Since many years the Internet has become part of everyday reality. It is used in almost every field of life. So it is worth to take a research on the use of this medium for evangelization, catechesis and pastoral widely understood. This article takes just such an attempt, but in relation to the pastoral care of Poles living in exile in London. For methodological reasons the reflection will begin with a presentation of the Church’s position on the internet, then will be conducted a short characteristic Polish immigration to the UK. The essence of the article is to present websites and other communication tools used by the Polish parishes in London. The culmination of reflection will be the presentation of proposals and wishes in relation to perspectives of using the Internet in their ministry.

1. Teaching of the Church on evangelistic use of the Internet

The Catholic Church on the Internet officially declared its opinion in 2002. John Paul II proclaimed the “Message for the XXXVI World Communications Day” entitled Internet: New Forum for Proclaiming the Gospel¹. In the same year the Pontifical Council for Social Communications published a document The Church and the Internet² and Ethics in Internet³. These documents laid the foundation for the Church’s teaching on this modern medium, which integrates together all the previously known means of social communication.

In all these documents, can be seen a clear endorsement of the use of the Internet in Church activities. Ecclesial authorities recognize the enormous potential of this medium for evangelization⁴. The importance of the Internet is seen in the fact that: „It offers people direct and immediate access to important religious and spiritual resources—great libraries and museums and places of worship, the teaching documents of the Magisterium, the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the

Internet and the religious wisdom of the ages.” John Paul II formulates therefore unequivocal appeal: „I dare to summon the whole Church bravely to cross this new threshold, to put out into the deep of the Net, so that now as in the past the great engagement of the Gospel and culture may show to the world „the glory of God on the face of Christ” (2Cor 4: 6).”

Benedict XVI, continuing the teaching of his predecessor, in 2009 released the “Message for the 43rd World Communications Day New Technologies” entitled *New Relationships. Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship*. The Pope argues that new technologies allow for meetings between people, mutual understanding and exchange of values. Much space is devoted to friendships created through the Internet. He urges for an appropriate education in the field of new technologies to use them in good purpose.

Noteworthy is also the message *The Priest and Pastoral Ministry in a Digital World: New Media at the Service of the Word* announced in 2010. The Pope leaves no doubt about his opinion on the Internet: “The increased availability of the new technologies demands greater responsibility on the part of those called to proclaim the Word, but it also requires them to become more focused, efficient and compelling in their efforts. Priests stand at the threshold of a new era: as new technologies create deeper forms of relationship across greater distances, they are called to respond pastorally by putting the media ever more effectively at the service of the Word.”

The message from 2011 entitled *Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age* encourages the use of social networks: „In the digital world, transmitting information increasingly means making it known within a social network where knowledge is shared in the context of personal exchanges.” Particularly important in this matter, however, is the message of 2013 years entitled *Social Networks: portals of truth and faith; new spaces for evangelization*. Benedict XVI writes in it: „Social networks, as well as being a means of evangelization, can also be a factor in human development.”

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9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
Pope Francis in his first message also focuses on the use of modern technologies in evangelising activities: „Keeping the doors of our churches open also means keeping them open in the digital environment so that people, whatever their situation in life, can enter, and so that the Gospel can go out to reach everyone”14.

There is therefore no doubt that the position of the Catholic Church towards the Internet as a tool of evangelization is definitely positive. This does not mean a lack of criticism because many times was pointed out serious dangers brought by the Internet. All the latest Popes call for responsibility of both senders and recipients of the mass media. They place a strong emphasis on optimal use of their huge opportunities.

It should also be noted that the involvement of the Church in promoting the use of the Internet does not remain only on a theoretical plane. The Holy See has in fact its own channel on YouTube15, works with most popular Internet browser Google. Papal profiles exist on social networks like Facebook i Twitter16.

All members of the Church, therefore, are obliged to accept and to bring into force papal appeals. This should bear fruit in increasingly better use of the Internet in establishing the relationship between people and especially in the proclamation of the Word of God to modern man.

2. Phenomenon of Polish emigration to Great Britain

Difficult fate of Poland, full of annexations, wars, destructive communism, but also ruthless capitalism, in which many people did not find their place, led to a situation that contemporary estimates say up to 20 million Poles living in exile17. One of the most popular destinations for is the United Kingdom. Currently, we can talk about three different groups of Polish immigrants residing in the country. The first one are Poles who remained in Britain after World War II, and came to this country immediately after the war. This group currently is small and for obvious reasons, is made up of elderly people. They are also strongly integrated with the local community18. The second group of Polish immigrants include those who left Poland in the 80s of the twentieth century for political reasons. Therefore they

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15 http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7E-LYc1wivk33iyt5bR5zQ (dostęp 12.13.2014).
16 See. J. Kloch, Internet i Kościół, [Internet and the Church]. Warszawa 2011, 70.
are called „the emigration of solidarity”. The third group are Poles who left the country after the integration with the European Union for economic reasons. Without a doubt, the last of these groups is the most numerous and the youngest. According to the available data of the Central Statistical Office in 2010 in the UK there were 560,000 Polish immigrants. Despite a slowdown of migration, which is a result of the global financial crisis, it is still in process and the number of Polish emigrants is systematically growing. So we can responsibly assume that at present there is population of about 600,000 Poles in the UK. In London alone, over 135 thousand people declared Polish nationality, with more than 20 thousand of them reside in Ealing. Post accession group of Polish immigrants in the UK consists mainly of young people. According to a study on Poles emigrating to various countries in recent years, „more than 1.4 million is 39 years old or less, including 226 thousand of children under 15.”

Despite the common belief with a high level of religiosity of Poles living in the UK, recent studies do not confirm this. According to the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, the percentage of Poles who attend every Sunday at Mass is only about 10%. The church always tries to help its faithful wherever they are, also in exile. Instruction Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi from 2004 published by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People states that the principal tasks of the pastoral worker among immigrants are “safeguarding the migrants’ ethnic, cultural, linguistic and ritual identity since effective pastoral activity is unthinkable if it does not respect and value their cultural heritage.” Also the Church in Poland creates a pastoral institutions operating in conditions of exile. Currently 99 Polish priests work as ministers in England and Wales. There are 69 Polish missions in England and Wales operating as personal...

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19 Tamże.
24 B. Marczuk, Wielki exodus z Polski trwa, jw.
parishes. The Catholic Holy Mass is celebrated in 207 towns and cities in England and Wales.

3. Websites of Polish pastoral centers in London

In the light of the Church’s teaching the use of modern instruments of social communication (especially the Internet) seems to be almost the duty of pastors and lay people, also in emigration. In this context was made an attempt to perform the analysis on the use of these tools in parish activities falling within the structure of the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales. However, the analysis was restricted to the territory of London. In this city live thousands of Poles and pastoral care in Polish is carried by at least 12 parishes, of which the vast majority have filial centers. Preliminary analysis shows that the Polish parishes in London actually use only the website as a tool for information and communication with the faithful. It must be admitted with appreciation that each of the analyzed parish runs its own website, but their quality is very different.

An example of a poorly developed website is a parish of St. Padre Pio in the district Northolt. It contains only brief and often outdated information on current events, opening hours, preparation for the sacraments and the conditions of which they are granted. The website offers a biography of the patron saint of the parish and contact details (address, phone number and e-mail address). Unfortunately, the layout is poor with dark colors. Some justification may be, however, that the parish belongs to the youngest Polish pastoral centers in London.

Slightly developed website is also the website of one of the oldest Polish parish including districts such as Lewisham and Brockley. Apart from general information and announcements the parish website contains information on how to prepare for the sacraments i.e. confession, baptism, marriage, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Very brief informations on parish catechesis and initiatives are also included.

Also the site of the parish located by the street Devonia does not belong to very complex, but contains the basic and current information. These include announcements, schedule of Masses, celebrations and meetings of various groups operating in the parish. Information about them, however, are very concise. Information on the website relate to the history of the parish, a special shop and Polish schools operating in its territory. Noteworthy are also numerous links to interesting Catholic websites.

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Not very attractive visually, but quite extensive, current and practical website is the property of Merciful Jesus Polish parish in the district of Croydon\textsuperscript{31}. In addition to news about the parish, worship and the sacraments, the website has published in-depth information about St. Sister Faustina Kowalska, a picture of Merciful Jesus and the instructions on how to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Some of the tabs seem to be underdeveloped, such as Parish office / funeral. It is worth noting that this parish is the only one among Polish pastoral centers in London, which has an account on the social networking site Twitter (@ LPMKCroydon) and through this medium inform the faithful about current events.

Parish of Christ the King located at Balham in London has graphically nice and quite extensive website\textsuperscript{32}. Unfortunately, some of the sub-pages are still blank (eg „domestic Church” and „Library”). Some information is also outdated, such as information about Advent confessions available during Lent. Unlike many of the previously discussed sites the preparation for the sacraments is not included. It seems to be a serious drawback, as it is an important aspect of pastoral ministry among the Polish immigrants and they are particularly interested in.

An interesting website has a parish in Highgate-Finchley in London\textsuperscript{33}. The parish each month publishes its own newsletter in hard copy and it is available on the website in pdf format. Brief information on the sacraments have also been included. It should be noted, however, that a brief theological introduction were published first and then practical information, which promotes proper understanding of the substance of the sacraments. A special tab is devoted to premarital catechesis, which probably shows a large number of people preparing for this sacrament. It contains, however, only citation from an article by Fr. M. Dziewiecki\textsuperscript{34}. On the website can also be found news about the priest, Saturday school, gift aid and recommended sites i.e. the Bible, the Vatican, the Conference of the Polish Episcopate, the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, as well as websites such as “Opoka”, “Gość Niedzielny”, “Niedziela” and many others.

The largest Polish parish in London, and even in the whole of the UK, is the parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mother of the Church in Ealing formally numbering about 4,500 faithful. The parish is run by the Congregation of Marian Fathers. The website does not make a good impression, especially in terms of graphics\textsuperscript{35}. In addition to the presentation of parishes and pastors, worship schedule, and a brief reflection on the sacraments, the website is a parish newsletter in electronic format. A large number of groups that operate in this parish is

\textsuperscript{31} http://www.parafia-croydon.co.uk/ (Access 12.03.2014).
\textsuperscript{32} http://www.parafia-balham.co.uk/ (Access 12.03.2014).
\textsuperscript{33} http://www.finchleyparish.co.uk/ (Access 12.03.2014).
\textsuperscript{35} http://www.parafiaealing.co.uk/ (Access 12.03.2014).
impressive. The page briefly information about what they do and when have meet-

The website has a number of links to sites dedicated to the Order of Marian Fathers, the Bible, faith, liturgy, the Church, catechesis, etc. There is even a possibility, thanks to paypal system, to make donation for the community. It is worrying, however, that the contact form is „temporarily unavailable”.

The most powerful websites are conducted by the following Polish parishes in London: Our Lady of Mercy in Willesden Green, St. John the Evangelist Church in Putney, St. Andrew Bobola in Hammersmith and the Polish Catholic Mission in Enfield - Palmers Green - Walthamstow. The first of these parishes is run by the Jesuits. Graphical view of the website makes a positive impression36. Also, the content is quite rich. In addition to traditional items such as presentation of the parish, contact information, terms of access for each sacraments, information about groups active in the parish as well as the cafe and library have been posted. The site also includes references to Polish Saturday School, scouts, etc. Some of the tabs (such as the reading room), however, are empty.

Undoubtedly an interesting website is also the internet service of the parish in Enfield37. Noteworthy is friendly and colorful graphics and simplicity of navigation. Presentation of the parish, sisters and priests working in it as well as the parish council seems to be sufficient, and the electronic version of the newsletter of the parish deserves appreciation. Similar comments can be formulated with regard to the sacraments and parish groups, though sometimes they are superficial. It also seems that some of the information is not updated (eg Gallery).

Attention should be paid on the website of the Polish church of St. John the Evangelist in London, where the ministry is exercised by the Society of Christ Fathers to Polish Migrants38. This website has nice graphics and is one of the most complex. On the home page there is a parish newsletter with practical information on current events. In addition to information about the parish, worship and sacraments, as well as a number of groups operating on its territory, this site contains numerous redirections to pages associated with the hierarchical Church (Vatican, dioceses), Catholic web portals (KAI; opoka.org.pl; mateusz.pl), state and public institutions (embassy or Polish Educational Society). Is also worth mentioning fact that this site is the only one of all the analyzed which includes Polish-English prayer book.

One of the most comprehensive websites, conducted by the Polish parishes in London is undoubtedly the website of the St. Andrew Bobola parish39. It contains

38 http://www.parafiaputney.co.uk/ (Access 12.03.2014).
information about the history of the parish, its patron, the image of Our Lady of Kozielsk and numerous parish groups. It also has a web version of the newspaper. It should be noted the online calendar with all the events connected with the parish. This website provides a unique on-line transmission from the church.

Beside regular parishes in London, there is also a Polish Student Chaplaincy. It runs its own internet service. It is not too developed, but shows high activity of the community and is constantly updated. A characteristic feature of the website are videos of the meetings, links to the Vatican’s YouTube channel and redirections to websites containing liturgical readings.

4. Perspectives for the use of the Internet in pastoral activity

To summarize the analysis carried out above it can be concluded that all the Polish pastoral centers in London have websites. All of them contain information about the schedule of Masses, religious services and the sacraments. Very often the sites contain also informations on the groups operating in the parish. Undoubtedly, the use of Internet in the pastoral Polish community in London is larger than in Poland, where many parishes still does not have a website. Among the shortcomings is a lack of current updates for some sites, leading to the loss of their informational value. Some of them are also quite poor, both in terms of content and form. It is necessary to improve the layout of most sites, in order to make them not only practical, but also an attractive tool.

The need to create and expand websites derives from the universal availability of the Internet. For parochial centers, as well as for larger ecclesiastical structures is actually the only chance to reach broad audiences. While in the case of the press, radio or television, they are not able to compete with commercial media, on the Internet, the Church can “compete with other broadcasters, because establishing and maintaining web pages does not require large capital investment and is mainly based on the inventiveness and competencies”.

The urgent task is the establishment of parish profiles on social networks i.e. Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Only one of the Polish centers in London has a Twitter account, although the population of Poles in Great Britain and London is very young. Young people generally use the social media. Pastors can not allow the lack of evangelistic and pastoral proposals in this type of media. Benedict XVI spoke about this: „priests can rightly be expected to be present in the world of digital communications as faithful witnesses to the Gospel, exercising their proper role as leaders of communities which increasingly express themselves with the

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41 W. Śmigiel, Czytelnictwo katolickich stron w Internecie, „Roczniki Teologiczne” 51:2004, z. 6, s. 243.
different “voices” provided by the digital marketplace. Priests are thus challenged to proclaim the Gospel by employing the latest generation of audiovisual resources (images, videos, animated features, blogs, websites) which, alongside traditional means, can open up broad new vistas for dialogue, evangelization and catechesis.

**Conclusion**

The analysis done on the use of the Internet by Polish pastoral centers in London shows great openness to new media. Each parish has at least a website containing basic information about its functioning. At the same time, however, it has been emphasized the need to create profiles on social networking sites, because they give a chance to reach young people.

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Key words:
Polish emigration, pastoral care of emigrants, Polish parishes in London, Internet in pastoral ministry
Summary

This article attempts to explore the use of the Internet for evangelization, catechesis and widely understood pastoral work in relation to the pastoral care of Poles living in exile in London. For methodological reasons, first it shows the position of the Catholic Church on the Internet, followed by a brief characterization of Polish immigration to the UK. In the centre of the article there is an analysis of websites and other communication tools used by the Polish parishes in London. The culmination of reflection is to present proposals and demands concerning the prospects of using the Internet in their future work.