

Adrian Korczago

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Call to a parishioner ‘on the dole’

A verbatim from Poland

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Dr. Korczago is a Lutheran parish minister in a rural parish, a little south of the coal-mining district of Kattowice in southern Poland.

Cl = parish member; P = pastor.

- Cl 1: Did you hear the latest news? It is getting worse and worse in our country!
- P 1: Well, if you want me to be honest, I do not share your opinion, especially not in regard with our area here around! Many people are renewing their houses and flats, are buying new cars, and are travelling for vacation. As far as I know this is the same in your family, isn't it?
- Cl 2: It used to be... It is only past any more by today. It is all over. One accident, and my life has ended!
- P 2: You have the feeling that the accident made all the perspectives of your future tumble down and that your horizon is very limited now?
- Cl 3: Horizon, perspectives... I am some creature that is of no use any more.
- P 3: ...??
- Cl 4: Well, I got fired! Quite a while ago I fell ill. So my doc wrote to my company that I couldn't work for some time. And since my illness went on, he had to write this again and again. One day they told me: "Bye, bye, Mr. X!" – Anyway, one day soon our pit will crash anyway... But in that case I would have got some severance payment. I could have repaid the credit, that I raised to renovate our house. But now I became redundant and I am sitting here in my awfully bad luck.
- P 4: Are you still on the dole?
- Cl 5: No, I am getting not a single penny... only in my dreams! But moreover: I even lost any dreams!
- P 5: As far as I know you, you have always been a skilled craftsman, not only with the work down in the pit, also in the house construction business, You have been very active when we rebuilt our church building, and the other

men appreciated the quality of your work. – I understand that your situation is very hard – but why all this pessimism?

Cl 6: After I was laid off from the pit, I found some jobs – here and there. But finally, this accident happened, right in front of my house – and this really changed everything.

P 6: Did you apply for your pension?

Cl 7: Of course I did. They checked my application, and at first the commission sorted me into ‘Group 3’. But when they checked on all the specifications, they found out, that my life’s working time was too short to be eligible for a pension at all. All that is left to me is to be the ‘char’! And my wife is out now for work! We are vegetating, that’s what it is! – What will happen once the children will start attending school? – It’s better not to start thinking about it at all! – If we wouldn’t have our parents to support us, we would be stony-broke.

P 7: Did you try to get some retraining?

Cl 8: I don’t know any other kind of work. And to work at a construction site, well everybody would be afraid of that. If some accident would happen there, then they would have to pay.

P 8: It is a pity that you have lost all your courage. All the time before, I have always admired your courage! To be honest, right at the moment I do not know at all how I can help you.

Translated by Klaus Temme