

Summary

The book *Suicide in Catholic view* consists of ten chapters, an introduction, a conclusion, an appendix and an extensive bibliography.

Mental problems have escalated among Polish society after over two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people, among whom the number of suicides has doubled, are in a particularly difficult situation. An increase in mental disorders is also observed in some older age groups, which may result in more suicidal behaviour in the future.

In these difficult times, in the shadow of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the persistent energy and economic crisis, questions arise about the role and place of clergy in suicide prevention.

The book describes in some detail the phenomenon of suicide both in Poland and worldwide, focusing on the social consequences of the aforementioned phenomenon. The specifics of suicide and, more broadly, of suicidal behaviour and its devastating consequences among youth, seniors and women are described. The book refers to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by presenting the latest data from the Police Headquarters.

The next chapter presents the topic of suicide in the Bible. Much space is devoted to showing the Roman Catholic Church's approach to the phenomenon of suicide and to suicide in history. Particular attention has been paid here to the views of St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas as well as to the findings of numerous Councils. In a separate chapter, the topic of suicide and suicide in the contemporary interpretation of the Roman Catholic Church is addressed, referring to the documents of the Second Vatican Council and later ones. In addition, the book presents contemporary pastoral practice applied to suicides and their families.

As already stated, there is a need to activate clergy and laity in suicide prevention. These actions can save many lives. The book analyses various guides for priests towards assessing their usefulness in specific pastoral work with people at risk of suicide.

One chapter presents the concept of the Polish Suicidological Society's volunteer service "Helping people in suicidal crisis". There is the possibility of linking this initiative with the activities of clergy from Caritas together with volunteers.

The social relevance of the problem is beyond doubt. It is to be hoped that Christians – both clergy and lay people – will read the enormity of the suffering and fear that drives many people to bargain for their lives. It is important not only to understand this problem, but also to awaken a readiness to help people lost in the meanders of modern life by emphasising the value of each person, their dignity and subjectivity.

Suicidologists have described a phenomenon called the Papageno effect, which shows that by simply taking an interest in the problems and suffering of another person, we can help them, we can dissuade them from suicidal thoughts and attempts to take their own life. The only prerequisite is to have the right amount of empathy within oneself and to be willing to devote some time to a fellow human being struggling with temptations to commit suicide.

Keywords: suicide, suicidal behaviour, suicide prevention, pastoral care in suicidal crisis