in the years 397-398 in his work against Manichean bishop Faustus¹⁸. Also in the Sermon 272, dealing completely with the Eucharist, we can find similar vocabulary. The first part of the argument remains that baptism draws its cleansing strength from the word.

BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS

At this point, it has to be kept in mind that for Augustine, the word and sacrament are correlational terms¹⁹. Baptism, however, is established and blessed not by any word, but by the word of Christ, as we can read in the Gospel of Matthew, “Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (28:19). These words are pronounced during the baptismal dialogue between the minister and the recipient of Baptism²⁰.

Though the words are only transitory, their power is perennial (*sonus transiens, uirtus manens*) and Augustine ascribes substantial importance to “the words of the Gospel”. In 400-401, while writing his work on baptism, *De Baptismo*, he repeatedly accentuated, that the sacrament is “sanctified by the words of gospel” (*baptismum dicimus uerbis euangelicis consecratum*)²¹. The words are sufficient for it to become a sacramental reality, which means that the act is now beyond the possible defiling influence of those who receive and administer it²². The word is thus sufficient to make Baptism a real sacrament given that this word is the “words of the gospel”. Any words of the gospel would not suffice either; these words must

¹⁷ To see other use of term see: P. Sambor, *Quasi uisibile uerbum chez Augustin*, „La Maison-Dieu” 287 (2017), p. 23-48.

¹⁸ Cf. *c. Faust.* 19,16, *CSEL* 25, p. 513.

¹⁹ *c. Faust.* 19,16, *CSEL* 25/1, p. 513: „[...] Quid enim sunt aliud quaeque corporalia sacramenta nisi quaedam quasi uerba uisibilia, sacrosancta quidem uerum tamen mutabilia et temporalia? Deus enim aeternus est, nec tamen aqua et omnis illa ctio corporalis, quae agitur cum baptizamus et fit et transit, aeterna est: ubi rursus etiam illae syllabae celeriter sonantes et transeuntes, cum dicitur deus, nisi dicantur, non consecratur. Haec omnia fiunt et transeunt, sonant et transeunt; uirtus tamen, quae per ista operatur, iugiter manet et donum spiritale, quod per ista insinuatur, aeternum est”.

²⁰ Cf. *bapt.* 3,20, *CSEL* 51, p. 211.

²¹ For example: *bapt.* 3,15, *CSEL* 51, p. 205, 3,25, *CSEL* 51, p. 217, 4,6, *CSEL* 51, p. 227.

²² For example *bapt.* 3,15, *CSEL* 51, p. 205: „Baptismus uero Christi uerbis euangelicis consecratus et per adulteros et in adulteris sanctus est, quamuis illi sint in pudici et immundi, quia ipsa eius sanctitas pollui non potest et sacramento suo diuina uirtus adsistit siue ad salutem bene utentium siue ad perniciem male utentium”.

have the Trinitarian form as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:19. This makes baptism sacred because Christ himself established it²³.

This theological understanding is the foundation of Augustine's assertion in his 80th homily on the Gospel of John: "Eliminate word and what will remain of the water? Just water. The word comes to the element and so the sacrament arises, which itself is as visible word"²⁴.

Such vocabulary can be found also in the case of the Eucharist where Augustine mentions sanctification of the sacrament by word as a result of the influence of the word over material. This can be found in probably his most famous homily on the Eucharist, homily 227²⁵. Similarly, as in the case of baptism, also in the case of the Eucharist the spoken word guarantees the incorruptibility of the sacramental presence, and the Eucharist remains Christ's body and blood, notwithstanding the right or wrong subjective conditions of the minister and the recipient of the sacrament²⁶.

In case of the sacrament of baptism, it is thus important to use the right gospel words and according to Augustine, these words themselves are sufficient to validate the Lord's sacrament. For this reason, heretics and schismatics have a legitimate sacrament, even though they don't have it legitimately²⁷. At the same time, Augustine refuses to accept that the wrong internal faith could change the effect of the sacrament. Internal meaning of the words remains valid whether the usage is right or wrong, just as in the case of right or wrong text interpretation. This was expressed in Augustine's third book *De baptismo* this way: "The sacraments remain the same; they keep everywhere their value even though they are understood inaccurately but they are being celebrated with the aim to make harm, so as with the text of the Gospel: if it is the same, it is valid everywhere in the same way, also if it was administered with a wrong thoughts"²⁸.

²³ *Bapt.* 4,18, *CSEL* 51, p. 244: „Non itaque dat remissam peccatorum sermo qui ut cancer serpit ad aures audientium, sed cum baptisma uerbis euangelicis datur, qualibet ea peruersitate intellegat ille per quem datur uel ille cui datur, ipsum per se sanctum est propter illum cuius est”.

²⁴ *Io. eu. tr.* 80,3, *CCL* 36, p. 529: „Detrahe uerbum, et quid est aqua nisi aqua? Accedit uerbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum, etiam ipsum tamquamuisibile uerbum”.

²⁵ *S.* 227, *SC* 116, p. 234: „Panis ille quem uidetis in altari sanctificatus per uerbum dei, corpus est Christi. Calix ille, immo quod habet calix, sanctificatum per uerbum dei, sanguis est Christi”.

²⁶ See also: M.-F. Berrouard, *Introduction aux Homélies de saint Augustin sur l'Évangile de saint Jean*, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 2004 (Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 170), p. 70-74; Ch. Couturier, «*Sacramentum*» et «*mysterium*» dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin, in: H. Rondet u.a., *Études augustiniennes*, Paris: Aubier 1953, p. 161-332; H.-M. Féret, *Sacramentum. Res. Dans la langue de s. Augustin*, „*Révue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*” 29 (1940), no. 2/4, p. 218-243.

²⁷ *Bapt.* 5,8, *CSEL* 51, p. 269: „Nos autem baptismum eos non iuste et legitime possidere concedimus, non possidere autem non possumus dicere, cum sacramentum dominicum in euangelicis uerbis cognoscimus. Baptismum ergo legitimum habent, sed non legitime habent”.

²⁸ *Bapt.* 3,20, *CSEL* 51, p. 211: „Sacramenta tamen, si eadem sunt, ubique sunt integra, etiamsi prae intelleguntur et discordiose tractantur, sicut scriptura ipsius euangelii, si eadem ipsa est, ubique integra est, etiamsi innumerabili falsarum opinionum uarietate adseratur”.

According to Augustine, all the heresies and schisms until his time had a valid baptism, but only if the gospel words were cited, which are the divine words, by means of which God remains present always when they are being pronounced. With this argument, Augustine exceeded the shadow of Cyprian's theology. By the Gospel words, God sanctifies His sacrament wherever it is administered, even when it is done outside the Church. Because of their divine origin, these words are sufficient to repair whatever errors caused by the wrong intention of the cleric²⁹. This same theological principle applies in the case of the recipient also; the recipient's right or wrong intention, or right or wrong faith does not lead to any change in the validity of the sacrament. Even in the case of the heretics who contort the basic truths of the faith, if baptism is administered by the Gospel words and the Church rules, the validity of the baptism remains. According to Augustine, God remains ever present in His own Gospel words, through which Christ's baptism is sanctified, and thus it is only Himself, who sanctifies his sacrament³⁰.

The sacramental words thus represent God's tool; their power doesn't come from themselves, but from God, who spoke them through Jesus Christ³¹. Moreover, it is evident from Augustine's argument that the sense of Gospel words is accentuated by the fact that they include not only the Trinitarian appellation, but also Christ's name. In his work *De unico baptismo*, originating in 410-411, the Hippone theologian borrows the same theological principle from the arguments of Pope Stephen against Cyprian of Carthago that Christ's name remains the same name also in the mouth of godless people. The Gospel reveals that the name of Christ was used in exorcisms also by people who were not part of the disciples of Jesus (Mark 9:38; 16:17). For this reason, one cannot deny, that the uttering of the same name is able to sanctify also the baptism of heretics and schismatics³².

The 80th homily on the Gospel of John takes these arguments further. For this reason, Augustine justifies the sacramental role of the baptismal word, calling it "the word of faith". And even though the baptism is sacred by means of Christ's word,

²⁹ *Bapt.* 6,47, *CSEL* 51, p. 323: „Quia plerumque precis uitium superat precantis adfectus et quia certa illa uerba euangelica, sine quibus non potest baptismus consecrari, antum ualent, ut per illa sic euacuentur quaecumque in prece uitiosa contra regulam fidei dicuntur, quemadmodum daemonium Christi nomine excluditur”.

³⁰ *Cresc.* 4,24, *CSEL* 52, p. 524: „Illa namque per se ipsa uera et sancta sunt propter Deum uerum et sanctum cuius sunt”; cf. A. Mandouze, *Sacramentum et sacramenta chez Augustin* [Dialectique entre une théorie et une pratique], „Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé: Lettres d'humanité” n°48, décembre 1989, p. 367-375.

³¹ *Bapt.* 4,18, *CSEL* 51, p. 244: „Non itaque dat remissam peccatorum sermo qui ut cancer serpit ad aures audientium, sed cum baptisma uerbis euangelicis datur, qualibet ea peruersitate intellegat ille per quem datur uel ille cui datur, ipsum per se sanctum est propter illum cuius est. Et si quisque per hominem peruersum id accipiens non accipiat tamen ministri peruersitatem, sed solam mysterii sanctitatem, in bona fide et spe et caritate unitati conpaginatus ecclesiae remissionem accipit peccatorum non per uerba sicut cancer serpentia, sed per euangelica sacramenta de caelesti fonte manantia”.

³² *Un. Bapt.* 12-13, *CSEL* 53, p. 13-14.

it still sanctifies only the one who accepts it in faith, and thus opens himself for its sacramental effect. The sense of this part of the homily lies in the interconnection between the sacramental word of the baptism and faith.

BIBLICAL ARGUMENT

The Hipponite theologian elaborates and confirms his argument by appealing to various biblical citations. First, he repeatedly cites John 13:10 reinforcing his assertion that during the administration of Baptism, the water receives its power for internal purification of the recipient from the words of the gospel. To prevent all possible allusions to magic, he emphasizes that it is “because of the word; but not because it is spoken out but because it is believed (*creditur*). Also in the word itself, one thing is the transmitted voice, and the other thing is the remaining power (*uirtus*)”³³.

It is worth to remind that in majority of cases, for Augustine, the term *uirtus* means the sacramental effect of grace (*non communis erat omnibus gratia, quae sacramentorum uirtus est*)³⁴. However, in the anti-Manichean work *Contra Faustum* Augustine reminds us of the importance of the word in Baptism; but he emphasizes that the gestures and words are temporary while the *uirtus* remains because it is the demonstration of God’s authority that acts through the means³⁵.

To support his thoughts, Augustine cites four Biblical verses: a) “The word of faith, the faith which we preach, that if you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if you believe with your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. It is by believing with the heart that you are justified, and by making the declaration with your lips that you are saved”. (Romans 10:8-10); b) “Since he purified their hearts by faith [...]” (Acts 15:9); c) “It is the baptism corresponding to this water which saves you now – not the washing off of physical dirt but the pledge of a good conscience given to God” (1 Peter 3:21); and d) “as

³³ *Io. eu. tr.* 80,3, CCL 36, p. 529: „Vnde ista tanta uirtus aquae, ut corpustangat et cor abluat, nisi faciente uerbo, non quia dicitur, sed quia creditur? nam et in ipso uerbo, aliud est sonus transiens, aliud uirtus manens”.

³⁴ *En. ps.* 77,2, CCL 39, p. 1067. In case of the Eucharist, Augustine emphasizes the same: *Io. eu. tr.* 26,11, CCL 36, p. 265: „Aliud est sacramentum, aliud est uirtus sacramenti”. Also: *bapt.* 3,15, CSEL 51, p. 205: „[...] Et sacramento suo diuina uirtus adsistit siue ad salutem bene utentium siue ad perniciem male utentium”.

³⁵ *C. Faust.* 19,16, CSEL 25,1, p. 513: „Deus enim aeternus est, nec tamen aqua et omnis illa actio corporalis, quae agitur cum baptizamus et fit et transit, aeterna est: ubi rursus etiam illae syllabae celeriter sonantes et transeuntes, cum dicitur Deus, nisi dicantur, non consecratur. Haec omnia fiunt et transeunt, sonant et transeunt; uirtus tamen, quae per ista operatur, iugiter manet et donum spiritale, quod per ista insinuat, aeternum est”.

Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy by cleansing it, washing it with water and the word” (Ephesians 5:25-26). Through the first three citations Augustine establishes that Baptism cleanses only those who accept Christ’s word and power in faith. By citing from Ephesians, Augustine affirms that Christ, together with his Father, is the real vinedresser and purifier of His Church and that His word has the power to purify and thereby giving purifying power also to the water. Augustine cites the above verses one after the other without being particularly explained.

It is thus obvious how Jesus could have told his disciples that they are clean for the word he had spoken to them even though washing of the feet meant baptism for them. It is Christ’s word that causes the sacredness and the sacramental effect of baptism. However, in the text of the 80th homily on the Gospel of John, the term *creditur*, a term highly important for Augustine, is used. It is Augustine’s belief that since the sanctity of the sacrament is of divine origin the internal state of the recipient is not decisive; but, as Augustine adds in the third book of his work *De baptismo* this *uirtus* can be accepted either for the salvation or for condemnation³⁶. For the purpose of this paper, it is sufficient to understand Augustine’s classical vocabulary in which he distinguishes between the valid reception of the baptism (*habere baptismum*) and its effective spiritual fruit, which he calls *habere utiliter/salubriter/ad salutem*. To have a valid baptism doesn’t mean that the recipient of the sacrament obtains automatically also the spiritual fruit of the sacrament. This distinction represents the foundation of the Augustine’s baptismal theology in his struggle with the Donatists.

The distinction between sacrament and its effects is cardinal in Augustine’s theology. This is the reason why in his third book *De baptismo* he reminds, “It is not important – if one talks about the integrity or the sanctity of the sacraments – to know, what is being believed or by which faith is the one who accepts the sacrament is nourished. This surely is highly important for salvation, but not in the question of the sacrament”³⁷.

In spite of the validity of Baptism and thus of the rightness of using the gospel words, there still remains a question of its spiritual fruit, which is the central point of Augustine’s theology.

Only a return to the unity of Catholic church causes bearing of this spiritual fruit and its beneficial use. Owning of the correct form, and thus administration of the sacrament through correctly outspoken gospel words, is not sufficient if it is not administered in the unity of the vinculum of the love of the Catholic church

³⁶ *Bapt.* 3,15, *CSEL* 51, p. 205: „[...] Et sacramento suo diuina uirtus adstitit siue ad salutem bene utentium siue ad perniciem male utentium”.

³⁷ *Bapt.* 3,19, *CSEL* 51, p. 208: „Nec interest, cum de sacramenti integritate et sanctitate tractatur, quid credat et quali fide imbutus sit ille qui accipit sacramentum. Interest quidem plurimum ad salutis uiam, sed ad sacramenti quaestionem nihil interest”.

(*uinculum caritatis*)³⁸. At the end of his work *De baptismo*, the Hipponite theologian asks himself about the validity of baptism administered at the theatre by an actor, which means enacted baptisms during play and amusement. In this case, Augustine doubts to accept the validity of the baptism. In his repudiation of this, he leans on the fact, that the “Community of saints“ is completely missing here, whose presence could guarantee its graveness³⁹. Augustine suggests the importance of the Church of believers, whose presence is more important than the absence or incorrectness of the faith or intention.

BAPTISM OF CHILDREN AND FAITH OF THE CHURCH

At the end of his arguments, Augustine appeals to the liturgical practice of baptism of small children, by which he wants to testify to the correctness of his arguments. He was absolutely certain that the baptism of small children manifested the ability of Christ's word to purify the best way. A small child cannot express its personal faith in Christ's word; yet, as is mentioned in Romans 10:10, since the Church practice proves that Baptism brings its spiritual fruit also in the case of a small child, it makes him a believing Christian and removes his original sin.

At the end of the third paragraph of this homily, we can find the following text variant: *hoc uerbum fidei tantum ualet in Ecclesia Dei ut per ipsam/ipsam [...]* (This word of faith is so powerful in God's Church, that thanks to it [...]). Editors of the edition *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* chose the variant *ipsam*, which can be masculine or neuter; we however follow the form *ipsam*, which can be found in *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* and which was used also by medieval theologians of Leuven. The feminine *ipsam* doesn't emphasize word or believer, but God's Church.

³⁸ *Bapt.* 1,11, *CSEL* 51, p. 156: „Quid ergo prodest homini uel sana fides uel sanum fortasse solum fidei sacramentum, ubi letali uulnere schismatis perempta est sanitas caritatis, per cuius solius preemptionem etiam illa integra trahuntur ad mortem? Quod ne fiat, non cessat misericordia Dei per unitatem sanctae ecclesiae, ut ueniant et curentur per medicamentum reconciliationis, per uinculum pacis“; p. 268,2, *PL* 38, 1232-1233: „Iam uero si membrum praecidatur de corpore, numquid sequitur spiritus? Et tamen membrum agnoscitur quid est; digitus est, manus est, brachium est, auris est: praeter corpus habet formam, sed non habet uitam. Sic et homo ab Ecclesia separatus. Quaeris ab illo sacramentum, inuenis: quaeris baptismum, inuenis: quaeris symbolum, inuenis. Forma est: nisi intus spiritu uegeteris, frustra foris de forma gloriaris“.

³⁹ *Bapt.* 7,102, *CSEL* 51, p. 374: „Vbi autem neque societas ulla esset ita credentium neque ille qui ibi acciperet ita crederet, sed totum ludicre et mimice et ioculariter ageretur, utrum adprobandum esset baptismus qui sic daretur, diuinum iudicium per alicuius reuelationis oraculum concordi oratione et impensis supplicii deuotione gemitibus inplorandum esse censerem, ita sane ut post me dicturos sententias, ne quid iam exploratum et cognitum adferrent, humiliter expectarem“.

For Augustine, sacraments and the Church are inseparable terms. For this the Hipponite theologian is indebted to the theology of Optatus from Mileve and Cyprian of Carthage. From Optatus, Augustine adopted the absolute identity of the validity of the sacraments – both in the Catholic Church and in the case of the heretics or schismatics⁴⁰. In spite of the separation of the heretics or schismatics from the Church, the *forma sacramenti* still remained if they followed “the words of the gospel and the rules of the Church during baptism”⁴¹. Even though the heretics or the schismatics use the sacraments in an incorrect way, these still aren’t their own sacraments, but the sacraments of Christ and of the Church. For this reason, only their return to Church can provide an effective use of sacraments; otherwise, the sacraments are harmful to them because the element of love is missing.⁴² If the *forma sacramenti* is followed and respected, Christ is present, but only in the Christ’s Church one can find also the fruit of the sacraments. In other words, only through the Catholic Church *uirtus* from Christ is received⁴³.

At the end, Augustine emphasizes the effectiveness of the faith of the Church by referring to the established practice of Baptism of the small children. On this faith of the Church, there are believers participating, whom Augustine calls *societas sanctorum*, who create the main core of the Christ’s Church⁴⁴. Through the faith of its members, the Church mediates a spiritual birth of its children in the sacrament of Baptism. This faith in the Church is a principle of universality and an effective tool of its growth in unity all around the world. In this sense, we can understand also *Sermo* 214,2, where Augustine explains to his catechumens a part of the Creed about the Church. However, a spiritual and sacramental effect acts only in those, who are in the Church added in the catholic faith and unity. Even though, the Church is able – by its faith and sanctity – to reach also those ones, who are outside the visible *communio*⁴⁵. Thus, Augustine’s understanding of communion is not the same as Cyprian’s ideas of the unity of the bishop with

⁴⁰ *Bapt.* 1,2, *CSEL* 51, p. 145: „Sic et illi, qui per sacrilegium schismatis ab ecclesiae communionem discedunt, habent utique baptismum, quem priusquam discederent acceperunt”.

⁴¹ *Un. Bapt.* 4, *CSEL* 53, p. 5: „[...] Si denique de ipsa etiam trinitatis unitate dissentientem haereticum inuenio et tamen euangelica et ecclesiastica regula baptizatum [...]”.

⁴² *Bapt.* 1,2, *CSEL* 51, p. 145: „Sicut autem per unitatis reconciliationem incipit utiliter haberi quod extra unitatem inutiliter habebatur”; *bapt.* 1,18, *CSEL* 51, p. 163.

⁴³ *Bapt.* 4,1, *CSEL* 51, 223: „Sic ergo baptismus ecclesiae potest esse extra ecclesiam, munus autem beatae uitae non nisi intra ecclesiam repperitur, quae super Petram etiam fundata est, quae ligandi et soluendi clauis accepit”.

⁴⁴ *En. ps.* 148, 17, *CCL* 40, p. 2178: „Et hoc canticum pacis est, canticum hoc Caritatis est. Quisquis se a coniunctione sanctorum separat, non cantat canticum nouum. Secutus est enim ueterem animositatem, non nouam caritatem. In noua caritate quid est? Pax, uinculum sanctae societatis, compago spiritalis, aedificium de lapidibus uiuis”; *bapt.* 1, 26, *CSEL* 51, p. 170: „Quod palea est palea est, et semper ab illius Ecclesiae quae sine macula et ruga est unitate diuisus est etiam qui congregationi sanctorum in carnali obduratione miscetur”.

⁴⁵ *En. ps.* 83,7, *CCL* 39, p. 1151-1152.

his believers (*ubi episcopus ibi ecclesia*), but a *Catholic* unity – the unity of the Church spread all around the world. In contrast to his predecessors who stressed the *visible belonging to the Church*, Augustine's emphasize is on the *universal belonging to the Church*, and for this reason sometimes the invisible presence is also given importance⁴⁶.

However, this happens through the mediator role of the believing community that professes its faith in place of the child via the Lord's servants who bless the water and immerses the child into this water.

The Holy Spirit who causes the spiritual rebirth of the recipient of Baptism and his affiliation to the body of Christ, that is the Church, creates a spiritual unity with those who are connected with Him by love "poured into our hearts" (Romans 5:5)⁴⁷. For this reason, in 420-421 of his work *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum* Augustine expressed, that in the Redeemer's Church small children believe via the others⁴⁸.

To summarize, the homily reminds us of the important role of the Holy Church in the Sacrament of Baptism. The recipient is sanctified through the words of the Gospel spoken by the administer during the sacrament of Baptism, however, its effects take place only with faith (*quia creditur*) in, what is called by Augustine, *Ecclesia Dei*.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we analyzed Augustine's 80th homily on the Gospel of John, in which he interpreted the Biblical text John 15:3. The first complete Slovak translation of this homily is attached annexed with this paper. The Hipponian theologian pointed out that Baptism is established as a sacrament by the word of Christ that

⁴⁶ See also: M.-F. Berrouard, *Introduction aux Homélies de saint Augustin sur l'Évangile de saint Jean*, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 2004 (Collection des Études Augustiniennes. Série Antiquité 170), p. 70-74.

⁴⁷ *Pecc. mer.* 1,38, *CSEL* 60, p. 37: „Quod per sacramentum in paruulis fieri non dubitat mater Ecclesia, quae cor et os maternum eis praestat, ut sacris mysteriis inbuantur, quia nondum possunt corde proprio credere ad iustitiam nec ore proprio confiteri ad salutem. nec ideo tamen eos quisquam fidelium fideles appellare cunctatur, quod a credendo utique nomen est, quamuis hoc non ipsi, sed alii pro eis inter sacramenta responderint”.

⁴⁸ *C. ep. Pel.* 1,40, *CSEL* 60, p. 457: „Propter quod in Ecclesia saluatoris per alios paruuli credunt, sicut ex aliis ea quae illis in baptismo remittuntur peccata traxerunt”; p. 176,2, *PL* 38,950: „Nam et ipsi portantur ad ecclesiam: et si pedibus illuc currere non possunt, alienis pedibus currunt, ut sanentur. Accommodat illis mater Ecclesia aliorum pedes ut ueniant, aliorum cor ut credant, aliorum linguam ut fateantur: ut quoniam quod aegri sunt alio peccante praegrauantur, sic cum hi sani sunt, alio pro eis confitente saluentur. Nemo ergo uobis susurret doctrinas alienas. Hoc ecclesia semper habuit, semper tenuit: hoc a maiorem fide percepit; hoc usque in finem perseueranter custodit”.

is pronounced during the administering of the sacrament, and so the sacrament becomes real.

However, the sacrament becomes really effective and brings forth the spiritual fruit only for the one who believes this word. At Baptism, the words pronounced have a strength to cleanse and purify (*ut mundare possit*), but this strength is realized only when it is accepted in faith.

The baptism of children, so, becomes a demonstrational example of confirming the strength of Christ's word, as well as an example of the importance of the community of believers who during the baptism of children respond in faith in place of them. The text of the homily correlates with the main works from the period of the struggle against Donatism.

Each sacrament is valid, when a word – established by Christ or the Church – is pronounced over the material element by anyone who have received a faculty to do so. The word sanctifies the ceremony and so the sacrament comes into existence. It realizes this role itself, without the recipient and minister bringing something personally into it. The sacrament thus has its own efficacy independent from the person, who is present, and regardless of his faith. Even though Augustine professes the sacramental realism, he also emphasizes the substantial dependence between the validity of the sacraments and faith, understood in the broadest sense. This faith is connected with the *fait Catholica*, the faith of the Catholic Church, spread all over the world that – thanks to its faith – keeps its strength present in the sacraments. The word of faith that sanctifies Baptism, is not a platonic idea existing itself all alone, but is the word of the Church, the profession of its faith. Thus, it is not the subjective faith of the minister or the recipient, but the faith of the universal Catholic Church – *Catholica*, lived in *communio sanctorum*, who represent the core of the Church. This ecclesiological dimension of understanding the word of faith in the sacrament is absent in the texts of the Catholic-Protestant dialogue of the Tridentine and post-Tridentine period, and thus fails to give full total representation to Augustine's perception.

80. HOMILIA ŚW. AUGUSTYNA O EWANGELII WEDŁUG ŚW. JANA.
ANALIZA TEKSTU JAKO PRZYCZYNEK DO DEBATY
O ROZUMIENIU CHRZTU

Streszczenie

Wpływ św. Augustyna na rozwój zachodniej łacińskiej myśli teologicznej jest znaczący. W wielu aspektach wpłynął on także na refleksję kontrreformacyjnych i reformacyjnych Teologów, szczególnie Marcina Lutera. Marcin Luter cytuje fragment 80. Homilii do Ewangelii św. Jana w trzecim paragrafie Artykułów Szmalkaldzkich. Stąd można uznać za pewne, że Augustyn wpłynął na jego rozumienie chrztu, szczególnie relacji między

wiarą a słowem w czasie sprawowania sakramentu chrztu. Celem niniejszego studium jest zaproponowanie teologicznej analizy wspomnianej wyżej 80. Homilii do Ewangelii Jana w kontekście myśli św. Augustyna. Jest to krótki dyktowany tekst, napisany przez teologa z Hippony między 419 a 423 r., w którym wyjaśnia on J 15, 1-5 słowo po słowie. Reformacja, kontrreformacja i teologowie potrydenccy odnosili się do trzeciego paragrafu 80. Homilii często, a na ich interpretacje miało wpływ to, czy znajdowali się po katolickiej czy też protestanckiej stronie sporu. Interesujące jest to, że chociaż tekst ten był często cytowany, istniały jedynie nieliczne interpretacje, które podeszły do tekstu w sposób profesjonalny. Homilia Augustyna odzwierciedla duchowe bogactwo walki z donatyzmem (rola szafarza i przyjmującego sakrament chrztu) oraz pelagianizmem (chrzest dzieci). W niniejszym studium koncentrujemy się na tym, że jest to komentarz do Pisma Świętego, stąd analizuje całą homilię.

Słowa kluczowe: Augustyn, Marcin Luther, Reformacja, chrzest, słowo, *In Iohannes euangelium tractatus*, homilia.

SAINT AUGUSTINE'S 80TH HOMILY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.
TEXT ANALYSIS AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEBATE
ON UNDERSTANDING BAPTISM

Summary

The influence of St. Augustine on the development of western latin theological thinking is significant. In many ways, he also influenced thinking of counter-reformation and reformation theologians, mainly Martin Luther. Martin Luther quotes the passage of the 80th homily on the Gospel of John in the third paragraph of the Smalcald Articles. Therefore, it is certain that Augustine influenced the understanding of baptism, mainly the relation between faith and word during administration of the sacrament of baptism. The aim of our study is to offer theological analysis of the 80th homily on the Gospel of John mentioned above in the context of Augustine's thinking. It is a short dictated text written by the theologian of Hippo in 419-423 where he explains the Gospel of John 15, 1-5 word by word. Reformation, counter-reformation and post-Trentian theologians used to refer to the third paragraph of the 80th homily too often and their interpretation was influenced by their position, whether they were on the side of Catholics or Protestants. It is interesting that although the text was often quoted, there were only several studies that dealt with it in a professional way. Augustine's homily reflects the spiritual wealth of the battle with donatism (the role of administrator and recipient of the sacrament of baptism) and pelagianism (baptism of children). In this study, we point to the fact that it is a commentary on the Sacred Scripture, therefore we analyse the homily as a whole. The study also includes the first complete translation of the homily into Slovak language.

Key words: Augustine, Martin Luther, reformation, baptism, word, *In Iohannes euangelium tractatus*, homily.

DIE 80. HOMILIE VOM HL. AUGUSTINUS ZUM JOHANNESEVANGELIUM.
 TEXTANALYSE ALS EIN BEITRAG ZUR DEBATTE
 ÜBER DAS VERSTÄNDNIS DER TAUFE.

Zusammenfassung

Der Einfluss des hl. Augustinus auf die Entwicklung des westlich-lateinischen theologischen Denkens ist nicht zu unterschätzen. In vielen Aspekten hat er auch die gegenreformatorischen und reformatorischen Theologen, vor allem Martin Luther, beeinflusst. Luther zitiert Fragmente der 80. Homilie zum Johannesevangelium im dritten Paragraf der Schmalkaldischen Artikel. Daher darf man mit Sicherheit annehmen, dass Augustinus das Taufverständnis Luthers beeinflusst haben konnte, vor allem das Verhältnis vom Glauben und Wort bei der Spendung des Taufsakramentes. Das Ziel der vorliegenden Studie ist eine theologische Analyse der genannten 80. Homilie zum Johannesevangelium im Kontext des Denkens vom hl. Augustinus. Sie umfasst einen kurzen Text, geschrieben vom Theologen aus Hippo zwischen den Jahren 419 und 423, in dem erklärt er, ein Wort nach dem anderen, den Text von Joh 15, 1-5. Die Reformation und Gegenreformation sowie die nachtridentinischen Theologen haben den dritten Paragraf der 80. Homilie oft erwähnt und ihre Interpretationen waren davon abhängig, ob sie protestantisch oder katholisch geprägt waren. Interessant ist die Tatsache, dass trotz der oftmaligen Zitierung dieses Textes, nur manche Interpretationen an ihn fachlich herangehen. Die Homilie Augustinus' spiegelt den spirituellen Reichtum der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Donatismus (die Rolle des Spenders und Empfängers der Sakramente) sowie Pelagianismus (Kindertaufe) wieder.

Schlüsselworte: Augustinus, Martin Luther, Reformation, Taufe, Wort, *In Iohannes euangelium tractatus*, Homilie.

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