

*THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
IN THE TEACHING
OF THE FOUNDER AND THE RENOVATOR
OF THE CONGREGATION
OF MARIANS*

*Theological Foundations
of the Christian Life
in the Teaching
of the Founder and the Renovator
of the Congregation
of Marians*

Tadeusz Rogalewski, M.J.C.

Marians of the Immaculate Conception
Stockbridge, Massachusetts 01263
1999

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Imprimi Potest for original Polish text:
Very Rev. Jan M. Rokosz, MIC
Provincial
Warsaw, April 19, 1996

With Ecclesiastical Permission

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 99-074138
ISBN 0-944203-35-3

Project coordinator and art selection for cover:
Andrew R. Maczynski, MIC

Translation and editing from Polish into English:
Paul and Ewa St. Jean

Editing and proofreading for English edition:
David Came

Typesetting:
Patricia Menatti

Cover Design:
Bill Sosa

Front cover: Bas-relief depicting the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians,
Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus and Blessed George,
located on the wall of the chapel of the Marian monastery in Skorzec, Poland.

Printed in the United States of America by the *Marian Press*,
Stockbridge, Massachusetts 01263

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General Abbreviations

ca	—	<i>circa</i>
ed.	—	<i>editio</i> , edition
f.	—	<i>folio</i> , current page number
mps	—	typewritten copy
pp.	—	<i>paginae</i> , pages
r.	—	<i>recto</i> , facing page of the manuscript
rps	—	manuscript
v.	—	<i>verso</i> , reverse side of the manuscript to be read after <i>recto</i>
vol.	—	<i>volumen</i> , volume

Bibliographical Abbreviations

CM	—	Constitutiones Congregationes Clericorum Regularium Marianorum sub titulo Immaculae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, Rome, 1930.
DD	—	Spiritual Diary, Warsaw, 1988
IC	—	Inspectio cordis Stanislai a Jesu Maria Congregationis Immaculae Conceptionis Clericorum Recollectorum Ex Scholis Pij Praepositi - Recollectiones pro Dominicis et Festis totius anni et Menstruis exercitijs tumulturaria [<u>!</u> = tumultuaria] opera consutatae [<u>!</u>], ca. 1680-1685 — copia 185 ff. (contemporanea?), Library of the Major Seminary of Lublin, a handwritten copy, rps 523.
IM	—	Instructiones Congregationes Clericorum Regularium Marianorum sub titulo Immaculae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, Rome, 1959.

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- LD — Laus Deiparae Mariae Virginis, an. 1661 in: *Prodromus Reginae Artium*, P. I, N.III, c. I, Varsaviae, 1663; ed. IV, Cracoviae (ca 1669), pp. 62-70, in: Pos. 593-599.
- LP — *Listy polskie [Polish Letters]*, vol. I-III, Warsaw, 1987.
- MP — Georgii Matulewicz-Matulevicius *Manuscripta Polona*, Archivum Generale CC.RR. Marianorum, vol. I-II.
- NV — *Norma Vitae Religiosae Congregationis B.V. Mariae sine labe Conceptae Eremitarum Marianorum fidelibus defunctis praecipue militibus et peste sublatis suffragantium Proposita et ab Eminentissimo et Reverendissimo Domino Lucio [! — Leonardo] Cardinali Colloredo ex Commissione Sacrae Congregationis Regularium et Episcoporum Correcta*, Romae Anno Domini 1694, in: Pos. 458-483.
- OC — *Orator Crucifixus sive ultima Septem Verba Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, totidem piis discursibus exposita per R.P. Joannem [!] Papczynski, Presbyterum Polonum*, Cracoviae, 1670.
- PRA — *Prodromus Reginae Artium*, Varsaviae, 1663; ed. II, Varsaviae 1664; ed. III, Varsaviae, 1665; ed. IV, Cracoviae (ca 1669).
- Pos. — *Sacra Congregatio pro Causis sanctorum Officium historicum Posnanien. Beatificationis et canonisationis servi Dei stanislai a Jesu Maria Papczynski, Fundatoris Clericorum Regularium Immacolatae Conceptionis B.V.M. (+1701) POSITIO super introductione Causae et super virtutibus ex officio concinnata*, Romae, 1977.

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- TDM — Templum Dei Mysticum quod in Homine Christiano demonstravit etc., Cracoviae, 1675; ed. II, Varsaviae 1741; ed. III, Varsaviae, 1747.
- Tes. I — Testament duchowy (pierwszy) [First spiritual testament], December 9, 1692, in: Pos. 487-489.
- Tes. II — Testament duchowy (drugi) [Second spiritual testament], [1699]/1701, [TESTAMENTUM VENERABILIS PATRIS STANISLAI A JESU MARIA], in: Pos. 493-499.

FOREWORD

In this valuable new work, Fr. Tadeusz Rogalewski, M.I.C., offers us a much-needed synthesis of the writings of Father Founder and Blessed George. Fr. Rogalewski is uniquely suited to carry out this important effort both by his academic skill and his personal experience. His doctorate in theology has given him the skills needed to delve into the theological foundations of the thought of Fr. Stanislaus and Blessed George. And his rich personal experience — as a professor in our seminary, retreat director and author — have provided him the occasion to ponder deeply and understand keenly the riches of the spiritual heritage that God has given to both the Marians and to the Church in the persons of our community's Founder and Renovator.

I have two reasons for particularly appreciating and valuing this new work of Fr. Rogalewski. As a young seminarian, seeking to put into writing in English the spiritual heritage of the Marian community, I wrote in 1980 a brief work, *Love, Service, Zeal*. Its tiny 28 pages made an ever-so tentative effort to sketch the highlights of the Marian spirit. Since that time, much has been written on our history and spirit (though, it is true, little has appeared in English.)

Thanks to the work of the International Historical Institute and Fr. Bukowicz, Subdcn. Gorski, Frs. Krzyzanowski, Makos, and Rogalewski, critical editions of the works of our Founder and our Renovator have been produced and much has been learned about the history of our congregation. Still, no synthesis of any breadth of these new sources and resources had been attempted, in any language. This effort of Fr. Rogalewski is a wonderful gift to those of us who have been waiting for just such a work.

My second reason for a special appreciation of this work is more personal. I have had the happy opportunity to get to know Fr. Rogalewski through our meetings at the International Historical Institute in Rome and during several visits to Poland. He is a man of energy, kindness and dedication. Recently, several of his shorter writings have been translated and published in English.

The publication of this work will, I am certain, make him better known and give his efforts well-deserved appreciation by a wider audience. It promises to be for a new generation of English-speaking Marians the foundational work that Fr. Witold Nieciecki's *Spirituality of the Congregation of Marians* was for Marians in the 1970s. May it be just the

first of many books that will open for us the treasury of the spiritual wealth that is available to us in the lives and writings of the Marians who have gone before us.

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Marian History and Spirituality*

INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to meet the hopes and allay the fears of the contemporary world, the Second Vatican Council wanted to assist people in finding answers to their eternal questions. Therefore, it addressed its message to all the pilgrims journeying to the Kingdom of the Father. This message is a message of salvation. The world in which we live had fallen into the bondage of sin, but was liberated by Christ who crushed the power of evil and made it possible for the people to undergo a transformation which leads to the fullness of perfection. The Church wants to bring this truth closer to humankind. Therefore, it enters a dialogue with humankind on various problems and helps the people to resolve them within the light of the Gospel. Thus it leads man to salvation, contributes to the spiritual renewal of society, all the time continuing Christ's work of salvation (cf. KDK 1-4). The mission of the Church is to help people to shape their lives according to the teaching and example of the Savior by which they will attain unity with God. This teaching is rich in its variety and encompasses all manifestations of religious life which comprise the Christian ethos.¹ Undoubtedly, the greatest role in the shaping of Christian moral attitude was played by religious orders. They provide a special way of living a life of holiness through the practice of the evangelical counsels. Such a life is an expression of perfect love and of one's total dedication to the service of God and others. Religious consecration reveals "an elevation of the Kingdom of God above the mundane and all its most important needs. It also shows all people the great power of the reigning Christ and the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit working miraculously in the Church." (KK 44).² Through the personal sanctity of their members, religious orders enrich God's Church and become a charismatic sign of eternal good for all. It is these religious orders that fulfill the work of the apostolate on behalf of the Church in various areas of human life and according to the needs of the times; they do it by word, example, prayer, penance and sacrifice.³

It was usually the spirit of the founder and other prominent members

of the community, who created a particular model of meeting and experiencing God, that left its mark on the religious order giving it its specific character.⁴ Comprehensive studies of the history of a religious order and its character allow us to understand better and to fathom to a certain degree the very ideal of Christian life. It seems very useful and worthwhile for us to conduct such studies on our native soil. As the first religious order founded in Poland, the Congregation of Marians, founded in 1673 by Stanislaus Papczynski and renovated by George Matulaitis-Matulewicz in 1909, merits our special attention. Although the congregation has been in existence for over three centuries now, its spiritual heritage is little known and insufficiently researched. And yet, both the Founder of the Marians, the Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus, and its Renovator, Blessed George, were considered holy men by their contemporaries. Their holiness was reflected in their writings which emanate the true spirit of the Gospel, and are based both on experience and intense spiritual lives.

Both the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians knew how to interpret the signs of the times and each sought ways to meet the needs of his contemporary world. They both managed to avoid the errors present in the Catholic moral teaching of their times.⁵⁻⁶ They were able to see those truths of the Gospel, which hold true in every age but which merit special emphasis during a particular period of history. Such an approach is considered appropriate even today as we discuss the need for a new evangelization. Therefore, it is entirely justifiable that we become acquainted more closely with the spiritual legacy of these men, the most prominent of Marians. Their writings contain a lot of elements drawn from the rich heritage of Christian tradition. They provide various moral guidelines; the guidelines known to Christian asceticism and mysticism, which lead to union with God. They speak about the hard work undertaken in order to attain Christian perfection and obtain salvation through the control of one's desires and self denial. They call to penance, to fighting sin, to conversion, to prayer and to acquiring virtues. Since, as I have already mentioned, the majority of these guide-

lines constitute a common Christian heritage, I will not discuss them here in detail.

The task which has been undertaken in this work is to investigate the fundamental assumptions and theological truths on the basis of which the formation of the Christian attitude is to take place. For it is more often the case that mere guidelines and instructions as to how we should live are the object of in moral teaching (and hence are usually better known); rather than their connection to the truths of the faith on which they are based. By demonstrating the foundations of moral formation, such teaching acquires a particular credibility, the power to convince; and provides a motivation which brings about interior change. It is not my intention, however, to study any particular process of moral formation or its implementation. To approach the task in this manner seems even more appropriate because it concerns the very foundation of Christian life.

In order to accomplish this task as outlined above, I shall analyze the writings of our authors — both those addressed to the general Christian audience and those addressed specifically to religious. Later, I shall attempt to bring out certain elements and aspects of their teaching on Christian formation in order to carry out a proper synthesis, keeping in mind that, according to the thought of both the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians, a religious is a model of a true Christian and it would be very difficult to separate these two models in the writings of Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz. A comprehensive study and discussion of this issue will allow us to assess these writings properly and to point out their fundamental values.

Up to now there have been various articles and extensive monographs published discussing issues of Christian life in the writings of Father Papczynski, especially his approach to the charism of Mary and eschatological issues. The writings of Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz have also been the subject of scholarly treatises and articles which discuss, among other things, his contribution to Catholic social thought and his approach to spiritual direction, and point out essential characteristics of his teach-

ing. However, a comprehensive study of the thought of both of these authors has never been conducted. In an effort to remedy this, I decided to devote my attention to their teaching and thus hope to fill this gap in such an important area of Polish moral theology.

The principal sources for this work are the writings of Stanislaus Papczynski and George Matulaitis-Matulewicz. Both authors left many writings on various subjects. I have selected, first of all, those writings concerning the issues of moral life, i.e. the religious statutes that were drafted by each of them, the instructions which they prepared for these statutes, little ascetic works, personal notes, letters, homilies, sermons and conferences.

The most extensive work which is very helpful in preparing a study on Father Papczynski's teaching is *INSPECTIO CORDIS*. We do not know the exact time when this work was written. The Venerable Servant of God probably wrote it after 1679 and before 1685. It is a manuscript measuring 18.5cm x 14.5cm and numbering 186 leaves of text. *Inspectio* contains meditations for Sundays (Part I), more solemn feasts (Parts II-III), days of recollection (Part IV) and for particular days of the week (Part V). Each meditation, divided into a few points, is a commentary to a particular verse of the Gospel taken from the text of the Holy Mass for that particular day or selected because of a certain truth of faith, a particular religious vow or a virtue appropriate for those in the religious life. The daily morning meditations concern the Lord's Passion, the evening meditations regard ultimate affairs of man. Two meditations were prepared for each day: one for the time before receiving the Eucharist and one for the time after. The basic source used by the Venerable Servant of God in preparing *Inspectio Cordis* was the Holy Scriptures which he quoted and referred to all the time. As can be seen from the note which the author had written on the title page, he wrote *Inspectio* in haste. This is why his comments to the fragments of the Holy Scriptures were limited to what he was able to recall from memory or to what he carried in his heart. Yet, because of all this, *Inspectio* is an original work and is the fruit of its author's rich personal reflection

on the Word of God.

Another valuable source is NORMA VITAE. This work is important because it once constituted the Marians' religious rule. We find in it the fundamental ideas of the Institute founded by the Venerable Servant of God. The first version of *The Rule of Life* was drafted by the Venerable Servant of God probably around the year 1672. As he was writing it, the author was influenced by the following sources: the Holy Scriptures, the Rule of St. Augustine, the documents of Pope Clement VIII and the constitutions of the Piarist Fathers. Naturally, Father Papczynski also drew his inspiration from the source common to all religious orders, i.e. from the sound tradition of the Church. His work is original in its form and content; it was written in a clear, vivid and convincing style.

An important work in the studies of Father Papczynski's teaching on the Blessed Mother is his sermon entitled LAUS DEIPARAE MARIAE VIRGINIS. It contains valuable instructions, especially those concerning the imitation of Mary. This particular sermon by Father Stanislaus is probably one of his first sermons delivered after his ordination, i.e. in 1661. A year later he prepared his textbook of rhetoric titled *Prodromus reginae artium* for publication and included the sermon mentioned above as an example in the chapter called *De Laude*.

An extremely useful document in our research is the so-called OBLATIO. Father Papczynski made this act of oblation during the ceremony of his dispensation from the vows in the order of the Piarist Fathers on December 11 (?), 1670. Even though, at that point, he was moving into the ranks of diocesan clergy, he made a pledge, although not in a canonical form, to live according to the evangelical counsels until the time when he would be able to give them the canonical form in the religious institute he would establish. We know from *Oblatio* that at the moment of leaving the Piarists, the Venerable Servant of God had already formulated a clear goal for himself to the fulfillment of which he would dedicate the rest of his life, i.e. to the establishment of a new religious order. In *Oblatio* he also presented a general idea of his future institute, in particular, the fact that it would be Marian in character, that

its members would be called Clerici Mariani, and that the institute would bear the title of the Immaculate Conception.

As we discuss the sources for the present book, we must not overlook the REPORT FROM THE VISITATION conducted by Bishop S.H. Swiecicki, prepared on October 24, 1670, during his canonical visitation of the Korabiew Hermitage. At that time the Visitor left the first Marians certain dispositions and statutes which they were supposed to follow in addition to the *Rule of Life*.

Among the later documents which proved useful in preparing this book, mention should be made of the LETTER TO THE MARIANS of the Korabiew Forest dated April 19, 1690. Father Papczynski listed in it certain rules of discipline to be followed by the members of the congregation of that monastery. Yet, in its spiritual content, the letter has a general character and may be considered as an encouragement to practice virtues and live pious lives — an encouragement addressed to any broader group of people.

Another very useful source is the document entitled PRAECEPTA PRO FRATRIBUS MARIANIS PATRIS STANISLAI. It contains the recommendations for the confreres living at the Korabiew Hermitage. We do not know the exact date when this document was written, but it happened probably after April 10, perhaps in June of 1701. In the recommendations mentioned above we can see the concern of our Founder about religious discipline and the spiritual well being of the confreres.

One must not underestimate such sources as the collection of Paschal sermons entitled ORATOR CRUCIFIXUS, Cracow, 1670, and a little ascetic work entitled TEMPLUM DEI MYSTICUM, Cracow, 1675. The first one is a collection of meditations upon the words uttered by Christ on the Cross, containing practical instructions for Christian life. The second one is a kind of a textbook on asceticism and discusses the theological foundations of Christian life. On the basis of Revelation and the works of the writers of the Church, the author presents here both the ideal of Christian perfection and the particular stages of its development.

We must also mention two SPIRITUAL TESTAMENTS of the

Venerable Servant of God. The first one was drafted on December 9, 1692. The second one dates back to ca. 1699/1701 and contains Father Papczynski's last admonishments addressed to his spiritual sons.

Among the sources which assist us in studying the teaching of Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, the following ones are the most useful: SPIRITUAL DIARY, Warsaw, 1988; CONSTITUTIONES Congregationis Clericorum Regularium Marianorum sub titulo Immaculae Conceptionis Beatissimae Virginis Mariae, Romae, 1959; POLISH LETTERS, vol. I-III, ed. by J. Bukowicz, Warsaw, 1987; MANUSCRIPTA POLONA, Arch. Gen. CC. RR. Marianorum, vol. I-II.

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz wrote his *Spiritual Diary* in the years 1910 to 1914. It is, as it were, his self-portrait written during the initial period of the renovation of the Congregation, dedicated to his confreres with whom he shares his inspirations and revelations. For this reason it is an important source useful in our research.

Constitutiones are the constitutions for the renovated congregation of Marians. Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz prepared their first draft in 1909, the next and final one — in the years 1922 to 1926. This double work on the constitutions allowed him to create a work so mature that it was also appreciated by people from outside the congregation. After the Renovator's death only a few modifications were introduced to these constitutions. They were published in their final version three years after their author's death, i.e., in 1930. They were binding in the Congregation of Marians until the changes introduced after Vatican II.

Instructiones are the instructions written by the Renovator of Marians. They are an ascetic and religious commentary to the constitutions. Here the author elaborated on the character and the spirit of the Congregation. As he was writing these instructions, he drew his inspiration from prayer, from the experience of the Church throughout the ages, from the history of his own and other religious congregations and from the advice of various competent people. He left a series of instructions regarding the spiritual and religious life seen in various aspects. In the

final edition from 1959, the instructions are divided into four principal parts: *Instructiones generales, De exercitiis pietatis, De vita religiosa, De officiis*.

The Polish Letters were written between 1901 and 1927. They depict his life, activity, personality and reflect the ideas which animated him. In the letters, the author discusses various issues, mostly, however, the matters regarding the congregation. The letters were preserved with reverence by their addressees and later gathered together by the Marians during the beatification process.

Manuscripta Polona are two volumes containing the outlines of the conferences delivered by Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz to various religious communities. Typed and collected in two folders, they are an important source for the research into the ascetic thought of the Renovator of Marians.

Although we do not yet have a comprehensive study of the theory of Christian life of the Congregation of Marians, we do have various works at our disposal which separately discuss certain aspects of the teachings of its Founder and Renovator.

Father Papczynski's teaching found its most extensive presentation in the doctoral dissertation by Father K. Krzyzanowski entitled STANISLAUS A JESU MARIA PAPCZYNSKI, O. IMM. CONC. (1631-1701): MAGISTER STUDII PERFECTIONIS, Romae, A.D. 1963. In the first part the author presented the life and the writings of the Venerable Servant of God, in the second — his teaching on Christian perfection, and in the third — on perfection in the religious life. However, what Father Krzyzanowski did not have at his disposal was *Inspectio cordis*, a very important source which presents Father Papczynski's ideal of interior life, which was found only in 1971.⁷

The second important study on Father Papczynski's teaching is the work by A. Pakula entitled DOSKONALOSC, ZAKONNA WEDLUG "INSPECTIO CORDIS" STANISŁAWA PAPCZYNSKIEGO MIC (1631 - 1701) [Religious Perfection According to "Inspectio cordis" by Stanislaus Papczynski MIC], Lublin, 1991. The author of this work gave

an extensive presentation of such perfection but essentially limited himself, as he had mentioned in the title, to only one source.

An important contribution to the study of the teaching of the Founder of Marians on the Blessed Mother is the work by Z. Zywicka entitled *MARYJNOSC W ZYCIU I PISMACH O. STANISŁAWA PAPCZYŃSKIEGO, ZAŁOŻYCIELA MARIANOW (1631-1701)* [The Spirit of Mary in the Life and Writings of Father Stanislaus Papczynski, Founder of the Marians (1631-1701)], Lublin, 1976.

Mention should also be made of a treatise by the author of this book entitled *KONCEPCJA ŻYCIA CHRZESCIJAŃSKIEGO W PISMACH O. STANISŁAWA PAPCZYŃSKIEGO* [A Concept of Christian Life in the Writings of Father Stanislaus Papczynski], Warsaw, 1980. The purpose of this treatise was primarily to present such a vision of interior life, as conceived by the Founder of the Marians, which is useful for general Christian formation, and to do so on the basis of the sources which were available at the time. However, one source, which is now considered to be most useful, i.e. *Inspectio cordis*, was missing. It had already been found at that time but was not yet translated. Without taking this work into account, Father Papczynski's teaching on interior life would remain incomplete, thus this present book is not a repetition of my earlier study; it is its continuation and an elaboration on it. It takes into account several other sources which have not been used so far.

It is worth noting that the authors of other works published within recent decades dealt with various elements of Father Papczynski's teaching. Although they did not focus on his teaching about interior life, we may still find certain issues there which are interesting to us at the present time. Let me mention at least the most important of these works: S. Sydry, *Czcigodny Sluga Boży o. Stanisław od Jezusa Maryi Papczynski i jego dzieło* [The Reverent Servant of God Father Stanislaus of Jesus and Mary Papczynski and His Work], Warsaw, 1937; G. Navikevicius, *Stanisław di Gesu Maria Papczynski (1631-1701)*, Roma, 1960; E. Jarra, *Mysł społeczna o. Stanisława Papczyńskiego założyciela Marianów* [The Social Thought of Father Stanislaus Papczynski, Founder of

Marians], Stockbridge, 1962; G. Karolewicz, *Poglady społeczne Stanisława Papczyńskiego na tle epoki* [Stanislaus Papczynski's Social Views against the Background of His Times], Warsaw, 1964; K. Krzyzanowski, *Pod sztandarem Niepokalanej* [Under the Banner of Mary Immaculate], Stockbridge, 1966; M. Tarnawska, *O. Stanisław Papczyński na tle swoich czasów* [Father Stanislaus Papczynski and His Times], London, 1962.

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching on interior life has been the subject of a variety of works discussing its various aspects. However, a comprehensive study of this issue has not been conducted yet. The most important among these works are: Boniecki A., *Wkład w katolicką myśl i czyn społeczny ks. arcybiskupa Jerzego Matulewicza, 1871-1927* [Archbishop George Matulewicz's Contribution to the Catholic Social Thought and Activity], Lublin, 1964; Byczkowski T., *Kierownictwo duchowe według bł. Jerzego Matulewicza* [Spiritual Direction According to Blessed George Matulewicz], Lublin, 1993; Chrosciechowski J., *Rozważania o duchu zakonnym Ksieży Marianów* [Meditations on the Religious Spirit of the Marian Fathers], Fawley Court 1968; Gorski T., Proczek Z., *Rozmówiony w Kościele. Błogosławiony Arcybiskup Jerzy Matulewicz* [Enamored with the Church. Blessed Archbishop George Matulewicz], Warsaw, 1987; Nieciecki W., *Główne cechy duchowości Zgromadzenia Ksieży Marianów w świetle Konstytucji marianskich z 1930 r* [The Main Characteristics of the Spirituality of the Marian Fathers in Light of the Marian Constitutions of 1930], Rome, 1965; Pecyna M., *Osobowość i działanie błogosławionego Jerzego Matulewicza* [The Personality and the Activity of Blessed George Matulewicz], Wrocław, 1990; Pro Christo et Ecclesia, a collective work to honor the 40th anniversary of the death of the then Servant of God Archbishop George Matulewicz, ed. by J. Bukowicz, London, 1968; Wisniewski M., *Sluga Boży Arcybiskup Jerzy Matulewicz odnowiciel i reformator Zakonu Ksieszy Marianów 1871-1927* [Venerable Servant of God Archbishop George Matulewicz, Renovator and Reformer of the Congregation of the

Marian Fathers], Rome, 1958.

The subject matter and the purpose of this book, which is to show the theological foundations of Christian life in the teaching of the Venerable Servant of God Father Stanislaus Papczynski and Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, defines the method that should be used; the book will contain an analysis of their writings and then a synthesis of the collected material around the ideas which were most fundamental and common to both of these men. This, in turn, will allow us to make a critical evaluation of the material prepared in this manner.

The study which has been conducted will be divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter I will discuss theocentrism as the leading principle in the teaching of these two authors. In their view, it consists in listening to the call of Everlasting Love and in responding to this call. In practice it impels one to be always concerned about God's glory and to dedicate oneself completely to God. The second chapter will provide a closer look at the next trait of the presented doctrine, namely, at life in Christ. I first draw the reader's attention to the theological foundations of this idea, then to Christ's call to repentance and to the issue of imitating Christ. The third chapter deals with the teaching on the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian formation, where the two authors devote their attention to the truth about Christ's sending the Spirit as our Comforter and show how the Spirit works in human life. The fourth chapter will discuss the next fundamental principle, i.e., the ecclesial character of Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's doctrine — the biblical vision of the Church in the interpretation of the first author and the love of the Church in the teaching of the other one; his recognition of the ministers of the Church and supporting the Church in its ministry. The fifth chapter will be dedicated to the discussion of the charism of Mary in the works of the two authors. We shall see how the Founder and the Renovator see Mary in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception and in other mysteries of her life, what place they see for her in the life of their own congregation and what their teaching about the imitation of Mary in the entire Christian life is. In the sixth chapter I draw the read-

er's attention to the ultimate affairs of man, of the whole of mankind and the world in the interpretation of Father Stanislaus and Father George. I emphasize their call to vigilance and prayer in the face of this reality.

After I have presented the teaching of the two authors on Christian life, I make an attempt, in chapter seven, at evaluating the merits of their doctrine or teaching. I first emphasize the sources of their teaching, then the formal aspects of their interpretation and, finally, the value of the doctrine.

I hope that this synthetic presentation of the teaching of the Founder and the Renovator of the first religious order for men dedicated to the honor of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary will help the reader to become more familiar with this teaching, to appreciate its value even more and to strengthen his conviction that this teaching may help to shed more light on the issue of Christian moral formation even today — in the times of the new evangelization.

Notes:

- ¹ Cf. M. Daniluk, *Duchowosc chrzescijanska*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka KUL*, ed. by R. Lukaszyn, L. Bienkowski, F. Gryglewicz, vol. 4, Lublin, 1983, 317.
- ² Cf. D. Olszewski, E. Sztafrowski, *Zakony*, in: *Slovník teologiczny*, vol. 2, O-Z, Katowice, 1989, 397.
- ³ Cf. S. Wojcik, *Zakony*, in: *Katolicyzm A-Z*, ed. by Z. Pawlak, Poznan, 1989, 396.
- ⁴ Cf. A. Bazielić, *Duchowosc sw. Alfonsa Liguori*, Warsaw, 1983, 5n.
- ⁵ Cf. J. Pryszmont, *Zycie chrzescijanske jako realizacja zbawienia. Doktryna moralna biskupa Teofana Pustelnika*, Warsaw, 1979, 6.
- ⁶ Cf. *Breviarium Fidei*, ed. S. Glowa and I. Bieda, Poznan, 1989, 29.
- ⁷ Cf. H.D. Wojtyńska, *Inspectio cordis, nie znane dzieło ojca St. Papczyńskiego*, in: *Summarium. Sprawozdania Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL*, no. 2(22/1), 1973, Lublin, 1975, 154-156.

CHAPTER ONE

GOD IN THE CENTER OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

According to the teaching of both the Founder and the Renovator of Marians, the first and most important theological foundation, on which the entire moral formation of a Christian should be based, is theocentrism. When we conduct an in-depth study of the writings of these two authors, we realize that Christian life should be directed towards God.¹ God is supposed to exert such an influence on the shaping of man's personality that he would accept the system of Christian values in his life and act according to these values.

As they ponder the Divine Revelation, the two authors emphasize, first of all, the call of Divine Love addressed to us. As they seek the best way in which to respond to this call, they encourage us to spread God's glory by all possible means. The consequence of adopting such an attitude is one's complete dedication to God.

1. The Call of Everlasting Love

In Father Papczynski's opinion, love is the fundamental and the most important virtue in the teaching of Christian life. God calls man to love and wants to bring him to a union with Himself. The author describes such a union as a meeting inside a mystical temple. Every man created by God and reborn in the Sacrament of Baptism is such a temple. There is an altar in this temple, namely the human heart. It is in the human heart that God remains hidden just as He does on the altar in the Eucharist: "So who will deny that man's heart, especially the heart of a man who fears God, is the altar of God Most High? Just as God is always present in the Most Holy Eucharist on the altar of a material temple, He is equally present in the human heart which is dedicated to

Him.”²

In Father Papczynski’s teaching, love occupies the most important place. It is first evident in the basic document which he wrote, i.e. in the religious rule *Norma Vitae*.³ It was to this virtue that the Founder of the Marians dedicated the entire chapter of the rule entitled *De Charitate* and it is with Divine Love that he begins his lecture on the vows and the virtues of the Marians. It is on love that one’s eternal salvation and the value of one’s merits depend. Therefore, it should be regarded as a pearl more precious than any other goods, as a treasure hidden in the soil, which must be found (cf. Mt 13, 44, 46). For although Divine Love is a gift, one may always try to obtain and preserve it by constant prayer and mortification. At this point the Founder of the Marians issues an appeal to his confreres, an appeal that he repeated after St. Paul: “Let all that you do be done in love!” (1 Cor 16, 14).⁴

The matters which Father Papczynski discusses in his teaching concern the preservation of the Ten Commandments, the evangelical counsels, the laws, the admonishments, the resolutions, the rites and the customs of the Church and the acceptance of the principles which it promulgates. It is also a matter of love to preserve the religious rule and all other regulations accepted in the spirit of Christ’s admonishment: “If a man loves me, he will keep my word” (J 14, 23).⁵

The Founder of the Marians places a special emphasis on the fact that the preservation of God’s teaching is to be an expression of perfect love. He uses a good family as an example. “Just like the children who really love their parents try to fulfill their will faithfully, in a similar manner, those who call themselves God’s sons and want to show their love to the Best Father, should take great care to fulfill His commandments. And to the contrary, how very unworthy of being called a son is one who stubbornly disbelieves all orders given by the Father and considers them frivolous. Thus whoever does not show concern for the matters of God, cannot be considered even the servant of God. For it is in this way that the Infinite Goodness complains about such people: “Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you?” (Lk 6, 46). Therefore, you

must make efforts to proceed towards the perfect union with God by faithfully keeping His commandments and teaching and by obeying the orders of those who are His substitutes.”⁶

Furthermore, the love of God is to manifest itself in performing every good and avoiding every evil: “Out of the love of God you will bear with willingness and fortitude mortifications, afflictions, reproofs, injuries, calumnies, labors, pains, destitution, austerity, and other situations like these. Out of the love of God you will carry out in a most perfect way your exercises, duties, jobs entrusted to you, and whatever concerns your state and vocation. You will consecrate to Divine Love all of your entire life, daily actions and sufferings, and each and every moment, particulars, circumstances, changes. Each and every action and suffering by due submission, confidence and piety [will be consecrated] for all eternity on the altar of love, by a pure heart joined to the merits of Christ the Lord, His Immaculate Mother, all of the Saints, and the universal Church.”⁷

Father Stanislaus consistently emphasizes that the love of God understood in this way is to encompass virtually the entire man and all of his life. He tries to express this thought with his characteristic zeal and attention to every detail so typical of the times in which he lived. For it was his opinion that if one truly loves, one wants to say everything and sacrifice everything.

All encompassing love is also to be manifested in the way a religious community functions. The Superior General will take care to have other officials throughout the entire Congregation — Procurators, Economes, Zealots — who will try to fulfill their duties most diligently for the love of God, for the merit of obedience, so that they may one day receive a reward from our Lord.⁸

Father Stanislaus recommended that his confreres practice the love of God and he did so not only in the religious rule that he wrote but also in other more general letters, and in his testament. In his letter to the members of the house in the Korabiew Forest, he recommended that they cultivate such love and take great care to observe their vows, pray fervent-

ly and persevere in their vocation.⁹ In his testament he again recommended the love of God and neighbor, zeal in faith and perseverance in vows.¹⁰

In Father Papczynski's thought, the motive impelling man to the love of God, which manifests itself in acts of love, is the awareness of the fact that God loves us according to the promise made by His Son: "...and my Father will love him" (Jn 14, 23). Good servants rejoice in the fact that by their service they gained the recognition and gratitude of their employers. The servants of the Heavenly Father may also win His heart through obedience and submission. The conviction that God loves them will become the reason for their greatest joy and happiness."

The Founder of the Marians continues to emphasize that God really loves man. After all, He led man out of nothingness and made him so beautiful that he surpasses all other creatures on earth in his appearance. He breathed a soul into him, a soul shaped in God's likeness and image. He gave man a mind, so that he could understand who his Maker is. He gave man a heart, so that he could love God. He gave man a will, so that man could prove that he is free. He gave man memory, so that he could ponder all the blessings bestowed upon him.¹² And there are still so many more works of God's love, like the creation of the entire world for man; the world with the heavenly lights hung on the firmament, with birds, all kinds of animals, fish, trees, flowers, and grasses which beautify the earth. Everything that is joy to man's eyes and heart was given out of the Heavenly Father's love. And everything was made complete by the death of His Only Beloved Son.¹³ "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..." (Jn 3, 16). This is a love so great that neither the tongues of humans nor those of the angels can express it. Neither can it be comprehended by the human mind because this gift, in the person of the Son, sent to the aid and for the salvation of humankind, is the work of boundless love which surpasses all measure and comprehension.¹⁴

In his lecture on Divine Love, the Founder of the Marians emphasizes, in the baroque style so typical of and appropriate in his times, this

fundamental truth that man was redeemed by the Son of God and brought back to the house of the Father. But in what a wondrous way was he redeemed!

“Consider the benefit of Redemption: how the Son of God, who is equal to His Father in everything, agreed to assume human nature, so that you, a rebel, might be brought back to the house of your Father, so that you might be saved from the prison of eternal abyss or hell. Infinite and unfathomable, He was confined to the Virgin’s womb; inaccessible to suffering, He suffered persecutions, afflictions and adversities all His life: the cold — at His birth; the knife — when He was circumcised; the severity of climate and many other discomforts — during the flight to Egypt. When He taught, He had to suffer the malicious tongues of the unbelievers and take shelter from the stones they hurled at Him. He had to experience the temptations of hell, and receive the worst for all the good that He gave. When you finally reach the mystery of His Passion, you will be almost astounded: as you meditate upon this mystery, your mind will not be able to comprehend the agony, the torture and the pain borne by the God-Man. And let it be sufficient to you to understand that it was in reparation for our countless sins that He suffered indescribable torment.”¹⁵

Father Stanislaus illustrates his lecture on the Savior’s redeeming love with convincing examples. If a king gave up his only son to save his kingdom threatened by imminent destruction, he would probably earn great love, admiration and eternal memory of his subjects. This is what Moses did when he offered himself to suffer great infamy and rejection when God wanted to destroy the rebellious Israeli nation. Feeling responsible for his nation, Moses cried out to the Lord: “But now, if thou wilt forgive their sin — and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Ex 32, 32). God liked this attitude and it also earned the admiration of Moses’s people. Therefore, Jesus, who freely accepted death for the entire world, deserves our gratitude all the more.¹⁶

According to Father Papczynski, there is yet another reason for a religious to be grateful to God, namely, his awareness of a double vocation

— to the Catholic faith and to the religious life. A man called to the faith became enriched with the benefits of the faith and received many graces and inspirations. The religious life, in turn, is a harbor in which he finds shelter from the dangers of the sea. It is like Ezechiel's gate through which one enters the sanctuary of eternal life.¹⁷ For it is true that in the religious life "one lives more purely, falls less often, rises more quickly, regrets more readily, acts faster, dies with greater confidence and is more certain to obtain salvation."¹⁸

As he calls upon us to show our gratitude to the Savior, Father Papczynski also encourages us to try and strengthen our faith in God. It is to be a faith which saves from eternal damnation. Such faith impels us to show concern for those who are not yet enjoying the benefits of redemption, among them "the pagans, sectarians and heretics." This concern also involves those Christians who do not cooperate with the gift of their faith, who do not care about the good and follow the path of evil. We must sympathize with them because of their blindness and ask that the light of faith shine upon them.¹⁹

In his meditations on the love of God, Father Papczynski constantly searches for new ways to stimulate such love in order to be able to touch the human heart as strongly as possible. The fact that our friends love us compels us to love them in return. But God created and made us in His likeness. What kind of love, then, does He deserve for this? If the vessels, paintings, and statues knew their creators and could talk to them knowing that it is to their hands that they owe their own beauty, they would love them without fail. We do know our Creator and we are in communion with Him.²⁰ Should we fall into bondage and should someone ransom us, we would try very hard to show gratitude for such a blessing. Meanwhile, Jesus Christ did pay the ransom price for all of us in the bondage of death with His Blood. The knowledge of this should ignite in us true flames of love for Him.²¹ However, Father Stanislaus is convinced that only in heaven will the human heart become fully immersed in God. The merciful God will make it so that "always and everywhere, throughout eternity, we will love Him perfectly, with all our

heart, with all our soul, our thoughts, our will and with all our strength and we will become united with His Divinity in the tightest bond of faithful love.”²²

According to Father Papczynski, the people dedicated to God should exhibit such great concern for the progress of their love of God that they ought to conduct an examination of conscience every hour, asking themselves how far they progressed in this love or to what degree they neglected it, and draw appropriate conclusions for further work on themselves in this very important sphere of their lives.²³

* * *

Just like for Father Papczynski, so also for Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, love of God is the highest ideal and the chief principle of the Christian life. After all, life is a service to the One who is Love (cf. 1 Jn 4, 8) and who loves everything that He created — more than a good father loves his children. A spring only produces water, the sun only emits rays, but God gives love and blessings. The goodness of all creation has only been “borrowed” from Him just as the light from the sun; in reality only “One there is who is good” (Mt 19, 17). Just like the light of the sun in the air, His love radiates into all beings, yet it embraces man in a special way. We owe everything to Him. He gave us our body, our soul along with its faculties, our strength, the earth to take possession of, and, finally, His own Son. He loves both the righteous ones and the sinners, and if He sends us suffering, He does so out of love. His love stimulates our love.²⁴ He loves so that He would be loved. While it is true that there is nothing we can give God out of what we possess, because we have received everything from Him, yet we can give Him our heart and our love. St. Augustine said: “Nec colitur Deus nisi amando.” We worship God only by our love. He gave us everything out of love, so that later He would take pleasure in the goodness bestowed upon us. Therefore let us, too, love God, for it is only the love of God and the service to Him that matter. He alone is worthy of love because He is the Highest Good. Let us learn to remain in intimate communion with Him

by being aware of God's presence, by prayer, by surrendering our will to His will, by seeking His presence.²⁵

If God is so worthy of love, it is understandable why Blessed George tells his confreres to "seek God in everything, to do everything for God's greater glory, to bring God's Spirit into everything, to fill everything with God's Spirit." It is his main motto, the center of his life and the axis around which everything should revolve.²⁶ Adherence to this principle totally reorients man's life because at this moment he begins to look at everything from the perspective of eternity and begins to live in such a way that he might be always pleasing to God. But in this search for God it is not the man who takes initiative. God anticipates man, in His goodness He seeks us first. With His grace He stimulates us to make an effort to attain greater perfection and for the salvation of souls. We must only respond to this Divine initiative, remove the mounting obstacles and give in to God's grace. All of this often requires a radical change of life and the "sundering" of those ties which hold our soul in bondage; the bondage we were thrown into by our self-love, by relishing a comfortable life and following the whims of our own will. But those who manage to transcend their selves and totally submit themselves to God's will, will become participants in everything that is good.²⁷

In his desire to bring man to such spiritual maturity, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz tells him to practice love. He emphasizes the fact that love is increased by sacramental life and by trusting prayer, especially to the Holy Spirit, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to the Blessed Mother. We should not burden ourselves with too many prayers but our regular prayers should be said with attention, piety and dignity. Short ardent prayers play a great role here because they stimulate our love. Proper concentration is important so that we might be able to hear God. Finally, magnanimity and a glad heart will stimulate the outpouring of Divine Love because God loves those who give gladly.²⁸

Such dedication to God, as described by the Renovator of the Marians in his teaching, will lead us to complete union with Him. This union will be visible both in our prayer and in all our activity. At this point man will

prove to be generous and magnanimous in all his service to God.²⁹ He will always “walk in God’s presence” and live with the awareness that God is a witness to everything that he does. Although this awareness of God’s closeness and the conviction that He sees everything, will arouse fear in a servant of God, it will be a filial fear; a son will do everything to be always pleasing to God.³⁰ In his actions he will employ such means which God recognizes as just and proper, and he will lift himself up to God with all of his person.³¹ He will seek and see Him in everything; none of his duties or any confusion will interfere with this because his mind and heart will always yearn for God and feast on His delight-giving presence. The words of the Bride from the *Song of Songs* will come true: “My beloved is mine and I am his” (Song 2, 16), and: “I am my beloved’s and his desire is for me” (Song 7, 10).³²

There is an important statement in Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz’s teaching, namely the one which says that in the atmosphere of such love and warmth towards God everything may be simple and easy for man. He will not find it difficult to be guided by proper and pure intentions in everything, to seek God in everything, and to undertake everything out of love for Him.³³ He will not base his actions on human considerations and the possibility of personal gain but only on the purest love of God. The more ardent this love is, the purer his intention will be and more deserving to be acted upon. God will become the purpose of all his aspirations, He will be man’s inspiration and stimulation, He will anticipate everything with His grace, He will be the only reward.³⁴

The next important conclusion drawn by Blessed George is that the love of God which seizes man has its repercussions in his entire life. Just like any other man, the Renovator of the Marians, who encountered so many difficulties in his personal life, in his work on the renovation of the congregation, in his pastoral activity, who was concerned about the future of his fragile work, saw the need to protect it all from danger. But he did know that without God this would be impossible. After all, one careless word, a sickness or somebody’s dishonesty might destroy everything that man was building with such care and effort. And then

death is yet to come. Thus it is precisely the one who has true faith and entrusts himself completely to God and Divine Providence who can then look into the future with absolute peace. He knows that without God's will not even one hair will fall off his head, just as even the smallest bird does not perish without God's knowledge. The hand of Divine Providence guides us in everything. Just as a child may rest peacefully in its mother's arms, similarly, those who have entrusted themselves to God completely, may work and rest peacefully in the bosom of Divine Providence. Besides, this is a necessity to which Jesus Christ pointed out: "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18, 35).

In his *Spiritual Diary* Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz demonstrated what fruits such a complete trust in God bears. He writes that he had to experience and suffer a lot but gives thanks to God for all this and entrusts himself completely to His care. He asks the Heavenly Father to guide him and to do with him whatever He pleases. He expresses his readiness to go wherever God would send him and, like a child, throws himself into God's embrace and thanks Him for leading him, His servant, along the path of difficulties, sufferings and burdens. He knows that if he follows this path, he will not lose way, for it is the path that our Savior Jesus Christ walked.³⁶

The heart of Blessed Bishop George burned with such love of God that a cry burst from it, one that can be recognized as a response to any and all calls of love: "Lord, how I love You! Grant that I love You more and never cease to love You. My heart is afire. I would offer up my blood to the last drop for You, I would sacrifice everything, renounce everything, even life itself, so that Your glory would increase and Your Church flourish and grow. O Lord, show me what to do. You have granted me so many graces, O Lord; what shall I give You in return, what shall I offer You, how shall I repay You? All that I have is Yours; what can I therefore give You? Everything that I possess. Of myself I have nothing, but with Your grace I am rich. I dedicate all to You."³⁷

The rest of this hymn of love written by the Renovator of the Marians

is not only a confession of a great heart but also a task with which all his spiritual sons have been charged. He asks God to use him as a dustcloth which is used to clean everything and then discarded. He wants to be used in such a way that the house of God would be tidier and cleaner. He wants to be used in God's vineyard and on God's soil so long as the harvest is better and the fruits more abundant. He goes so far in his magnanimity and dedication to God's cause that he is ready to suffer contempt, so long as God's glory increases and spreads and God's Church becomes stronger.³⁸

The confession mentioned above, which will be quoted again in full in the chapter on "The Ecclesial Dimension of the Christian Life" demonstrates to what degree Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz was able (just like Father Papczynski) to hear this call of God's love and to respond to it with his entire life. Such an attitude, which is a consequence of a deep faith in the existence of God as a person, directs everything towards Him and His glory. It helps man to understand how very dependent he is on his Creator. This, undoubtedly, finds its distinct expression in the formation of a proper Christian attitude.³⁹

2. An Answer to God's Call

The Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus and Blessed George believed that they could best respond to the call of God's love by spreading God's glory in every possible way and by dedicating themselves completely to the service of God. They lived by these ideas and they handed them down to their congregation.

a) Caring about the Glory of God

The desire to spread God's glory is awakened in Father Papczynski's heart when he reads the last missionary order given by Jesus to his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28, 19). The stimulus assisting us in the fulfillment of this order is an aware-

ness of how great the gift of creation, redemption and sanctification is. Having created the universe, God, Triune in persons and one in being, formed man and designated for him a wonderful land to live in, subjecting to man's power everything that lived there. At the same time He removed man from under the power of death. All these benefits were bestowed upon man by the Holy Trinity, although the very work of creation is attributed particularly to God the Father. Later, after the original sin was committed, the Son of God assumed a human body in order to take away both the original sin and the sins of all people with His blood and to open the gates of heaven before them. The Holy Spirit guides man towards the knowledge of true faith, to the knowledge of himself, his sinfulness and towards the change needed in his life. He enlightens man with His light, sends him holy inspirations, supports man's good intentions and makes his soul a perfect gift for the entire Holy Trinity. The awareness of these benefits should inspire man's gratitude.

"After you have considered the particular benefits granted to you by each of the persons of the Holy Trinity, give thanks for each one of them separately. Praise the Best and the Highest Father that He created you for glory and ask Him not to sentence you to disgrace. Exalt the Son who, out of love, redeemed you, so that you might live and beg Him humbly not to sentence you to eternal death even though you deserve the greatest hate because of your sins. Glorify the Holy Spirit who enlightens you through His grace and ask Him not to send you to the Prince of darkness even though His anger toward you is justified. Finally, complete expressing your feelings in honor of the Holy Trinity with the short ardent prayers of the three youths: "Let us bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, let us praise and exalt Him for ever. Blessed are You, O Lord, in the heavens, full of glory and exalted for ever."⁴⁰

Filled with the desire to spread God's glory in every possible way, our author thought that he would best respond to this need of his heart by calling a new religious order into being. Spreading the honor of the Immaculate Conception was also to serve this purpose.⁴¹ Therefore, he ordered his confreres to keep this goal of the congregation (the goal

which, after all, is characteristic of all religious congregations) in mind at all times and combine it with the care for their own perfection and salvation.⁴² He ordered the superiors to spare no effort in order to ensure that the worship of God blossomed ever more in all the churches of the congregation.⁴³ The priests leading this worship should distinguish themselves with true virtues and possess appropriate education.⁴⁴

The entire daily routine within the congregation was to be subordinated to the idea of worshipping God.⁴⁵ This was primarily accomplished through constant prayerful concentration which, in turn, helped to evoke the sense of God's presence, to glorify Him and to be with Him in a humble and pious manner. God was to be contemplated not only in one's individual self but also in all His creatures because it is true that "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17, 28).⁴⁶ A church or a chapel was to be the special place for nourishing such contact with God. Those who enter there should be convinced that they are entering heaven. And whenever they happen to walk by in front of the Holy Eucharist, they should humbly kiss the ground thus adoring the Lord of heaven and earth who is really present there.⁴⁷ After the evening meditation on Sunday or at some other appropriate time, they are all to gather together for the purpose of listening to a spiritual conference or to some appropriate reading in order to enliven in themselves the love of God and the zeal in His service.⁴⁸

The Founder of the Marians realized that the proclamation of the Word of God contributes in a special way to the spreading of God's glory so he ordered that particular attention be paid to this ministry. The preachers should possess adequate education and distinguish themselves with good manners, so that they might proclaim the Word of God with a salutary benefit to their listeners, teaching and encouraging them to what is good. In all of this, the preachers are to seek the glory of God rather than their own and to stimulate the faithful to a change of their ways, to the love and fear of God.⁴⁹ Those who are teachers should fulfill their duties willingly and diligently always keeping in mind the glory of God and the benefit of the faithful.⁵⁰

The idea of God's glory should accompany God's servants in all their endeavors. May they gladly accept all burdens, sufferings, discomforts, distress, thoughts, prayers, words, conversations, deeds and works, events and even death itself if necessary.⁵¹ All of this is for the greater glory, honor and praise of the Holy Trinity.⁵²

* * *

In the thought of Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, the spreading of God's glory is the most important task; so much so that it became the principal motto of his own life. At the very beginning of his *Spiritual Diary* our author declares:

Let my motto be: to seek God in everything, to do everything for God's greater glory, to bring the spirit of God into everything, to saturate everything with the Spirit of God.⁵³

This motto is not merely a slogan for Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz. It does have a practical meaning for him. It so happens in our lives — the Renovator of Marians continues his reflections — that we become too preoccupied with or fret too much about the difficulties which we experience at a given time or with those that await us in the future. The lack of means necessary to achieve our goals may cause us to worry, but it should also mobilize our strength to overcome the difficulties and obtain proper assistance. It is important not to become discouraged in these efforts and not to lose sight of the goal which we have set for ourselves. If the goal is good, if our attempts at achieving it might contribute to God's greater glory, we should make our best effort and continue to strive for it. The obstacles can be overcome or omitted, if only we manage to deny ourselves and become totally dedicated to God's cause.⁵⁴

The Renovator of the Marians was aware of the fact that working for God's greater glory often requires taking risks, that it exposes man to various dangers and may be a cause of many sufferings. Yet, we constantly expose ourselves to various dangers in our daily lives. We take risks even as we take into account the possibility of failure. There is no such risk here, for it is impossible to fail in God's cause. It is not so much

our intentions and achievements that count in this cause as it is our good will and the efforts we make; these two are of lasting value. Man never loses anything in his relationship with God, he always gains. It is different in his relations with people, but this should not concern or worry those who have totally dedicated themselves to God. No one can take God away from us and close the gates of heaven before us. People may remove us from what we have been working on and exile us to somewhere else. Yet, it is possible to work on and for their salvation wherever we may find ourselves because God is everywhere and the road to heaven is the same from any given place. But, we will be able to assume such an attitude only when we break all the ties binding us with the mundane, when we free ourselves from all earthly trifles and wishes, from the desires, aspirations and projects, for it is only then that we will not be afraid of anything. Our only desire will be to work for God's glory. And the only thing we should fear is that we might achieve less than our strength supported by the grace of God allows.⁵⁵

Animated by the idea of spreading God's glory, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz presents it as the basis of the spiritual formation of the religious, who, by putting this idea into effect in their own lives, will, at the same time, work on achieving the principal goal of the congregation.⁵⁶ Members of the congregation "should mostly direct their efforts where they hope to do more for the glory of God and the benefit of the Church, where it seems they are able to obtain greater, more universal, longer lasting good and more abundant results, where the need is greater and more urgent."⁵⁷ They must constantly nurture an ardent desire for greater personal sanctification and an ardent zeal for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.⁵⁸

In our author's opinion, such efforts should be always accompanied by pure, sincere and supernatural intention which encompasses not only one's life in general but also manifests itself in his individual actions, so that all his works would be directed towards God's greater glory. The members must always keep in mind that they should try to serve and please Divine Goodness for itself and for the love and numerous gifts

which it showers upon them, rather than out of fear of punishment and a hope for rewards, even though these latter ought to help them to do good, too.⁵⁹ They must act in such a manner that they would be pleasing to God, they must always conform their will to God's Most Holy Will and faithfully put it into practice.⁶⁰ The consequence of such an attitude is total dedication and submission of one's self and one's life to God.

b) Total Submission to God

Following the biblical thought that the heart is man's spiritual center, Father Papczynski states that it is necessary to submit one's whole heart completely to God. This particular statement lies at the foundation of his teaching on Christian formation. God should occupy the very center of human soul and dwell there in an atmosphere of love. What should this love be like? In his answer to this question, Father Papczynski refers to the letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, in which the Apostle of love described this virtue and recommended it to all the faithful in Corinth (cf. 1 Cor. 13, 1-7).⁶¹

In our author's opinion, true love of God should offer only the purest sacrifices on the altar of the heart. It must be pure, holy, ardent, heavenly and, like the salt which was sprinkled upon the offerings made according to the Old Law to enhance their taste and protect them from spoiling, true love should enhance the value of every sacrifice.⁶² This love, however, comes from the eternal source of infinite love, for it is God Himself who takes the human heart into His possession and wants to reside in it as King on His own throne and as God on His own altar.⁶³ He Himself initiates the close relationship between Himself and man and the consequence of this relationship is a bestowal of gifts. A special exchange of gifts takes place inside the mystical temple on the altar of human heart. In Father Stanislaus' opinion, man will always be endowed with gifts whenever he approaches God. The incomprehensible and infinite Lord makes a gift of Himself to His creation. But He molded the human heart in such a way that it, too, wants to possess Him. After all, it does cling to its Creator and yearns after Him. Indeed, our heart can-

not find peace anywhere but in God.⁶⁴ This truth had been expressed once before by St. Augustine and Father Papczynski does quote his words: “You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.”⁶⁵

Father Papczynski was absolutely convinced that if man wanted to cling to God completely, he should first seek Him earnestly and persistently. In his opinion, the life of St. Augustine is a good example of such a persistent search of God. This Father of the Church confessed that he had searched for God on the roads and streets of this world and could not find Him. Then he understood that he had been looking in the wrong places for he tried to find outside what was, in fact, inside — in himself.⁶⁶ The Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus follows St. Augustine’s thought and teaches that we must look for God inside ourselves, in our hearts — in mortifications, and not on the outside — in pleasures. God can be found where man is abandoned, where we surrender our own will — an indispensable act in forming a firm and stable Christian attitude.⁶⁷

Surrendering everything to God requires conforming one’s own will to His will. Such complete surrender on the part of the Son of God made it possible for Him to become man as He descended into the Immaculate Virgin’s womb. Similarly, every man can prepare the path to his own heart for God by following this cry: “Prepare the way of the Lord” (Mt 3, 3). Without complete surrender, without denying oneself, no gift from heaven, no grace, no virtue can find dwelling in one’s soul. Such surrender requires submitting all one’s senses, feelings and one’s whole heart to God.⁶⁸ It is in this very decisive manner that Father Papczynski places theocentrism at the foundation of his teaching on Christian formation.

God is jealous of us and it is His desire that we should offer and sacrifice everything out of our love for Him. Father Papczynski is very consistent in demanding that such offerings and sacrifices be made and suggests that one should give God everything indeed: “Therefore, whether you pray, read, write, conduct good conversations, meditate, work, eat, drink, enjoy an honest rest to strengthen your spirit; any honest, pious,

holy, useful and praiseworthy thing that you do, do it all out of your love of God in such a way that a particular intention would always precede your actions or at least follow them.”⁶⁹ It is good to evoke such an intention at every opportunity. God will then sanctify all our thoughts and actions, preserve them from sin and if we should fall, He will graciously pardon us. He will also enable us to love Him with all our heart, our soul, our thoughts, our will and with all our strength as well as to become united with His Divinity in the tightest bond of faithful love.⁷⁰

One of the consequences of our surrender to God is a constant sense of His presence. A sinner tries to hide himself and his evil just as if God were not everywhere, as if He did not penetrate everything, as if He did not know man’s thoughts and actions.⁷¹ Meanwhile, he might avoid many sins and imperfections if only he would remember God’s presence. “For as long as the light from high above shines upon you, you can see very clearly what you must do and what you should avoid: you bear all bitterness with a sweetness of spirit, you enjoy all the sweetness with a readiness to give it up. Your conscience is clear and you can see yourself living in an earthly paradise which (...) you have found, where you can take rest and enjoy every delight. When you pray, you feel as if you were in the presence of angels, so you say your prayers with great piety, humility and attention. I will not even mention the thousands of other benefits which the presence of God bestows upon you. On the other hand, when you are not mindful of God’s presence before you, when you have allowed Jesus to leave your soul, you are tormented by sadness, you fade, you have no sense of direction, you stumble and fall, you fall into various, even the worst kinds of sins and you watch yourself as if you were already in hell or at least close to it. Another author saw it, too, when he said: “To be without Jesus is a grievous hell; and to be with Jesus, a sweet paradise (Thomas a Kempis 2, chap. 8, 2).”⁷²

A further consequence of one’s total surrender to God in the formation of Christian attitude is, in Father Papczynski’s opinion, the fulfillment of God’s will. A religious should frequently recall to mind the reason why he had entered the religious life. He should recall his youthful

ideals and the desire to grow in perfection. He must strengthen himself in the conviction that perfection consists in fulfilling everything that God expects from him and in surrendering himself to God totally. This was the way to heaven taken by all the holy patriarchs and religious. Abraham who, at God's command, left his homeland and all his possessions behind and was ready to sacrifice even his own son, is a perfect example in this respect. In a similar manner, a religious left his home and family and went where the Holy Spirit directed him through his religious vocation. Therefore he should abandon everything that he has been accustomed to and surrender his will to God who is good.⁷³ He should also remember that God will reward him according to his work. The awareness of this truth should inspire him to look for work that is most conducive to his spiritual growth. He should not wait for work passively but employ his desires and best efforts in fruitful endeavors. He should not accept mediocrity in his work for God, rather, he should put all his heart into it and strive for what is higher and more perfect. Only actions count in eternity, as it was stated in this promise: "Their deeds follow them" (Rev 14, 13). A zealous servant of God tries to avoid the fate of the careless disciples who persist in their laziness while others distinguish themselves with diligence.⁷⁴

There is a special grace available to those who are united with God, a grace which Father Papczynski calls "a gift of spiritual vision," a grace for which one must ask just like the blind man in the Gospel did: "Master, let me receive my sight" (Mk 10, 51). He encourages us to pray for this gift in such a fervent way that it borders on obtrusion. This prayer asks for the grace to gaze intently upon the Creator, which can be achieved through contemplation. The path of contemplation leads one to self knowledge, to the knowledge of God and to a close union with Him as the Supreme Good, the union which is the goal of one's work toward personal sanctification. Of all the goods bestowed by God upon the people the gift of contemplation is the greatest. Since the happiness of those already in heaven consists in their ability to see God, the people on earth who can see Him in their souls and make Him present to others also

experience such happiness. Contemplation, therefore, is “an eye of the soul.” It impels one to seek God through constant prayer which engages man’s whole heart, all his wishes and desires.⁷⁵

Now, in turn, how did Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz understand the idea of total surrender to God? When the Renovator of the Marians was pondering what kind of people were needed in the renewed congregation and what kind of workers the Marian vocation called for, he stated without hesitation that they should be people who had died to the world, who had completely denied themselves and given themselves exclusively to God. To abandon one’s self, which is a condition of giving oneself to God, is to forgo the love of self in order to clothe oneself in Christ’s spirit and grace. The confreres are to remember that Christ “died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Cor 5, 15). Such surrender makes one’s ministry so very effective that he can even raise the entire world to heaven and bring it as an offering to the feet of the Supreme God.⁷⁶

The ideal of total surrender to God presented by the author of the *Spiritual Diary* found its expression in the new Constitutions of the congregation. It is at their very beginning that Father Renovator instructs his confreres to surrender everything to God as much as human frailty allows so that He alone would become the center of life of both the individual members and the entire congregation.⁷⁷ At the same time he points out the effective means for achieving this noble goal. These are pious exercises and practices through which the confreres proceed towards God, get to know Him better and contemplate Him. Their minds are lifted up to Him and their hearts and feelings lead them to a loving union with Him. They feel that they love Him more, that they take pleasure in Him and enjoy Him. Their will conforms to the will of God completely and they become more prompt from day to day in the service of their beloved God. In this manner they foster and augment in themselves

the love of God and neighbor.⁷⁸

Another expression of such a consecration to God is a faithful preservation of His commandments, the commandments of the Church and their own constitutions, fulfilling the obligations which ensue from the evangelical counsels and cooperating with God's grace. In all of this one should be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, follow them, try to overcome any adversities and carry one's daily cross patiently, bravely and gladly in union with Christ.⁷⁹ True surrender to God requires ridding one's heart of everything that is not from God. It requires that man become master of himself and form the closest possible union with Christ. Our Savior said: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Mt 16, 24).⁸⁰ Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz share a conviction that good intention, which is so important in Christian formation, is of great help in consecrating everything to God. If a person is guided by a supernatural intention in everything, his actions are more meritorious. Therefore, we should make certain that all our intentions are subordinated to the love of the One who is worthy of love above all else.⁸¹ Hence, virtually everything, even the smallest matters, should be consecrated to God according to the encouragement offered by St. Paul: "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3, 17). St. Paul enumerates the particular daily matters which should be consecrated to God: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (Cor 10, 31).⁸² Even in matters of small importance, such that they mean nothing in the opinion of the world or which this world regards as contemptible, love and good intention lift them up to Him and join them to Him, our ultimate end, and sanctify them, make them great, pleasing to God and full of merit.⁸³

Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz consistently implement the principle of theocentrism and assign to it a fundamental role in moral formation. They do not share the false conviction that man is free only when he alone decides his fate "as if he were to lay out the paths of his life all by himself in empty space all around him."⁸⁴ And

while God guides man's lot, He does not limit man's rights, He does not impose the allegedly stifling norms of behavior upon him and does not take away man's ability to make independent decisions.⁸⁵

It is worth mentioning that the principle of theocentrism proclaimed by Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz has always been alive in the world of Christian culture and that contemporary theology, too, emphasizes the importance of man's appropriate relation to God.⁸⁶

Notes:

- ¹ Cf. Y. Congar, *Wierze w Ducha Swietego* [I Believe in the Holy Spirit], vol. II, transl. *By L. Rutowska*, Warsaw, 1995, 86; cf. J. Nagorny, *Opcja fundamentalna w praktyce zycia chrzescijanskiego*, in: B. Jurczyk, ed., *Veritatis splendor. Przeslanie moralne Kosciola*, Lublin, 1994, 98.
- ² TDM 19.
- ³ Pos. 459-483.
- ⁴ "Vitae namque aeternae consecutio, meritorumque pretium in charitate situm est. Proinde quilibet Vestrum prae bonis omnibus hanc sibi gemmam pretiosissimam, hunc thesaurum in argo absconditum, studeat efficacissime comparare. Licet enim charitas DEI donum sit, orationis tamen et mortificationis assiduitate et obtinetur, et conservetur. Omnia ergo apud vos in caritate fiant." NV c. II, no. 1, in: Pos. 464.
- ⁵ "Praecepta DEI et evangelica consilia, Ecclesiae S. Romanae Catholicae leges, instituta, sancita, ritus, consuetudines, dogmata; haec quoque praesens Norma, et si quando plures darentur ordinationes, ex amore DEI servantur." Ibid., c. II, no. 2, in: Pos. 465.
- ⁶ "Considera, perfectae dilectionis esse, Divinos sermones CUSTODIRE. Nam sicut filii, qui vero amore feruntur in Parentes suos, eorum ad unguem explere voluntatem satagunt: hoc modo, qui filiorum Dei, Patris optimi ac maximi amantes esse voluerint, mandatorum ipsius diligentissimae executioni invigilare debent. Contra

uti indignus ille filii nomine est, cui surdo occinitur fabula, gratis omnia praecepta inculcantur, multaque a Patre iniunguntur; sic ne quidem servus Dei Censendus est, qui, quae Dei sunt, non curant. Sic enim de talibus conquesta Bonitas infinita dicit: *Quid me vocatis, Domine; et non facitis, quae iubeo vos?* Tuum itaque erit, per veram divinarum legum, ac verborum, et eorum qui illius vices agunt, observationem ad perfectam unionem contendere.” IC f. 56r.

⁷ “Praeterea ex amore DEI omne bonum operabimini, omne malum fugietis: omnem virtutem possibilem exercebitis, omne vitium ac peccatum detestabimini. Ex amore DEI mortificationes, afflictiones, reprehensiones, iniurias, calumnias, labores, dolores, inopiam, austeritatem, aliaque huiusmodi libenti ac forti animo perferetis. Ex amore DEI exercitia Vestra, officia, negotia vobis comissa, et aliquid statum Vestrum Vocationemque concernit, quam perfectissime exequemini. Amori Divino omnes Vestras totius vitae, praesertim quotidianas actiones et passiones, et omnia ac singula momenta, atomos, circumstantias, mutationes, omnium singularumque actionum et passionum, qua par est submissione, fiducia, pietate, pro tota aeternitate in amoris ara, corde inquam puro, cum Christi Domini Matrisque Eius Illibatae, SanctorumQue omnium, et Ecclesiae Universae meritis consecrabit.” NV c. II, no. 3, in: Pos., 465; cf. *Protestatio*, 1, in: Pos. 128.

⁸ NV ch. VII, no. 9, in: Pos. 478.

⁹ “Denique omnibus vobis amorem in Deum... votorum Sanctorum custodiam, studium ferventis orationis et... In Sancta vocatione cum adiutorio Dei perseverantiam ardentem commendamus.” *List do Marianow w Puszczy Korabiewskiej* [*Letter to the Marians of the Korabiew Forest*], 19 April, 1690, in: Pos. 486.

¹⁰ Tes. II in: Pos. 495.

¹¹ IC f. 56 r.

¹² Ibid., f. 161 r.

¹³ Ibid., f. 57 v.

- ¹⁴ “Occupa mentem tuum [’tuam] in Divina expendenda erga homines dilectione, quae tanta est, ut humana lingua, imo Angelica, exprimi nequeat, ac mente comprehendi. Nam si alios amoris actus praeteris; et si nullum nobis praeter hunc exhibuisset, quod dedisse decreverit victimam pro totius humani generis salute Unicum suum; ac re ipsa dederit; utique hoc solum infinitae charitatis, ac incomprehensi amoris est.” Ibid., f. 57 v, n.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., f. 161 r.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., f. 57 v, n.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., f. 161 r-v.
- ¹⁸ “Ubi vivas purius, cadas rarius, surgas velocius, irrorerissaepius, ambules citius, moriaris confidentius, salveris certius.” Ibid., f. 161 v.
- ¹⁹ “Deus a te, anima mea, pro incomprehenso Redemptionis beneficio, atque simul a mortalibus universis nihil aliud requirit, nisi fidem, nisi, ut credatur in ipsum; atque id non pro sua, sed nostra parte, pro nostro commodo, bono, incolumitate; ne pereamus. Attamen considerabis; plurimos esse gentilium, Apellarum, haereticorum, qui beneficio Redemptionis abusi; non solum non credunt; sed blasphemant. Imo quot Christianorum sun, qui huic dono fidei non cooperantur, bona negligentes, mala consecrantes. Compatiaris eorum caecitati, et tam illis, quam tibi, ad credendum, et agendum lumen a Sole in Sanctissima Eucharistia abscondito humiliter pete, ut credendo, et agendo non pereas; sed inspirationibus, praeceptis, illuminationibusque divinis parendo salveris,” Ibid., f. 58 v.
- ²⁰ Ibid., f. 83 r.
- ²¹ Ibid., f. 83 r-v.
- ²² “Sic enim futurum est, ut pius et misericors Dominus... tandem faciat, ut illum ex toto corde, animo, mente, voluntate, viribus, ubique, semper, tota aeternitate, diligamus perfectissime, et artissimo intimae Charitatis vinculo illius uniamur Divinitati.” TDM 43 n.
- ²³ “Singulis horis vos examine, quantum in amore Dei profecistis, aut defecistis: itaque emendate defectum, et profectum procure.” NV ch. V, no. 2, in: Pos. 472.

- ²⁴ *De Deo*, MP, Vol. 1, 433 n; Cf., *Listy polskie*, vol. II, Warsaw, 1987, 110.
- ²⁵ *De amore in genere*, MP, Vol. II, 139.
- ²⁶ “Let my motto be: to seek God in everything, to do everything for God’s greater glory, to bring the spirit of God into everything, to saturate everything with the spirit of God. May God and His glory become the center of my entire life, an axis around which all my thoughts, my feelings, desires and actions revolve.” DD 1.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.
- ²⁸ *De amore in genere*, MP, Vol. II, 141 n.
- ²⁹ “In omnibus et per omnia quivis ad arctissimam cum Deo unionem tendere, cum Eo tam in oratione, quam in omnibus suis actionibus quam maxime coniunctus esse studeat atque in Eius servitio magnanimus et vel maxime generosus et liberalis.” CM 176.
- ³⁰ “Deum tuae operationis testem habe; vita cum timore filiali quidquid Eius oculis displicere, et cura ex amore quidquid Ei placere potest.” IM XX, 68.
- ³¹ “In mediis, negotiis et occupationibus strepitu vide, ne Deo tibi praesens esse omnino desinas; quantum potes, quandoque, licet brevissime, mentem eleva in Deum et te ipsum circumspecte.” IM XXIII, 3.
- ³² *Ibid.*, XX, 48.
- ³³ “In omnibus sodales dirigantur recta et pura intentione quam saepius renovare curent: nempe in omnibus Deum quaerere, omnia ex amore Dei facere, per omnia Deo placere, omnia ad nempe in omnibus Deum quaerere, omnia ex amore Dei facere, per omnia Deo placere, omnia ad deum Eiusque maiorem gloriam referre studeant.” CM 240.
- ³⁴ “Ne motivis mere humanis aut emolumentis ad agendum impelli te sinas, sed ex motivo purissimi Dei amoris omnia perage; quo amor Dei in te erit vehementior, eo intentio erit purior atque eo maioris meriti tua opera; ut Deus omnium operum torum est finis, ita et inceptor sit ipse et impulsor, et principium sua gratia praeveniente;

ne ullum praemium ab hominibus his in terris pro laboribus tuis expectes, sed ad aeternum aspires.” IM XX, 49.

³⁵ DD 19.

³⁶ Ibid., 41.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Cf. W. Granat, *Kuczlówiekowi i Bogu w Chrystusie*, vol. I, Lublin, 1972, 110.

⁴⁰ IC f. 62 r-v; cf. *Piesn Jutrzni niedzielnej*, in: Liturgy of the Hours, Week I; cf. Dn 3,56.

⁴¹ *Letter to fr. Alessio Armini, March 23, 1688*, in: Pos. 242.

⁴² “Inprimis finem Vestrae Congregationis diligenter et assiduo expendite; qui sicut omnium sanctissimarum Religionum, ita vester communis esse debet: Maius incrementum Divinae gloriae, et cum seria ad perfectionem tendita propriae salutis cura.” NV ch. I, no. 2, in: Pos. 463.

⁴³ NV ch. VII, no. 4, in: Pos. 477.

⁴⁴ Ibid., ch. VIII, no. 3, in: Pos. 480.

⁴⁵ Ibid., ch. VI, no. 1, in: Pos. 474.

⁴⁶ “Recolectio vestra continua haec erit, ut ubique DEUM praesentem agnoscatis, colatis, benedicatis, et sic in conspectu eius modeste fideliter pieque versimini, quemadmodum servos decet in praesentia Domini sese gerere. Studete DEUM in creaturis omnibus contemplari, non solum in nobismetipsis; siquidem in eo vivimus, movemur, et sumus (Act 17, 28) et hanc ratione numquam vobis ex animo elabetur.” Ibid., ch. V, no. 1, in: Pos. 471 n.

⁴⁷ “In templo, aut Oratorio quoties eritis, in caelo vos esse putate. Ante Venerabil quoties transibitis, terram humiliter osculabimini, adorando praesentem realiter caeli terraeque Dominum, et pro tam admirando memoriali digne gratias persolvendo.” Ibid., no. 3.

⁴⁸ Ibid., ch. IX, no. 4, in: Pos. 482.

⁴⁹ Ibid., ch. VII, no. 5, in: Pos. 477.

⁵⁰ Ibid., ch. VII, no. 6, in: Pos. 478.

- ⁵¹ *Protestatio*, 1, in: Pos. 128.
- ⁵² Tes. I, in: Pos. 489.
- ⁵³ DD 1.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14; cf. *Listy polskie*, vol. I, Warsaw, 1987, 100.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ “Finis generalis Congregationis CC. RR. Marianorum sub titulo Immaculae Conceptionis B. Mariae Virginis est promotio gloriae Dei et sanctificatio membrorum suorum.” CM 1.
- ⁵⁷ “Suos conatus, pro posse et viribus, eo potissimum dirigant, ubi plus Deo gloriae et Ecclesiae utilitatis afferri speretur, ubi maius, universalius, longius duraturum bonum et abundantiores fructus obtineri posse videatur, ubi necessitas sit maior ac res magis urgeant.” *Ibid.*, 350.
- ⁵⁸ IM I, 31.
- ⁵⁹ “Puram, imprimis, rectam, supernaturalem intentionem habere stude, non solum circa vitae tuae statum generatim, sed etiam circa omnes res tuas et actiones particulares, ut omnia opera tua, etiam indifferentia, merito et gloria Dei impleantur. Id semper sincere specta, ut servias et placeas Divinae Bonitati propter seipsam et propter caritatem et eximia benefici, quibus nos praeveni, potius, quam ob timorem poenarum et spem praemiorum, quamvis etiam hisce ad bonum iuvare debeas.” *Ibid.*, XX, 46.
- ⁶⁰ “... sed in omnibus quae agis id purissime et simplicissime intende, ut Deo placeas et Deus in te complacentiam habeat, ut Dei gloriam provehas amplifiesque, ut tuam voluntatem sanctissimae Dei voluntati conformes eamque fideliter exsequaris.” *Ibid.*, XX, 47.
- ⁶¹ TDM 80 nn.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 39.
- ⁶³ “Si Cor altare DEI est, iuxta mentem D. Bernardi, soli Deo consecratum sit. Solus vult cor tuum habere (monet te, Christiane, imitator Christi 1,2, c.7) et tanquam Rex in proprio throno sedere, tanquam DEUS in ara sua.” *Ibid.*, 25 n.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22 n.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁶ “Circuivi vicos et plateas civitatis huius mundi, quaerens te (Deus) et non inveni; quia male quaerebam foris, quod erat intus. Mecum eras, et tecum non eram: ea me tenebant longe a te, quae esse non poterant nisi in te.” Cf. IC f. 13 v.

⁶⁷ Ibid., f. 13 v.

⁶⁸ Ibid., f. 7 v.

⁶⁹ TDM 42 n.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 43 n.

⁷¹ IC f. 89 v.

⁷² Ibid., f. 53 r-v.

⁷³ Ibid., f. 14 r-v.

⁷⁴ Ibid., f. 25 r-v.

⁷⁵ Ibid., f. 29 r.

⁷⁶ DD 52; cf. *Listy polskie*, vol. II, Warsaw, 1987, 120.

⁷⁷ “Omnibus abdicatis, quantum humana fragilitas sinit, sodales se totos Deo et eis, quae Dei sunt, omnino devoveant, dedant ac consecrent ita, ut Deus tum singulorum membrorum, tum universae Congregationis vitae plane sit centrum.” CM 4.

⁷⁸ “Ad id continuo tendant per pietatis exercitia et praxes, ut mente ad Deum accendant et ad Eum attendant, quo Eum melius cognoscant contemplanturque; ut affectu et corde intime cum Deo uniantur, quo Eum magis diligant, in Eo complaceant Eoque fruantur; ut voluntate ad Dei voluntatem se conforment atque in dies magis promptos se reddant ad serviendum Deo dilecto; tandem ut in se iugiter foveant augeantque Dei ac proximi caritatem.” Ibid., 257.

⁷⁹ “Suam voluntatem conentur omnino conformare voluntati divinae, cui se submittant, quam faciant et adimpleant; praecepta Dei et Ecclesiae necnon proprias constitutiones fideliter servando, consilia evangelica generose adimpleando, divinis gratiis fideliter cooperando, Sancti Spiritus ductum attente, discrete ac dociliter sequendo, adversa superando et tolerando atque suam crucem praesertim quotidianam patienter, fortiter et alacriter cum Christo

ferendo.” Ibid., 174.

- ⁸⁰ “Studeant igitur reapse et simpliciter omnibus renuntiare et dei servitio se totos mancipare, ea quae non sunt ex Deo et propter Deum ex corde suo expellere et in hisce omnibus seipsos fortiter vincere, atque Christo quam proxime sociare. (Mt 16,24; Lk 14,26; Mt 19,29).” IM I, 13.
- ⁸¹ “Potes ex variis eiusque multiplicibus intentionibus supernaturalibus simul conceptis operari, quo opera tua maioris fiant meriti; sed cura, ut eas omnes intentiones illi praestantissimo fini, amoris scilicet supra omnia dilecti subordinates.” Ibid., XX, 50.
- ⁸² “Omnia etiam minima ad Deum referre et in omnia Deum inferre cura, iuxta illud S. Pauli: *Omne quodcumque facitis in verbo aut in opere. Omnia in nomine Domini Jesu Christi* (Col 3,17); *Sive ergo manducatis, sive bibitis, sive aliud quid facitis: omnia in gloriam Dei facite* (1 Cor 10, 31).” Ibid., XX, 51.
- ⁸³ “Licet opera in se indifferentia et minima et opinione mundi vilia, humilia contemplabiliaque sint, amor Dei ardens et intentio pura elevando ea usque ad Deum et cum Deo, ultimo nostro fine, coniungendo, sanctificat ea, magna facit atque Deo grata et meriti plena.” Ibid., XX, 52.
- ⁸⁴ Cf. A. Zuberbier, *Teologia dzisiaj*, Katowice, 1975, 196.
- ⁸⁵ Cf., *ibid.*
- ⁸⁶ Cf. A. Ganoczy, *Stworczy człowiek i Bog Stworca*, Warsaw, 1982, 103.

CHAPTER TWO

LIFE IN CHRIST

According to the teaching of both the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians, it is Jesus Christ that leads man to God, to the love of Him and to total submission to Him. And it is this particular characteristic of their teaching that will be discussed in this chapter. The two authors present the main truths of the Christian life on the basis of the events and ideas in the Gospel. Jesus Christ and His teaching are the foundation from which they develop their own teachings on conversion, repentance and profound spiritual change. They point to Christ as the example to imitate and, therefore, the most perfect ideal of man and the model of all virtues.

1. The Theological Foundations of Life in Christ

The starting point of Father Papczynski's presentation of the Person of Jesus Christ is the scene in which Jesus silences the storm on the sea (cf. Mt 8, 23-27). The storm broke out and raged while Our Savior was sleeping quietly in the boat and His disciples were "fighting" with the high waves. Jesus wanted to test the Apostles' faith. When He silenced the wind and the sea, the amazed disciples cried out: "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey Him?" (Mt 8, 27).

And so, who is Jesus, the One whom we receive in the Eucharist? — asks Father Stanislaus. "He is alive, immortal, powerful, gentle, invincible; He is good, merciful, very gracious — the Supreme One; He is quiet, kind-hearted, He is Wisdom, Love, Truth, the fullness of all Life and all Good. Picture it to yourself and imagine gold, silver, precious stones, all the jewels of the world, all the riches and delights of heaven, the world with all creation, the heaven with all the angels and saints. All

of this is surpassed by God who has given Himself to you as spiritual nourishment: true God and true Man. He is the One who created you; the One who redeemed you; the One who will judge you.”¹

Father Stanislaus emphasizes the fact that even though Jesus is the Son of God, He also called Himself the Son of Man. However, man often errs and understands the Divine in merely human terms. Hence, many of Jesus’ contemporaries considered Him to be only a man. He was to them the son of a carpenter and if He did drive the evil spirits out, He did it, in their belief, not by His own power but by the power of their evil prince — Beelzebub. Yet, St. Peter, more enlightened than the others, denied these erroneous opinions about Jesus and stated that He is “the Son of the living God” (Mt 16, 16). For this statement he was appointed to the highest office in the Church and is to us an example of faith in the God-Man.² Apparently it was not an easy faith since the Pharisees could not accept it, the proof of which can be found in their many conversations with Christ. This is evident even at that point when one of them asked Him the tricky question about the greatest commandment of the Law (cf. Mt 22, 36). Father Stanislaus calls the Pharisees the unhappy people for even though they had the living Truth right before them, they did not believe it and did not accept the teaching which they heard, rather, they tried to put Jesus to a test.³

It is Father Stanislaus’s desire to awaken in others, especially in those who come to the Lord’s Table, an awareness that it is necessary for them to recognize Christ’s divinity. The following text of his meditation before receiving the Holy Communion may serve as an example illustrating this desire:

“The houses visited by kings become famous, the thresholds crossed by priests and others servants of God become blessed. And what to think about a soul whose chamber is entered by pure Love, whose dwelling is visited by the King of Kings, the Highest Priest of the Melchizedek’s rite? The kings bestow riches upon those whom they visit, adorn them with honors or ennoble them with coats of arms; the priests give blessings to those they visit. But our Lord, Jesus Christ, as the richest King,

gives the souls which He visits numerous riches (i.e. virtues), the noble coats of arms (i.e. the nature of His grace and the signs of various gifts) and His Divine blessing (...). Here comes the Father: rise up, why are you sleeping? Here comes the Groom: go out to meet Him. Here hastens the Comforter: why are you sighing in sorrow? Open the cell of your heart before Them and let it become transformed into heaven. O, Holy Trinity! O, Father Most Holy, O, Son Most Gracious, O, Spirit most Beloved, the dwelling of my soul stands wide open before you: come, hurry, but I am a sinful man.”⁴

The thought about the Holy Spirit often recurs in our author’s writings. Father Papczynski emphasizes the role played by the Holy Spirit in prompting man to imitate the life of Christ just as when He animated the Apostles to proclaim the glory of Jesus, with courage, to be ready to suffer, to bear abuses and blows. This is of essential importance in such formation of a Christian that enables him to bear injuries willingly, ignore insults, calumnies and false accusations.⁵

As he presents the teaching about the Divinity of Christ in the Trinity of Persons, our author does not ignore His humanity and sees the proof of this humanity in the following statement made by Our Savior: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me” (Mt 28, 18). Here Jesus speaks of Himself as man rather than God. As God, He is equal in authority to the Father; no one gave Him this authority, He always had it of Himself. But the authority is given to Christ as man in heaven, so that, having ascended there, He might be able to open it to the faithful, the just, the holy and close it to the unfaithful, the unjust and the condemned. He is given authority on earth, so that He might destroy the worship enjoyed by all creation, the worship due only to God, that He might attract all nations to the true faith, both by Himself and through His disciples, and that He might establish His Church and reign everywhere in people’s minds, hearts and souls.⁶

After having brought the truth about the Divinity and humanity of Christ closer to the readers, Father Papczynski focuses his attention on Christ’s saving power. This power is inherent in His very name.

Thousands of goods lie in this name which is more powerful than thunders. Called in sadness, Jesus brings consolation. In times of danger, He guarantees victory. Called upon in poverty, He will enrich us; in sickness, He will heal us. He will support us in our struggle with sin and in acquiring virtues because He came to save the sinners and He is the Lord of virtues. Therefore, may the name of Jesus be the subject of our meditations, may it be our love, joy, rest, respite, nourishment, our life and heaven.⁷ There is nothing more worthy in the whole world than Jesus and nothing more worthy of love, hence His essential role in the spiritual transformation of man. He is the Light which we should gaze upon and never lose sight of, so that we might reach Jesus who reigns in heaven.⁸ He is the Eternal Sun which helps us to see our imperfections, failures, mistakes, shortcomings and transgressions. This true Divine Light enables us to see our sins, to make a sincere resolution to remove evil, mend it and not to repeat it again. For just as the rays of the sun entering a house through its windows uncover dirt and disorder, so also this Sun of Justice reveals all spiritual disorder and impurity as He enters the chamber of the human heart.⁹

The power of God which makes man's interior transformation possible is revealed in the power of the name of Jesus. His name frees the possessed from evil spirits according to the promise: "In My name they will cast out demons" (Mk 16, 17). Therefore St. Paul says: "... at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Phil 2, 10). His name also makes our prayers effective. The prayers of many people are fruitless and ineffective because they are not being offered to the Father in the name of Jesus. This is why the Church always concludes its prayers with an invocation: "Through Jesus Christ, our Lord" and such prayers are never in vain.¹⁰

Father Papczynski seeks comparisons which would help him to glorify ever more adequately the goodness of the Savior, the goodness which has such an obvious influence on man. He refers to an account given in one of the Gospels: "He came down with them and stood on a level place" (Lk 6, 17) and calls Jesus a flower which grew out in the

fields : “It was very fitting that a wild flower should stand on a level place where it could be seen by everyone (...) Had he stayed up on high, not everyone would have heard Him, discovered Him and admired Him with joy and to his own benefit. He knew how to adapt, He knew how to approach people of various standing in life, various characters, skills and intelligence. He did not hesitate to come down to the low and miserable places, so as to save everyone. He did not consider it an offence to His great majesty to lower Himself in order to give the miserable crowds, even the sinners, a chance to seek the Heavenly Kingdom (...). Having abandoned His heavenly loftiness, He will stand on the level place of your nothingness to raise you to the higher level of His love.”¹¹

The fact that Jesus wants to be the groom of the soul, just like the one in the parable of the ten maidens (cf. Mt 25, 1-13), also shows how profound His bond with man is. He, too, espouses the human soul, enters it and endows it with peace and love. This espousal, this union between Him and man calls for faith, love and obedience. The one who walked where he pleased before, now has the duty to walk the ways of His commandments. The one who resisted His inspirations and admonishments before, should now serve Him in faithful submission. Who was languid, is to light up with the flame of His love and contribute to the common good. All of this requires abandoning the old man, the violent, imperfect one, and clothing oneself in Jesus Christ.¹² All of this is possible because we are being supported in this effort by the “Tamer of evil spirits, the Savior of the world, the Lord of Heaven, the Supreme Monarch, the Life, the Way, the Truth, the future judge of all mortals.”¹³

The power of Christ present in His words and teachings manifests itself in a particular way in the Eucharist. Who would doubt that He brings life to people — He raises some from the death of their sins and preserves others from such a death. He did say after all: “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood ... will live for ever” (Jn 6, 54).¹⁴ Our author elaborates on this thought further in the idea of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus said of Himself: “I am the good shepherd” (Jn 10, 14). Every

shepherd has three duties: he should know his flock, he should know exactly how many sheep he has in his flock, he should feed them and defend them from predators. This is what the heavenly Shepherd is like. He knows His sheep well and He assures us about it Himself: “I know My own and My own know Me” (Jn 9, 14). He has them all written down on His Divine hands in immortal script for He says: “Behold, I have graven you on the palms of My hands” (Is 49, 16). He also takes care of the food for His flock, i.e. for our souls, which is expressed in the following invitation: “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11, 28). This tender care which we experience at the hands of Our Savior had already been announced by the prophet in these words: “For He will give His angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways” (Ps 91[90], 11). But, the Shepherd Himself, too, surrounds his flock with His care directly: “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28, 20). This takes place primarily in the Eucharist.¹⁵

Our author pauses for a moment longer to consider the figure of the Good Shepherd because he himself was also a zealous shepherd. Father Papczynski saw the image of God’s Shepherd in David, who defended his father’s flock from the wild animals as he recalls it himself: “When there came a lion, or a bear, and took a lamb from the flock, I went after him and delivered it out of his mouth; and if he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and killed him” (1 Sam 17, 34-35). This is the kind of shepherd that David was. Jesus, in turn, seeing the “predators from hell” abduct His Father’s flocks, comes to their defense and gives His life up for them. How does He give it up? He exposes His flesh to cruel torture and death, and His soul to sadness and piercing pain. Neither the human mind nor that of an angel can comprehend it. No one’s lips can express it in words.¹⁶ The more so that Christ “is ready to pour His Blood once again, if necessary, even for just one soul.”¹⁷

How very significant is Father Papczynski’s statement on Christian life, understood as life in Christ, when he depicts Jesus as the Good

Shepherd, who not only gives His life up for His sheep, but also gives His life to them: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10, 10). His goodness lacks in nothing. He takes care of the life of his sheep and provides food for them. He bought their life with His death and gave His Flesh and Blood as food for them: “For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed” (Jn 6, 55). This blessed food and drink not only brings man to life but also cleanses his soul, removes sickness and pours in new strength.¹⁸

As he contemplates the person of the God-Man, Father Papczynski emphasizes the fact that salvation is for all of us. Jesus is concerned for all the people and their conversion, and He takes into account the happiness of the righteous and the sinners alike. He attracts them to Himself through inspirations and numerous benefits which He generously bestows upon them, thereby bringing the sheep earlier marked with the stamp of Satan into His fold.¹⁹ People instinctively felt this and, as it is said in the Gospel: “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him” (Lk 15, 1). Just as the sun absorbs the humidity of the earth and dries out the bogs and marshes, similarly, the Sun of Justice attracted the sinners to Himself. Jesus’ entire life was filled with mercy and compassion. As a child He received the pagan kings. And as a teacher He brought Zaccheus down from the tree took Matthew, Mary Magdalene and many other sinners under His protection. He even put a sinner at the head of His Church. And today, too, He impels everyone to conversion, attracting people like a magnet, like the sun; captivating them with the bonds of His love.²⁰

This friend of tax collectors and sinners is without sin Himself. Only He could challenge His adversaries: “Which of you convicts me of sin?” (Jn 8, 46). He has no sin. Why then was He arrested and accused like a felon, sentenced and led to death like a criminal, and deprived of His life in such a cruel manner? — asks Father Papczynski. There is only one answer: the sins of the people were the reason. “He was ... stricken for the transgression of My people” (Is 53, 8).

In order to show Our Savior’s innocence and patience, Father

Stanislaus draws the readers' attention to one particular sin committed by those who listened to Jesus. They said that He was possessed by demons: "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" (Jn 8, 48). Jesus patiently bore the sharp lashes of the malicious tongues. His patience is amazing and admirable. It is an example to be imitated by those who are being condemned and slandered. They should not allow this to upset them but try to preserve the peace and serenity of spirit.²²

Jesus' patience and goodness compels many to conversion. Thus His promise is being fulfilled: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (Jn 12, 32). When Christ Jesus was to become clothed in the garment of the Divine glory at Mount Tabor, He wanted only three persons to witness His transfiguration because He felt that it would be of smaller benefit to the people. But when He was to suffer, He wanted to be lifted up above the earth and crucified in the capital city of the Jews in front of a great crowd of people. In this manner His suffering became like a rope by means of which He was to draw the whole world to Himself. It was at this particular moment that Christ's humanity acquired omnipotence and took reign over the entire creation.²³ It is at this point that His work of converting all the people to God begins.

Life in Christ is understood somewhat differently by the Renovator of the Marians. Father Papczynski treats the subject more in terms of the doctrine while Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz does so from the ascetic point of view. The first author shows Christ as the God-Man, emphasizing His might and saving power as He exerts influence on man. The other author brings Christ into the difficult and complicated life of the contemporary world which is to become renewed in Christ, so that contemporary man might be reborn spiritually.²⁴

This profound relationship with Christ who enters the difficult history of man and the world became evident in Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's

own life at the time when, soon after the renovation of the congregation, came a period of great sufferings, for which he gave thanks to God and surrendered himself to Divine Providence in everything. His life at that time gave ample evidence of self-denial and an ardent love of Christ. His confession of love for the Savior, whom he wanted to love more and more, is very moving. His requests for the grace of ever greater love, for the grace of courage and fortitude in the labors which he undertook for the exultation of Christ's name, for the courage to overcome all difficulties, obstacles and discouragement, are all very telling. He asked Jesus for courage to be able to work and suffer for Him anywhere, wherever He might bring him in His Spirit.²⁵ St. Paul and his famous words: "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom 8, 31) was an example and inspiration for the Renovator of the Marians in his efforts. Therefore, he continues to draw inspiration from the Apostle of the Nations: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For thy sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8, 35-39). To the Renovator of the Marians, these words offered strength, support and comfort in all persecutions. In these words he found the strength necessary to deny himself completely, to love God, to give himself totally to Christ and become united with Him.²⁶ This is how profoundly Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz understood his relationship with the Lord and Savior of the world whom he loved above all else.

Animated with the spirit of love for Jesus, the author of the Spiritual Diary encourages his confreres to try and renew everything in Christ, including themselves. In order to accomplish this, they should not give in to the bad habits and passions of this world, to the erroneous opinions and views, but renew themselves, become completely filled with the

Spirit of Christ, His laws and principles, proclaim Christ to the world and lead everyone to Him.²⁷ Filled with such love of Christ, the confreres should work with all their strength, so that He might be known both in their home country and in the whole world. They should try to bring Him in everywhere and imbue everything with His Spirit.²⁸

He clarifies this task further, pointing out the difficulties encountered by a Christian when he must object to evil. One must not respond to evil with more evil but rather, conquer evil with good. Any difficulties, persecutions and other obstacles of similar nature, which will be experienced by the particular confreres, should not crush their spirit. To the contrary, all of them, animated with the Spirit of Christ and the Church and with the desire to spread God's glory and save souls, should accept any crosses as signs of God's blessing and His special grace, and pray for their persecutors. Neither should they defend themselves without a serious reason to do so. Rather, let them remain silent in the face of accusations, dedicate themselves to positive and peaceful work and try to demonstrate through their exemplary conduct and noble life how unjust such accusations were. The Gospel, the laws of the Church, the example of Christ, the Apostles, the Martyrs and other saints show them a way out of all these difficulties and it is from these sources that they are to draw light, inspiration, consolation and fortitude.²⁹

In his writings, Blessed George often points out the difficulties one encounters in spreading God's Kingdom on earth, but he adds that they must be overcome in the spirit of the love of Christ. Animated with this spirit, the confreres are to undertake work first of all in those places where the Church is being oppressed and persecuted, where the need is greatest, where Christ is less known or fought against, where God's greater glory so requires. And if it becomes necessary, they should be ready, like the first Christians, to hide in catacombs and expose themselves to any danger after the example of St. Paul who wrote: "Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one!" (2 Cor 11, 23). "We are fools for Christ's sake ..." (1 Cor 4, 10-13). It was amidst such difficulties that St. Paul did not cease to proclaim the Gospel.³⁰

The Renovator of the Marians realized that the thought of a future reward is a great support for the fatigued and persecuted heralds of Christ. This thought helps them to purify their intentions and undertake any labors out of love for God; the greater the love, the purer the intention and the more meritorious the actions. In this manner God will become the beginning and end of any activity preceding everything with His grace. Man, in turn, will not expect any human reward for his efforts here on earth but will long for the eternal reward which, out of God's mercy, will be our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.³¹ This thought will make it easier to open our hearts to His urgent call to conversion.

2. Christ's Call to Repentance

As he ponders the Gospel message which shows Christ concerned about the fate of humankind, Father Papczynski brings forward one of the main truths contained in this message, namely, Christ's call to repentance which puts us under the fundamental obligation to undergo spiritual formation. In order to persuade man to heed Christ's call, Father Stanislaus places him before the majesty of the Heavenly King and makes him realize that the Savior had long been waiting for him: "Think, what kind of prayer will you use when you have arrived before this King of Heaven: what kind of plea, what model or form of request? Do use a humble and serious one as you say: You, Lord, are my Savior, who have been waiting so long for me to convert and I, an unworthy servant and fugitive, have been reluctant. You, Lord, are the One who could have very justly thrown me in hell thousands of times so far because of my crimes, yet You waited for me to come to my senses. Finally, You are the One who saw me soiled with countless foul smelling stains of my bad, ignoble deeds and, only out of Your mercy, called me to enjoy this holy bath in Your Most Precious Blood, so that I might be cleansed."³²

In his testament, Father Papczynski confesses that he immerses his own sins in the saving wounds of Jesus Christ, his Lord and Redeemer.³³ These wounds should be a motivation for us to repent. A Christian must

realize that it was he who was the cause of Jesus' crucifixion and that he continues to crucify Him every day each time he commits a sin. And when he wonders who he should turn to now, he needs to remember that the Savior calls him to Himself despite the wounds, the injustice and the death that He had suffered.³⁴

In his desire to persuade man to undergo a radical spiritual transformation, the author recalls our Savior's tears. Jesus Christ weeps over a sinner even as He wept over Jerusalem when he foresaw its destruction (Lk 19, 41). "Consider, therefore, that if Christ the Lord could not stem the tide of tears caused by the terrible pain He felt as He foresaw and foretold the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, with what kind of sadness will He be filled, with what violent pain, with what kind of tears, when he foresees the fall of your soul or if He can already see it in ruin, devastated, unrestored?"

"For the soul is the city of the Most High. The senses are the dwellers of this city, the members of the body — its buildings, the virtues — its ornaments, the flesh — its walls, the eyes and ears — its gates; the heart is its royal throne, its fortified castle, its strong tower. And so, come, O, my soul, to the aid of Jesus who is weeping over you! You will thus be able to hope not to fall into ruin or, should this have already happened, you will receive help to rebuild. Call your inhabitants, i.e., the senses, to put them in order and mortify them, so that they would not walk away from Divine Love again; so that they would not make offerings to idols, i.e., to sins, to their own will and to love of self."³⁵

According to Father Stanislaus' teaching, the compassion which is aroused at the sight of our Savior's tears provides a strong stimulus to conversion. Jesus would have been greatly consoled if one of His friends had empathized with Him and wept over Jerusalem with Him. Similarly, He rejoices when we purify ourselves in tears brought on by daily living and when we make reparations not only for our own transgressions but also for the downfall of other souls who remain in mortal sin. He rejoices when we contribute to their reform by offering our intercessory prayers and voluntary acts of penance for them; when we try to return

these souls to the state of grace.³⁶

Our Venerable Servant of God knows that the human ability to recognize evil is very limited. Hence the sinner is not fully aware of his transgressions committed both during the early period of his mental development and later. We may choose not to weep over the sins we are not aware of, but we must recognize the present darkness of the soul and allow the Eternal Sun to dissipate it.³⁷ And it is indeed Jesus that allows man to know himself. “For, just as dirt in a house is invisible at night, but revealed when the sun rises, so are we unaware of even the obvious faults when Divine light is not present within us. How clearly do we see all the stains of imperfection, not to say the monsters of our transgressions, when the rays of this light enter our hearts. St Peter, too, recognized that he was a sinner exactly at the moment when he saw Christ, the Eternal Sun, on his boat. Woe unto you if you do not recognize and admit that you are a sinner today even as you carry Jesus in your heart.”³⁸

Our solidarity with the weeping Jesus does not end merely with empathy, sorrow and regret. It requires that we cooperate with the Savior in every possible way as we work to destroy the kingdom of evil. Christ destroys its seeds, demolishes what Satan had built and rebuilds and renews what God had accomplished. He destroys the work of the architect from hell and restores the work of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ Christ Himself convinces a Christian, He Himself encourages him to penance, forgives his sins and bestows His graces upon him. However, He demands to see the fruits of conversion, such as the mortification of one’s opinion, of one’s bad desires and willfulness. He also requires that we offer everything to His Majesty.⁴⁰

A seasoned expert on the human soul, Father Papczynski knew that hardness of heart is often an obstacle to conversion. Even Jesus had to reproach His own disciples for it when He appeared to them after His resurrection: “He upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart” (Mk 16, 14). When the disciples ran away after Jesus had been arrested, they did not hear a word of reproach from Him. But when He

was already on His way to glory, and not to torture, He did reproach them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. In the first case, He took into account their human frailty and pusillanimity as they were running away from danger. Later He could not bear their obstinacy because they would not believe even those who had seen Him. He exhibits a similar attitude towards a sinner who continues to commit sins, even though he knows how much they offend Jesus. A sinner knows that he is doing wrong; he reads and hears that others have been condemned to eternal punishment because of much lighter sins, but he behaves as if he were asleep. He does not reform his ways when he hears the Savior's call. And even when, because of the Lord's mercy, he returns to the right path, he often strays again. This is the hardness of heart for which Jesus reproaches and which He can crush by sprinkling the sinner's heart with His Blood. Therefore, we must convert and repent while we still have time and while the Savior is ready to grant us the grace to do so. He Himself is the source of grace and our salvation. The One who reproached His disciples for the hardness of their hearts, also brought them to the Heavenly Kingdom.⁴¹

Jesus leads man to salvation in various ways, and our author knows these ways, too. Sometimes Jesus turns to man with reproach, at other times He sends His messengers, just as He had "sent two disciples" (Mt 21, 1) as He was approaching Jerusalem. These "messengers" are our various worries and crosses and their task is to train us in patience and mortification which, in turn, helps us to surrender our will to His will. Later He comes Himself and inspires us to do good by filling us with spiritual delight. This was the case with His disciples. Before His passion, He taught them about resurrection in order to help them to control their grief and surrender everything to His will.⁴²

The One who sends us the crosses and worries to train us, can also free us from spiritual affliction and restore peace to our despondent hearts in but an instant. He does so when He sees that a heart is too fearful during various storms and too weak to withstand their violence. At such times He appears as the Prince of Peace.⁴³

Father Papczynski is able to present various aspects of conversion. All of them aim at spiritual progress and holiness. Our author encourages his readers to enter a noble competition in their quest for perfection and he recalls the words of Christ's admonishment: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5, 48). The Supreme Master of Perfection wants His disciples to attain the perfection attributed to God Himself.⁴⁴ He Himself is the model of perfection and the unparalleled example to imitate. That is why, when Father Papczynski was saying good-bye to his confreres before he died, he left them as his testament a picture of himself only to look at, and the example of Jesus Christ's life to imitate.⁴⁵

Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz closely associates the idea of repentance and conversion with an obligation to strive for spiritual transformation understood as striving for holiness. To this ardent apostle, personal holiness is the foundation of all works and intentions. Hence, we should spare neither time nor effort for our spiritual betterment. We should be dedicated to this most important of tasks with all our hearts because the Lord Jesus said: "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" (Mk 8, 36).⁴⁶ Therefore we must constantly perfect our spiritual life in order not to cause damage to our soul. "Our task must be: to be perfect and to perfect; to perfect ourselves and to perfect others and their works. We must perfect ourselves in the spiritual life by selecting those spiritual exercises which especially impel one more toward a conscious supernatural life, as, for example: a pure, supernatural intention (this should become habitual in our lives), particular and general exams of conscience, meditations, spiritual reading, a good and conscientious confession, made at least once a month with sincerity and open-heartedness, a report on our spiritual life to our spiritual moderator."⁴⁷ However, special attention is paid by the author to the discussion of the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament in our spiritual life and thus in the realization of the idea of conversion.

What is essential in spiritual transformation is the truth that the love of Christ who “having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end” (Jn 13, 1) is most fully realized in the Eucharist. In the Holy Eucharist His Body becomes united with our body. The spirit may not be able to comprehend all of this, but it can feel the love which is being dispensed so generously. For man, who is a helpless creature exposed to constant danger from himself, from the world and Satan, the Eucharist is the most effective weapon. It wipes away venial sins, gives strength, sustains life, stimulates growth, enlightens the mind and strengthens the will. It is also the source of virtues. Finally, it is nourishment for all, even the unworthy and imperfect, for those who do not feel the spiritual hunger or are very preoccupied. Jesus said: “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11, 28).⁴⁸

According to Archbishop George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, Christ’s call to conversion is directed first of all to those who dedicated themselves to the service of God in a special way. A person who left the world and entered a religious congregation, should not seek himself but Christ, not his own benefit but that of Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 2, 21). He should not be concerned with how to carry out his own intentions and realize accidental or personal goals but concentrate his efforts only on how to be more pleasing to God and how to serve the Church better, according to Christ’s encouragement: “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well” (Mt 6, 33).⁴⁹ In this spiritual work one must constantly look to the suffering Jesus, offer Him his works, pain, distress and suffering — all this in the spirit of repentance for his own sins and the sins of the world. “Grant me, Lord, prays Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, the spirit of repentance, so that I might suffer at least a little for all the great and grievous sins of my former life. Grant me, Lord, abundant tears that I might weep over my heavy and numerous transgressions.”⁵⁰

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz gives these thoughts from his Spiritual Diary a legal form in his Constitutions and obligates the Marians to be

particularly diligent in restraining the inordinate love of self which is the cause of all sin and to overcome this in themselves firmly and continually. Let everyone renounce and abandon himself, die to the world and live wholly for Christ.⁵¹ In the Instructions, in turn, he elaborates in greater detail on the subject of conversion and defines it as “death to the world.” One must, therefore not only partly, but completely abhor everything that the perverse world inordinately loves and embraces; one should accept and with all his strength seek after everything Christ embraced. Those who are of the world seek riches honors, esteem, fame, pleasures of life, and other like things, but those who seriously want to follow Christ, should put on the garment and mark of Christ and be ready to suffer not only poverty but any privation for Him. They should not seek honors within or outside the Congregation, but rather, with the grace of God, suffer insults, contempt, injuries, false testimony, persecution, exile, imprisonment, and dispersal — after the example of their Master Jesus Christ, who having joy set before Him, endured a cross.⁵² They should, therefore, renounce all things really and completely and devote themselves totally to the service of God, ridding themselves of everything that is not from God, becoming masters of themselves and forming the closest possible union with Christ.⁵³ It is indeed in such a radical fashion that the Renovator of Marians interprets Christ’s call to conversion. The consequence of this call will be a complete assimilation to the Divine Master.

3. The Idea of Imitating Christ

As we discuss Father Papczynski’s teaching and his presentation of the Christian life understood as a life in Christ, we cannot possibly ignore such an important idea as the idea of imitating Christ. To Father Papczynski, a Christian is an ardent follower and imitator of Christ. This imitation consists, first of all, in becoming like Him in life, in suffering, in avoiding sin and in the practice of virtues.⁵⁴

The Founder of the Marians often calls his confreres to follow in

Christ's footsteps and to imitate His life faithfully. He gives Jesus as an example even as "He was twelve years old" (Lk 2, 42) and went to Jerusalem with His parents, thus setting an example of piety. Father Stanislaus orders his confreres to keep recalling their own conduct as children so that they might compare it to Jesus' childhood. After all, their childhood had already been a time when they offended God, fell into evil and committed abuses. How different was Jesus' life in this period! At the age of twelve He gave an example of amazing piety. Meanwhile, a person who became a religious might have indulged in various improprieties and wickedness in his youth, and even now, while he remains in the house of God, he often lives a frigid spiritual life. And yet, one who imitates Jesus by wearing his religious attire, should also imitate Him by his conduct. The fact of simply being a religious does not save anyone, living a religious life does. It is not enough to be a religious only by name, it is necessary to be one in reality.⁵⁵

In order to focus his readers' attention on the person of Jesus and impel them to imitate the Savior, Father Papczynski recalls an episode from the Gospel which speaks about the messengers sent by John the Baptist: "Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ..." (Mt 11, 2). Jesus' precursor wanted his disciples to have no doubts whom to follow after his death. Therefore he sent them, so that they would learn from Christ Himself who He really is, so that they would become familiar with His person, His teaching, His habits and then follow Him.⁵⁶ In a similar manner, Father Stanislaus puts Christ before his disciples' eyes, so that they can imitate Him. He strictly demands that they decide whom they want to follow. God wants them to follow the Only One — Christ.⁵⁷ In order to make sure that they never forget about this, he ordered in the rule of life that they gather together each Sunday to participate in a spiritual conference which will remind them of the need to imitate Christ.⁵⁸ In order to help them to keep their Crucified Lord before their eyes at all times, he wrote meditations on Christ's Passion for each day of the week, in which he leads them in following their tortured Savior through the particular events of the

Passion and impels them to deep reflection and transformation of their lives. Thus, by showing Christ praying in the garden of Gethsemane, he encourages them and all of us to pray and to surrender to God's will in the face of increasing temptations and difficulties. Christ called before the tribunal of the high priest gives us an example of love, gentleness and goodness. Christ standing before Herod teaches that it is better to remain silent, even to the detriment of one's reputation, than to speak and sustain spiritual damage. The flogged Jesus encourages us to discipline our body in honor of His suffering and in order to avoid offending Him, as well as to be ready to fulfill His will in everything. The scene of His crowning with thorns encourages us to despise ourselves, to bear any afflictions and mortifications, to restrain our greed and lust, to clear the field of our heart of the thorns of sins and to sow the flowers of virtues there. When the Savior is walking the way of the Cross, a religious should join Him, just as the Blessed Mother did, and be willing to help Him to carry the Cross, just as she was, even though she could not. But a religious can willingly carry a spiritual cross. Jesus Christ stripped of His clothes and all covered with blood teaches a religious to renounce the love of self, his own will, his judgement and bad habits. Finally, when Jesus is hanging on the Cross, when He entrusts His disciple to His Mother, and the Mother to the disciple, when he calls upon His Father and gives His spirit up into the Father's hands, His imitator should contemplate the pain that the Blessed Mother felt and the tears shed by the beloved disciple, by Magdalene and other friends of the Lord, and to shed abundant tears himself. After all, Jesus Christ was put to death for his sins. Because of him, the Blessed Mother, along with the disciples and friends, had to bear inconceivable pains.⁵⁹

If Father Stanislaus's disciples are to imitate the Crucified Christ, they should, first of all, turn their attention to His spirit of sacrifice and self-denial. "What kind of virtue would you then acquire, if you should joyfully practice only those things which happen to be to your liking? Meanwhile, if you want to be a hero, you should imitate the heroic deeds of the Savior whom you have accepted, surrendering your will to Him

in self-denial. Seek, therefore, the opportunities to overcome your own opinion because you have sacrificed your will for the sake of hell many times so far. Make at least one holy, albeit belated, sacrifice to heaven — the sacrifice of your entire will.”⁶⁰

Jesus Christ Himself encouraged His disciples to imitate Him: “He who follows Me will not walk in darkness” (Jn 8, 12). The followers of Jesus become the sons of light and are able to conduct themselves the way their Master did, i.e. to live a life free from sin (cf. 1 Jn 3, 6).

This, after all, is a condition of persevering in Christ, which is a principal duty of a Christian.⁶¹

In their daily lives, the confreres are to deny themselves and imitate Christ by separating themselves from the mundane and practicing patience, humility, modesty, recollection, penance, prayer and religious observance.⁶²

The spirit of poverty is a particular expression of sacrifice after the example of Christ. He, the King of Heaven, did not even have a roof over His head (cf. Mt 8, 20; Lk 9, 58) and when He was thirsty, He was not ashamed to ask for water (cf. Jn 4, 7). Therefore, the religious should rejoice in their poverty and in this way become true disciples and followers of Christ.⁶³

The Founder of the Marians pays a lot of attention to the matter of imitating Christ’s obedience. The Marians have the motive and the model of obedience in the Savior who “humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2, 8).⁶⁴ The author emphasizes the fact that Christ was not guided by His own judgment, but He had the Spirit who guided Him and thus He faithfully fulfilled the will of the Eternal Father.⁶⁵ Similarly, those who have made a pledge to imitate Him, may not reign with Christ if they do not want to be obedient to Him. He was obedient not only to His Heavenly Father but also to His adoptive father on earth: “He ... was obedient to them” (Lk 2, 51). “As you watch Him being obedient to the will of His parents, Christ is teaching you now the virtue of heavenly obedience, using not a multitude of words but the teaching summarized in examples.”

“O, Jesus, I am more amazed at how submissive and obedient You are to Joseph than at how You convince the Jewish teachers by the power of wonderful words and knowledge. For what is so strange about the fact that You conduct a debate in the wisest manner if You Yourself are the eternal Wisdom? Yet, who would not be surprised that You, the Lord of Heaven, willingly surrender to Your parents; that, being God, You are obedient to humans? O, my Jesus! As I gaze upon Your example, I see how valuable and necessary the virtue of obedience is. For it was necessary that the One who was later submissive to His tormentors and to whom the entire world was submitted, should be also submissive and obedient to His parents.”⁶⁶

The Founder of the Marians sees the example of obedience not only in the person of Jesus but also in certain episodes connected with His life. The donkey on which Jesus enters Jerusalem (cf. Mt 21, 2) symbolizes the simple, sincere and obedient people whom the Lord wants to bring to Himself. He wants to be with such people. The obedient people, who fulfill His will, just as He fulfilled the will of His Father who is in heaven, are His brothers. For just as the donkey is full of simplicity because she runs, pulls and carries whatever is put on her back, so should the soul given to Christ be His simple handmaid. The human soul should persevere in carrying the yoke of obedience. We must be obedient and ready to respond to the call of the Lord as well as to walk the path shown to us by God and His representatives on earth. Therefore, even the saints gladly called themselves donkeys, for they were obedient and always ready to serve. This is the kind of people that God seeks, calls and chooses in order to put His yoke on them, to reveal His will to them and employ them to perform His works. But the human will often resists God and is not willing to be in His service. However, just as masters do not like disobedient servants, God does not like disobedient religious. Christ, the Lord, needs obedient people because He Himself was obedient and it was His desire to fulfill His Father's will. This is also the way His Apostles were, through whom He converted the whole world. Since He is the giver of all goods and virtues, we must ask Him for this

virtue, too.⁶⁷ The virtue of obedience is so important that our Founder goes so far as to say categorically that it is better to die than to disobey.⁶⁸

Another virtue that always goes hand in hand with obedience is humility. Once again Father Stanislaus prompts us to learn this virtue from Jesus who is “gentle and lowly in heart” (Mt 11, 29). A disciple of Jesus, too, must be humble, gentle and quiet. He is to shun what is haughty, and bend over to what is low. He should not elevate himself above others because of his knowledge and other talents given to him by God, or because of his gift of piety, multitude of friends, the splendor of honors, high esteem. He is to be always humble of heart, for it is only to God that he owes his virtues and everything that is good in him; it is only his vices that he owes to himself. Following Jesus’ example, he is to humble himself in everything, be scorned, ashamed, choose what is worse, yearn for contempt, because Christ says: “Learn from Me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart” (Mt 11, 29).⁶⁹ A religious does not have to transform the world as Jesus did, or to create the visible and the invisible, he does not need to perform miracles and raise the dead, but he should desire to be like the Savior — gentle and humble of heart.⁷⁰

As Father Stanislaus tries to encourage the reader to imitate the humble Christ, he recalls an episode from the Gospel in which Jesus healed a deaf man in the presence of the disciples and “He charged them to tell no one” (Mk 7, 36). In several other cases, Jesus forbade people to make known what He had done publicly because it would have affirmed a false image of the Messiah in the witnesses of these miracles. But, in addition to such concerns, Jesus wanted to set an example for others, to help them not to brag about the good they had done and thus to avoid many dangers.⁷¹

True humility does not forbid one to reveal God’s gifts when the need arises, hence Jesus could repeat after the psalmist: “I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world” (Mt 13, 35; cf. Ps 78[77], 2). Christ did not want to keep the fullness of His goods secret. He poured them out abundantly, teaching by word and example. He restored health to the sick, life to the dead, He consoled the afflicted, pardoned

sinner, bestowed graces upon the righteous and obtained salvation for all. Therefore, the power which He granted to his disciples may not remain useless, either.⁷²

Our Founder draws our attention to yet another sphere in which we should imitate Christ as we work on ourselves. Man gives in to temptations and there is nothing surprising about it. Jesus Himself wanted to share this experience, too. "Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Mt 4, 1). "Look and behold a very positive result of temptation. The evil spirit attacked, the God-Man resisted and won, while the other one was defeated and ran away. The God-Man was surrounded by angels and strengthened. This is how Divine Providence deals with those who are being tempted: it allows them to be attacked, it leaves them to their own strength; it allows the tempted man to fight bravely as he is hit and drowned by the waves of various temptations, but, in the end, it brings him joy and consolation: "To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life" (Rev 2, 7). Just as the earthly rulers, who lavish exceptional rewards, wreaths, titles, and various graces on their comrades in arms after a well-fought battle and victory, our Heavenly Ruler showers his own with miraculous graces like spiritual consolation, visions, revelations (oh, how unworthy of them you are!), highest charisms and heavenly gifts, after a good, courageous, ardent and triumphant battle with temptation. Fight, fight like a hero and persevere."⁷³

A soul that follows Christ often experiences spiritual consolations, so that it would not break down at the moment of trial. Christ showed His glory to the three disciples on Mount Tabor, so that they would not fear the experiences which awaited them later. To those who follow Him today, He shows a portion of His glory, especially in the Holy Eucharist. He allows them to taste the heavenly sweetness, so that they would gladly undertake any labors later, when they become desolate and lonely. For whoever tastes His sweetness once, will never seek anything else in the world but Him; nothing will be too disagreeable or difficult for him.⁷⁴

The vision of the Christian life; a life based on the imitation of Christ,

has its profound justification in the Christian tradition. Such vision has always been close to the hearts of many fathers and writers of the Church. It also occupies an important place in the contemporary theology which joins God's eternal plan for man with the person of Jesus Christ in an inseparable bond because "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph 1, 4).

For Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, the example of the saints is a particular stimulus to imitate Christ. With all their strength, they tried to be perfect "as their heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5, 48) and they aimed for this noble goal by becoming more and more like Jesus Christ.

"If I really want to follow in the footsteps of the Saints, the end of Christ's life must also become my end; those tools and means which Christ used must also become my tools and means. What did Christ desire? To establish God's Kingdom here on earth, i.e., our holy Church. And what was His way to this goal? — The way of utter self-abnegation in deeds difficulties, humiliations, persecutions, suffering. He followed this way until He was crucified, until He gave His life. What follows from this? That, of our own free will, wholly denying ourselves, all of us must offer and consecrate ourselves fully to the Church. To me the core and essence of our vocation is: we must freely and voluntarily renounce ourselves, our comforts, conveniences, appetites, and pleasures; we must renounce the world's riches, goods and vain glory. On the other hand, we should give and consecrate ourselves wholly, all our natural and supernatural talents, to the welfare of the Church: its defense, preservation, propagation, growth, and progress."⁷⁵

As he searches for the way to imitate Christ, Blessed George points to the need of contemplating Christ's life. He is the model for us when He works in the peace of His home in Nazareth, when He does penance and fasts in the desert, when He spends entire nights in prayer, when He stops at towns and villages, when He visits the righteous and the sinners,

the learned and the simple, the rich and the poor. Our model is the Christ who teaches and refutes the attacks of the Pharisees, who looks for the lost sheep, Christ persecuted and suffering.⁷⁶

According to Father Renovator, one simple way of imitating Christ is a willing acceptance of any works and duties entrusted to us by the Congregation. A religious will not consider any useful and honest occupation to be unworthy of him, bearing in mind the example of Jesus Christ, who worked with His own hands, and of so many saints who gladly accepted the humblest tasks.⁷⁷ For just as Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ did not come into the world to do His own will but His Father's, so also the religious should remember that they did not join the congregation to fulfill their own will but the will of the Heavenly Father.⁷⁸ Christ should be their Way, Truth and Life in everything. They are to reflect upon His hidden and private life as well as upon His public and apostolic life. He is the model of prayer, work, penance and sacrifice. It is not sufficient that they acquire one or another of His virtues, they must try to know Him better and better, to be imbued with His Spirit, to conform their will to His will, their whole life to His life, in order to become a living image of Christ.⁷⁹

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz also emphasizes the fact that every Christian is obliged to imitate Christ in his life. This duty ensues from the very name, i.e., "a Christian," which suggests that Christ is our model of life. The perfection and salvation of a Christian depend on whether he imitates his Master. Jesus said: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me" (Mt 16, 24). A decision to follow Christ, who is the Truth and the Light of the World, results in great spiritual benefits. It makes man's every action holy as he becomes united with Christ through the gift of grace, as he becomes filled with His spirit and acts out of the same motives as Christ did. The union with the Divine Master makes man's efforts extremely fruitful for Jesus assured us that if someone abides in Him, he "bears much fruit" (Jn 15, 5).⁸⁰

If someone wants to imitate Christ, he must first get to know Him, for

one does not value what one does not know. Therefore, it is necessary for us to meditate often on Christ and look at Him with the eyes of faith, just as an artist, who wants to paint a picture, does. Before we undertake something important, it is good to consider what Jesus would have done in a similar situation. It is useful to recall certain events from His life like the flight to Egypt, His presence at the wedding in Cana, visiting the sick, transfiguration on Mount Tabor, His persecution, prayer in the garden of Gethsemane and His Passion.⁸¹

Special attention should be paid to imitating Christ's obedience to the Father. This is how He speaks about Himself through the author of the letter to the Hebrews: "Sacrifices and offerings Thou hast not desired, but a body hast Thou prepared for Me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings Thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do Thy will, O, God' " (Heb 10, 5-7). Jesus was obedient to His Father's will when, at the age of twelve, He stayed behind in the temple, when He was baptized, and when He accepted and drank the cup of suffering. While the world is disobedient, Jesus wants to be obedient to God, to His parents, to the secular law, even to his tormentors. The Creator is obedient to His creation, while the people ignore the commandments of God and the Church and live according to their own will.⁸²

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz places a special emphasis on Christ's poverty combined with self-immolation and humility. This can be seen in the mystery of the Incarnation where God becomes man. He could have come robed in glory and majesty, but instead came in humiliation, poverty and suffering. He did not want to be glorified by the people but only desired that His Father be adored. A Christian is to imitate Him in all of this. He should put on the garment of Christ in order to carry Christ's life in his own body. A cry: "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go!" (Mt 8, 19) should be on the lips of every disciple of Christ.⁸³ But Jesus' way was the way of the Cross and it is onto this path that the Renovator of the Marians leads his readers.

What helps us to meet the suffering Jesus is our Savior's complaint as recorded in the Book of Lamentations: "All you who pass by, look and

see if there is any sorrow like My sorrow which was brought upon Me” (Lam 1, 12). The Church brings the pain suffered by Christ closer to the faithful as it encourages them to meditate upon His Passion during the time of Lent.⁸⁴

Why are we to meditate on the Lord’s Passion? — asks Blessed George. Because Christ’s Passion is the center of the Divine mysteries and the source of our salvation. Through His Passion, our Savior wiped our sins away, reconciled the people with God, obtained for them the grace of being sons of God, and opened the gates of heaven for them. The Passion is also a source of wisdom, because the Cross is the Divine Master’s pulpit, the most perfect book from which the faithful have always been learning the ways of God. That is why St. Paul said: “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2, 2). Finally, the Lord’s Passion is a source of power and strength, a defense and shield against the enemies of the soul, namely, Satan, the world and the flesh.⁸⁵

Christ’s Passion should be meditated upon with faith, for it is a mystery which can be fathomed only through faith. Hence, the Jews considered the Passion to be a scandal and the pagans thought it was foolishness. But a Christian, who looks at it through the light of faith, sees what Jesus suffered in body and soul and discovers the magnitude of His pain and love. “Look at Jesus’ Passion with the eye of living faith, encourages our preacher, just as if it were being repeated before you, as if you were its witness and participant. Imagine that you are following Him, praying in the garden of Gethsemane, that you are present at His flagellation and when He is being crowned with thorns, that you clean up His blood, help to carry the Cross, kneel at its feet and then see Him off to the grave.” The feeling that should accompany us in the meditation on the Lord’s Passion is that of compunction, humility and love. We should be also filled with the desire to make reparations for our sins. A person who committed even one mortal sin must agree that he, too, crucified Jesus. We must, therefore, bemoan not only Jesus’ Passion but also our own blindness.⁸⁶

When we meditate on Christ's Passion, we are filled with sorrow because, on the one hand, it shows the noble character of virtue but, on the other, reveals the wickedness of sin. Jesus knows that one of His disciples will betray Him and it deeply hurts His soul. It is already at the beginning of His Passion that we encounter the terrible mystery of wickedness. We observe how desire leads to betrayal and how "cheap" God is to people. Just as Father Papczynski did, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, teaches and asks questions as he ponders the particular episodes of Christ's Passion. As he discusses Judas's betrayal, he asks: "And you, yourself, have you not sold God?"⁸⁷

When the henchmen rush at Jesus in Gethsemane and tie Him up, it is their dark hour. Such hours do sometimes occur in the life of the Church and in the human soul. Judas wanted to leave this darkness and he began his repentance well, because he confessed his sin and returned the money he had received. But he lacked hope. He should have turned to the Savior and asked for His forgiveness. In our day, Judas still lives among us and asks what he will get; he will betray God and his own conscience; he will renounce Christ at the price of material gain, sensual pleasure, greed and selfishness. He has a lot of followers because so many breathe Judas's betrayal. One will spy on his friend to betray his secret, another spreads intrigues. ... Yet another says one thing to your face, only to contradict it when you are not there. But God who does not condemn a sinner easily, admonishes, evokes remorse and warns. Judas should have thrown himself at his Master's feet, he should have demanded that Pilate show clemency for Jesus; and when Jesus was on Calvary, Judas should have approached the crucified Savior with tears in his eyes.⁸⁸

As Blessed George meditates upon the scene when Jesus was hit in the face during the questioning before the high priest, he recalls the experiences of the Fathers of the Church who shivered in horror at a mere reference to this event. They wondered why, at that moment, the earth did not fall apart, the sun did not stop shining, and the world did not return to the state of nothingness. When Father Matulaitis-

Matulewicz hears false accusations, calumnies and blasphemies, he tells us to admire Jesus' silence because virtue does not seek reward on earth, but places its hopes in eternity and gives alms only for the reward of heaven. One who complains that his deeds have not been rewarded, does not comprehend the value of virtue.⁸⁹

After the terrible night which Jesus spent among the henchmen in prison, there rose the last day of His earthly life, the most important of all days that were and that were yet to come, the most important day for humanity — the day of redemption. The elders of the people, the chief priests and the scribes ordered that Jesus be taken to Pilate. They followed after Him triumphantly, but they did not enter the praetorium, so as not to cross the threshold of a pagan's house. Thus hypocrisy takes pains to avoid minor transgressions and ignores grievous crimes. As He stood before Pilate, Jesus did not respond to the false accusations, in order to do penance for those who bring wicked accusations to court or "defend a wicked cause." He did penance for those who abuse speech, utter slander, calumny, insults and curses about their neighbor. He also wanted to strengthen His disciples for those times when false accusations would be made against them. To this day such accusations are being launched against the Holy Father, the bishops and the priests by the enemies of the Church in their papers, writings and at various meetings. Very often silence is the only defense in such situations.⁹⁰

Jesus was sentenced and crucified. When the light of the sun failed, the earth began to shake, and the rocks were split after His death. The people, filled with fear, scattered in every direction. Only the women with Mary, Jesus' Mother, and John, His disciple, remained at the Cross. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Jesus' body down from the Cross and laid it reverently in Mary's lap. Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz tries to understand her feelings at this particular moment:

"Imagine the feeling with which she raised her hands towards Jesus to let Him rest by her maternal heart. Behold the love with which she embraces and showers Him with kisses, washes His wounds with her tears, removes the thorns from His head. O Mother, Most Beloved! How

many swords pierced your heart! And who had sharpened those swords; were these not the sinners of the world? The Blessed Mother saw them all in spirit, gathered on Calvary. And it was to them that this plea from her heart was addressed: O sons of man, since you have wounded my Son so cruelly, run here and heal your wounds in the Wounds of Jesus. My Son died for you to give you life: here are His hands outstretched to you and His Heart open for you. Come, therefore, with heart to the Heart! He will forgive you and I shall ask [His forgiveness] for you (...). But I ask you, too: do not crucify my Son again and again, but love Him with me.”⁹¹

As Mary followed the body of her Son being carried to the grave, she was filled with pain but also with peace because she was reconciled with God’s will. She set an example of how to cope with the loss of a loved one.⁹² Millions followed her to the Cross and the Grave and she led them all. Her faith was not shaken even for one moment. She believed that the One who died as man, would rise as God. Her only desire was that her Son would be loved.⁹³ Having become man and accepted the misery of the human nature, Christ wanted to show us the way in which a Christian is to model himself after Him. He gave us an example of how to suffer, live and pray. Had He not suffered persecution, it would be difficult for us to maintain a balance of spirit. Had He not prayed for His enemies, the virtue of forgiveness would be foreign to us now. Had He not experienced sadness, we would be unable to experience consolation in our own sadness. He wanted to experience every kind of sadness and distress that we experience. Divinity had taken human nature to itself and the Soul of Christ had drowned in the sea of pain, burdened by the sins of the world. The author tells us to count at least those sins by which God is being offended in our town alone, and to keep in mind that this town is only a tiny point in the vastness of the world. He tells us to take only one day into account and consider what its significance is in comparison with the centuries that have already passed. Or, one might consider the life of only one person — count his sins, recall places and years, see the atrocity of the sins he had committed and then multiply

this by the millions of people who now live on earth and who lived here since the beginning of the world. Meanwhile, God is still being offended, God's teaching continues to be twisted, the Church is still persecuted and divided. Christ took all of this on His shoulders and wanted to make reparations for it.⁹⁴

In his meditations on the imitation of Christ, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz turns to the thought of St. Bonaventure⁹⁵ who presents this Divine model in a very vivid and touching manner. Jesus is the brightest image of all virtues and good habits and the most perfect example of holiness. Therefore, we should try to become more like Him by imitating His habits and virtues, even as we were created in His image, and we will share in His brightness and glory. We must, then, bring His entire life closer to our hearts. How very humble was He when He was among people, how gracious toward His disciples, how temperate in food and drink, how merciful to the poor. He was free from the cares of the world, He was not preoccupied with the needs of the flesh, He was modest in his manner, patient in adversity, quiet in answering questions, He did not use harsh or unpleasant words, but healed people of their anger with gentle and humble answers. He was always orderly in His gestures, concerned about the salvation of souls, because it was for them that He wanted to become man and die. He was the example of all goodness and compassion, He did not hold sinners in contempt, He graciously received those who were repenting, He gladly served others. Therefore, in all His words and deeds He is the example to follow.⁹⁶

To sum up the suggestions and recommendations made thus far, we must emphasize that the teaching on the life of Christ put forth by the two authors is profoundly theological. This is also confirmed in contemporary religious thought which is characterized by the conviction that Jesus Christ is the center of all creation, especially of man and his actions. He is the center of the history of salvation and it is in Him that God focused the work of creation, revelation, redemption and the eschatological fullness of man. Hence, the Christocentric attitude should be characterized by a formation of personal and community life that con-

forms to the Christian philosophy of life.⁹⁷ It is understandable that the effect of such teaching is that it inspires us to listen intently to Christ's own teaching and to imitate Him in our lives. And since it was Jesus Himself that made the effectiveness of this formation dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit, it is advisable to investigate how our authors perceived His role in the spiritual life.

Notes:

- ¹ IC f. 21r; cf. P. Goralczyk, *Powtorne zwiazki malzenskie w teologicznym i etycznym swietle*, Zabki, 1995, 123n.; cf. Z. Sarelo, *Etyczna donioslosc doswiadczenia religijnego*, Warsaw, 1992, 162nn.
- ² Ibid., f. 122 r-v.
- ³ Ibid., f. 82v.
- ⁴ Ibid., f. 56v.
- ⁵ Ibid., f. 55r.
- ⁶ Ibid., f. 111r.
- ⁷ "Tua sit ergo IESUS meditatio, tuus amor, tuum gaudium, tuum refrigerium, tua Vita, tuum aelum. Apprehende IESUM, ut te apprehendat; ama IESUM, ut te amet: ne desere IESUM, ut te non deserat. Nihil est orbe, caeloque toto praestantius IESU, ergo illo nihil tibi sit amabilius. Da te totum IESU; et erit tuus IESUS." Ibid., f. 96v.
- ⁸ Ibid., f. 98r.
- ⁹ Ibid., f. 6r.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., f. 53r.
- ¹¹ Ibid., f. 99r.
- ¹² Ibid., f. 101r-v; cf. J. Nagorny, *Moralnosc chrzescijanska jako moralnosc nowego Zycia w Chrystusie*, in: J. Nagorny, A. Derdziuk, ed., *Vivere in Christo. Chrzescijanski horyzont moralnosci*, Lublin, 1996, 87n.
- ¹³ "Hic ille est, quem aditurus, suscepturusque es: hic ille cacodaemonum domitor, mundi servator, Dominus caeli, Princeps mundi,

- Vita, Via, Veritas, iudex omnium mortalium futurus.” Ibid., f. 43r.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., f. 38r.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., f. 47v.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., f. 48r.
- ¹⁷ “Siquidem hic paratus est pro una anima, si opus sit, rursus sanguinem suum profundere.” Ibid., f. 36v.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., f. 59f.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., f. 11r.
- ²⁰ Ibid., f. 64r-v.
- ²¹ Ibid., f. 37r.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid., f. 124v.
- ²⁴ Cf. J. Danielou, *Trojca Swieta i tajemnica egzystencji. Znak swiatyni czyli o obecności Boga*, transl. by M. Tarnowska, Krakow, 1994, 63nn.
- ²⁵ DD 43.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 79.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 80; cf. J. Nagorny, *Wierzyć, ale jaki z tego pożytek?*, in: T. Styczen Z. Zdybicka, ed., *Czytajac “Przekroczyć prog nadziei,”* Lublin, 1995, 168.
- ²⁸ “Id maxime cuique persuasum sit, tunc temporis futurum esse, ut quisque nostrum et de toto genere humano, et etiam de civili societate, in qua vivet, optime mereatur, cum ipse penitus Christi spiritu imbutus, pro viribus, adlaboret, ut omnes Christum cognoscant, ut omnia in Christo restaurentur, ut ubique Christus inferatur, ut omnia Christi spiritu imbuantur. Pro nationibus enim et gentibus, pro totaque humana cultura illud Scripturae valet: Non est salus in aliquo alio, nisi in Iesu Christo Domino. — Itaque omnes illud Christi effatum suum faciant: Quaerite ergo primum regnum Dei, et iustitiam Eius, et haec omnia adiicientur vobis (Mt 6, 33). IM I, 24.
- ²⁹ Ibid., I, 19.
- ³⁰ “Sui zeli vero conatus praeprimis in eas dirigant regiones, ubi

Ecclesia in maximis versatur angustiis, ubi iniquis legibus constricta maxime premitur, ubi vita religiosa persecutionem patitur vel penitus suppressa est. Atque in eo campo operam dabunt ubi maxime necessitas apparet, ubi Christus maxime ignoratur, vel etiam odio habetur, ubi plus gloriae Deo afferi potest. Ut penetrent ubicumque maximam vident Ecclesiae necessitatem, nil intentatum relinquant, etiamsi ipsis more primorum christianorum dilatescere, in catacumbis abscondi, omni periculorum generi exponi opportuerit. Hic quoque exemplo sit S. Paulus Apostolus, qui de se scribit: Ministri Christi sunt (ut minus sapiens dico), plus ego... (2 Cor 11, 23-28). Nos stulti propter Christum... (1 Cor 4, 10-13). Attamen S. Paulus non cessavit, etiam in talibus difficultatibus, Evangelium praedicare.” Ibid., I, 18.

- ³¹ “Neve aliud praemium pro nostris laboribus intendamus, praeter D.N. Iesum Christum qui ex misericordia divina in aeternitate sit merces nostra magna nimis.” IM, I, 20; “Ne motivis mere humanis aut emolumentis ad agendum impelli te sinas, sed ex motivo purissimi Dei amoris omnia perage ; quo amor Dei in te erit vehementior, eo intentio erit purior atque eo maioris meriti tua opera; ut Deus omnium operum tuorum est finis, ita et inceptor sit ipse et impulsor, et principium sua gratia praeveniente; ne ullum praemium ab hominibus his in terris pro laboribus tuis expectes, sed ad aeternum aspices, Ipsum scilicet Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, qui ex misericordia divina in aeternitate futurus est merces tua magna nimis.” Ibid., XX, 49.

³² IC f. 5v.

³³ Tes. I in: Pos. 488.

- ³⁴ “Tu es, tu; qui in crucem egisti Christum; et eheu! Agis quotidie, cum impie agis! Quo te nunc vertes, tanta impietate usus in tuum Creatorem? Et te vocat ad se oblitus vulnerum, iniuriarum, mortis.” IC f. 28r.

³⁵ Ibid., f. 72r.

³⁶ Ibid.

- ³⁷ Ibid., f. 72v.
- ³⁸ Ibid., f. 66r-v.
- ³⁹ Ibid., f. 12r.
- ⁴⁰ “CHRISTUS, quem suscepisti, ipse tibi e cathedra cordis perorat, ipse animat ad paenitentiam, ipse dimittit scelera, ipse dat veniam, ipse indulgentiam confert. Quare, ut regratifices tuo Domino, fac dignum fructum paenitentiae: et te amore eius, in quibusdam, praesertim proprio iudicio, cupiditatibus pravis, voluntate perversam mortifices: aliquid de tuo tantae Maiestati condonas.” Ibid., f. 10v, n.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., f. 118v, n.
- ⁴² Ibid., f. 39r.
- ⁴³ Ibid., f. 20r-v.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., f. 67r.
- ⁴⁵ Tes. II in: Pos. 496.
- ⁴⁶ DD 6.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 4.
- ⁴⁸ De SS. Sacramento, MP, Vol. I, 123 n.; Cf. Listy polskie, vol. III, Warsaw, 1987, 106.
- ⁴⁹ DD 23.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 72.
- ⁵¹ “Maxime vero inordinatum amorem proprium, qui est causa omnis peccati, moderandum quisque curet, fortiter et continuop seipsum vicendo; relictis omnibus, etiam seipsum, suum inordinatum sentire et velle quisque abnegat ac relinquat, ut sibi et mundo mortuus totus Christo vivat. Eumque loco omnium habeat atque pro Christo Eiusque Ecclesia non dubitet seipsum totaliter impendere.” CM 167.
- ⁵² “Hinc non ex parte tantummodo, sed omnino abhorreant ab omnibus his, quae perversus mundus inordinate amat et amplectitur atque admittant et totis viribus concupiscant, quidquid Christus amplexus est. Quammodum homine mundani et qui mundi sunt, quaerunt magna cum diligentia et diligunt divitias, honores, existimationem, famam, vitae commoda et alia huiusmodi, – ita qui serio

Christum sequuntur, exoptent ardenter veste et insignibus Christi induti, adeo, acilicet, ut parati sint non modo paupertatem et omnium indigentiam ferre, non modo sive extra Congregationem dignitates, honores et praelationes neque curare neque praetendere, sed etiam contumelias, contemptum, iniurias, falsa testimonia, persecutiones, exilia, carceres, dispersionem patienter cum Dei gratia tolerare, quo suo Magistro et Duci Iesu Christo, qui proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem confusione contempta, aliaque ratione assimilentur conformenturque.” IM I, 14.

⁵³ “Studeant igitur reapse et simpliciter omnibus renuntiare et Dei servitio se totos mancipare, ea quae non sunt ex deo et propter deum ex corde suo expellere et in hisce omnibus seipsos fortiter vincere, atque Christo quam proxime sociare.” Ibid., I, 13.

⁵⁴ Cf. P. Goralczyk, *Mozliwosc uwzglednienia zalozen systemowych etyki Dietricha von Hildebranda w teologii moralnej*, Poznan, 1989, 227 n.

⁵⁵ IC f. 13r-v.

⁵⁶ Ibid., f. 5r.

⁵⁷ “Tu hodie, non per legatum visitas, sed ipsamet Christum adis anima mea; non idcirco tamen ad eum festinas, ut te soletur in carcere duro corporis existentem, nam illius consolationibus minime digna es, quem toties tuis sceleribus, ac praecipue in horto fatali, contristata es; sed ut scias, cui tibi adhaerendum sit: Voluptatione? Mundo? Passionibus? Quibus valde implicata teneris? an Crucifixo huic Numini, quod te hodie immerentem et rebellem sanguine carneque sua tractatus est? Age, quem sequaris, vide, ne dum tuac voluntati malae subiaces, iniuriam facias Deo, qui vult ut sis una unij, et solum sola sequaris.” Ibid.

⁵⁸ NV c. IX, n. 4, in: Pos. 482.

⁵⁹ IC f. 176r-182v.

⁶⁰ Ibid., f. 68r.

⁶¹ “Tunc profecto veri Christiani noscimus, cum non in tenebris, sed in luce cernimur esse Christi vestigia sequando, iuxta eius testimo-

nium: Qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris. (John 8, 12). Unde memoratus divini Evangelii praeco ac scriptor Ioannes ep. 1, c. 2, 6 iterum nobis dicta repetens: Qui dicit se (ait) in ipso, nempe in Christo, manere, debet sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare.” TDM 138 n.

⁶² NV c. VII, n. 7, in: Pos. 478.

⁶³ “Quamvis unumquemque deceat memorem esse, quin imitatore caelestis Regis indigentiae, qui nec proprium tectum habuisse legitur (Matth 8,20; Luc 9,58), et aliquando sitiens aquam petisse non erubuit (Joan 4,7). Quocirca et vos in summa paupertate constituti summopere exultate, quod tunc veri Christi Domini discipuli possitis esse, et sequaces.” Ibid., c. III, n. 1, in: Pos. 468.

⁶⁴ “Motivum et exemplum obedientiae sumatis ab ipso Redemptore Nostro, qui humiliavit saemetipsum factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem Crucis (Philip 2,8). Qua in re, qui eum decraret imitari, hunc appareret nolle cum Christo regnare, si nollet obsequi debitae auctoritati pro Christo.” Ibid., c. III, n. 1, in: Pos. 466.

⁶⁵ “Neque enim ipse CHRISTUS Dominus seipsum direxit, sed habuit spiritum, a quo ducebatur; et aeterni Patris voluntatem, quam exactissime adimplevit.” IC f. 44r.

⁶⁶ Ibid., f. 14v.

⁶⁷ Ibid., f. 39r-v.

⁶⁸ “Cave, ne non malis potius mori, quam non obedire.” Ibid., f. 40r.

⁶⁹ “Disce a me, quia mitis sum, et humilis corde.” Aug., Ser. 10 de verb. Dni.

⁷⁰ IC f. 105r.

⁷¹ Ibid., f. 75v, n.

⁷² Ibid., f. 93r-v.

⁷³ Ibid., f. 30r-v.

⁷⁴ Ibid., f. 31v, n.

⁷⁵ DD 2.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 76.

- ⁷⁷ “Libenter quisque subeat laborem et mundus, quodquod ipsis committitur vel pro bono communi aut particulari obvenit, neve ullam occupationem, si utilis et honesta sit, se indignam reputet intuens exemplum Iesu Christi propriis manibus laborentis et tot sanctorum, qui etiam humilia officia obire in deliciis habebant.” CM 276.
- ⁷⁸ “Sicut Dominus et Magister noster Iesus Christus non venit in terram, ut suam, sed ut Patris sui faceret voluntatem, ita et sodales meminerint se non esse ingressos in Congregationem, ut facerent suam, sed Patris caelestis voluntatem; nam obedientia, quae Superioribus praestatur, Deo praestatur.” Ibid., 195.
- ⁷⁹ “Ad perfectionem tendant per imitationem Domini nostri Iesu Christ, qui est via, veritas et vita nostra, atque respiciant tum ad absconditam et privatam Eius vitam, tum ad publicam et apostolicam, tum ad orationi et labori, expiationi et sacrificio deditam. Non modo hanc vel illam Christi virtutem acquirendam curent, sed potius Eum magis magisque cognoscere, Eius spiritu imbui, suam voluntatem Eius voluntati, tota plane suam vitam Eius vitae conformare cupiant et studeant atque Christi vivam imaginem in se exhibere curent.” IM I, 11.
- ⁸⁰ De imitatione Christi, MP, Vol. II, 117n.
- ⁸¹ Ibid., 118.
- ⁸² Ibid., 118n.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 119n.
- ⁸⁴ De Passione Domini, MP, Vol. II, 66.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid., 67n. 105.
- ⁸⁶ Ibid., 68n.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., 55n.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., 57nn.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid., 60n.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., 77n.
- ⁹¹ Ibid., 86nn.
- ⁹² Ibid., 89.
- ⁹³ Ibid., 91.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 63nn.

⁹⁵ Cf. S. Bonaventure, *De Instit. Novit.* p. I, c. 13.

⁹⁶ IM I, 11; cf. J. Nagorny, *Moralność chrześcijańska jako moralność nowego życia w Chrystusie*, in: J. Nagorny, A. Derdziuk, ed. *Vivere in Christo. Chrześcijański horyzont moralności*, Lublin, 1996, 115 n.

⁹⁷ Cf. R. Łukaszyk, *Chrystocentryzm*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka KUL*, ed. R. Łukaszyk, L. Bienkowski, F. Gryglewicz, vol. 3, Lublin, 1979, 296.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN FORMATION

The two authors whose work is under discussion in this book tie their teaching on Christian moral formation with the role played by the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of man. For this reason they devote a lot of attention to the place that the Third Person of the Holy Trinity occupies in the Christian life. They begin with the truth about Christ sending the Spirit as Comforter and follow up with the discussion of the role He plays in the development of spiritual life. The Holy Spirit works in us through His presence and, in particular, through the bestowal of His sevenfold gifts.

1. The Coming of the Spirit as Comforter

The starting point of Father Papczynski's attempt to bring the truth about the sending of the Holy Spirit closer to the reader is Christ's conversation with His disciples, in which He prepared them for the moment when they would have to part. In order to make this experience easier for them, Jesus pointed to the great significance of this moment: "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counsellor will not come to you" (Jn 16, 7). The Venerable Servant of God praises Jesus' foresight, His concern and goodness. Jesus knows that His departure will be a cause of sadness for the disciples, so He promises to send the Spirit as Comforter to them. The disciples must be deprived of Jesus' visible presence if the Comforter is to come to them. It turned out later that His leaving was important for them because, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, a great spiritual change took place in them. Its result was the gift of tongues, the ability to understand the Scriptures and invincible

fortitude. This last gift in particular manifested itself very clearly in their lives because, equipped with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they were able to proclaim Christ's Gospel openly even though earlier, when their Master had suffered, they had fled in fear. But now, as they had undergone a spiritual transformation, they themselves were able to convert pagans to the true faith, to bear many persecutions and, finally, to accept cruel death in His name with joy. While they had not understood even this one word "maluczko" before the Spirit as Comforter came upon them, later, as they were enlightened and transformed by Him, they were able to interpret the announcements of the prophets and obtained perfect knowledge in all areas. Thus prepared, they taught the whole world and, as the Church sings about them today, "Their voices resound throughout the world, and their words to the ends of the earth." It is such magnificent fruits as these that can be seen when God's goodness seemingly leaves the human soul. This act of apparent separation does not deprive the soul of its merits, does not diminish its virtues, and is not an obstacle to its spiritual rebirth and salvation. To the contrary, by transforming the soul, it strengthens its resolve in adversities and perseverance in good deeds, and brings a beneficial change.¹

God's gifts are always preceded by suffering which is a sign of God's grace that the human soul is to receive. "Seldom are we closer to God than when we are oppressed" — the Venerable Servant of God repeats after Drexelius. And, echoing the words of the prophet, he says: "His way is in whirlwind and storm" (Nahum 1, 3). "He comes to man with a bang and roar when his soul is frightened and contrite. Moreover, He comes from on high, sent by Christ from the immortal, triumphant castle of the Heavenly King. I say this to you, the blows of the evil spirits erupting from the swamp of hell reach man as gentle whispers and flatter him pleasantly. But, having departed, they leave behind thousands of remorse, thousands of stings, thousands of terrible pains. The Lord's Spirit, in turn, comes in a strong wind, He comes with a roar after a period of oppression and suffering, He is mighty and terrible, but when He departs, He leaves many gifts behind: various joys, thousands of

spiritual consolations, thousands of fruits, thousands of goods. So, if you had been oppressed before the holy feast, be it by your imperfections, or because of your desire to find God's grace, or for some other pious reason, understand that you have thus received the Holy Spirit who will bring you unimaginable consolations.”²

The Holy Spirit comes to man together with the Father and the Son. Jesus said: “If a man loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (Jn 14, 23). Jesus comes with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Wherever the Son announces His coming with the Father, the Holy Spirit must be there, too. When the Father comes with the Son, the Spirit as Comforter comes also. Overjoyed at their coming, Father Stanislaus cries out: “O Holy Trinity! O Father Most Holy, O Son Most Gracious, O Spirit Most Beloved, the dwelling of my soul stands open for You: come, hasten, but I am a sinful man.”³

For Father Papczynski, the Holy Spirit alone is the greatest gift that can be bestowed upon man. When the Risen Jesus appeared to the Apostles, He breathed on them and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit!” (Jn 20, 22). This was His most precious gift to them. Father Papczynski expresses a conviction that we cannot possibly imagine a greater and more precious gift than this.

What more, other than the Holy Spirit, could the Lord have bestowed upon His disciples from among His blessings, graces and charisms? When one has Him, he has everything! When one is guided by Him, he will not lose his way for he is being lead along a straight, safe path to the Heavenly Home! “Know that these are the marks of the Holy Spirit: joy, peace, wisdom, gentleness, patience, humility, discretion, foresight and the like. If such marks do not shine in you, you do not have even a spark of the Light in you, not to mention the Holy Spirit.”⁴

In order to show the truth about the meaning of the Holy Spirit in man's life, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz recalls the words uttered by

Jesus to the Samaritan woman: “If you only knew the gift of God” (Jn 4, 10). The Holy Spirit is an infinite good for us because He is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity which is the source of all good. He is the giver of all graces. It is the Holy Spirit who distributes among us the fruits of salvation won by Christ and then continues His work. He adapts these fruits to every man. He is our Steward, Defender, Comforter, Teacher and Executor of the work of salvation. If we compare Jesus to the trunk of a tree, the Holy Spirit is the fruit of this tree. If Christ is the sun, the Holy Spirit is its light and rays. Christ teaches us and the Holy Spirit writes these teachings down in our hearts. Christ is the King and the Holy Spirit introduces Him into our hearts as into a kingdom, thus becoming the foundation of our spiritual transformation. He personally reigns in the souls of the righteous. He enlightens and penetrates souls with sanctifying grace. He strengthens and empowers souls through the Divine virtues which He pours into them. He makes the human mind and will more receptive to the work of God through His seven gifts. Four of these gifts perfect our mind (*sapientia*, *intelligentia*, *consilium*, *scientia*) and the remaining three perfect our will (*fortitudo* [*virtus*], *pietas*, *timor Dei*)⁵

Without the grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, man is completely helpless in his spiritual life. Just as the earth will not bear fruit without help from heaven, similarly, man will not grow in virtue and holiness without the grace of the Holy Spirit. This grace is the first and main condition of progress on the path to perfection. Therefore, the sending of the Holy Spirit to man and to the world is a mystery filled with consolation. The mystery endures and continues to renew itself. We are to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit just as Christ’s disciples had waited in Jerusalem.⁶

We can do nothing towards our sanctification without the aid of God’s grace. Christ said: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing” (Jn 15, 5). Blessed George remarks that we tend to rely on ourselves alone and count only on our own strength. Meanwhile, Christ’s words should bring us back to reality. Without Him, without His

grace, we can truly do nothing in matters of our salvation, sometimes in spite of the many great talents which we may possess. Therefore, St. Paul admonishes us: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Phil 2, 12-13). And so, we cannot even want anything, we cannot even think pious thoughts without the help of God's grace. "Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Cor 3, 5). We are not even able to ask for anything good without the help of grace. "For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8, 26). Everything depends on God and not on our will: "So [being chosen] depends not upon man's will or exertion, but upon God's mercy" (Rom 9, 16). God precedes our will, our every thought, request and sigh with His grace. Since we alone are not capable of anything, the Church prays and encourages us to pray to the Holy Spirit for various graces. "For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked" (Rev 3, 17).⁷

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz remarks that even if man had remained in the state of the original innocence, he, too, would have needed grace. He needs it all the more now that he has fallen. Without keeping God in mind, we cannot make progress on the path to Christian perfection or live according to its requirements. We are dispersed like children, the earth attracts us, the passions and the world make us stray from the correct path. Even if we remember about God at such moments, we are not at all inclined to act according to His will. Human nature and God's grace are often at odds and it is only grace through Christ Jesus that can save us. Just as Christ had once been the longing of nations, so today, His grace and the Holy Spirit are our longing. St. Thomas reminds us that the thing on which our entire Christian life depends is the grace of the Holy Spirit given by Christ's faith and it is first and foremost this grace that is the new light.⁸

2. The Work of the Holy Spirit in Human Life

a) The Presence of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit as Comforter sent by Christ and present in the soul of a Christian fulfills a manifold role in his spiritual life. Father Papczynski sees His work moving in three directions. First, the Spirit ignites, stimulates and animates. Then, He consoles, cheers up and uplifts those who are disheartened. Finally, He admonishes, warns, and reprimands the disobedient and calls the sinners to reflection and conversion.⁹

The work of the Holy Spirit is an expression of the great care with which He surrounds man as He shares Himself with man. The people who are aware of this care and goodness are capable of loving the good God even more ardently, and those who are lukewarm, will warm up to what is good and step onto the right path.¹⁰ He enlightens us with his special light, He turns Satan's dwelling into the house of God, He provides holy inspirations, supports good intentions and works in a soul until He makes it a perfect fruit for the entire Holy Trinity. He leads to the understanding of the true faith, to learning the truth, to the knowledge of self and one's own sins, to the improvement of life.¹¹

Father Papczynski places a special emphasis on the enlightening role of the Holy Spirit in the process of spiritual transformation. As He was sending the Apostles to evangelize the world, Christ promised to send them the Spirit of Truth who will teach them everything (cf. J 16, 13). He will be their teacher, protector and helper. Because of Him they will know what they are to proclaim to the nations, how to bring them to the worship of the true God, how to resist their tricks and avoid their ambushes, how to bear persecutions and accept even death.¹² This promise was fulfilled in the life of the Apostles. Filled with the Holy Spirit, "they began to speak in other tongues" (Acts 2, 4). The knowledge of languages, the ability to interpret writings and understand mysteries, the ability to recognize the signs of future events — are all the results of the work of the Holy Spirit and His gifts. These are gifts that oblige. They disappear quickly and bring little benefit to our salvation if they are not supported by gratitude, if they are not guarded by humility,

if they are not directed by a righteous intention, and if they are not put to proper use. St. Paul warns that the gift of tongues will cease, the knowledge will pass away, the prophecies will pass away, but love never ends (cf. 1 Cor 13, 8). He says so not because he does not appreciate God's gifts but because he wants to point to love as their foundation.¹³

Mary was best disposed to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the greatest things that happened in her life were his work: "She was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit" (Mt 1, 18). The one who was full of grace conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is both a mystery of faith and a tremendous grace. This grace manifests itself also in the conduct of a Christian, in his actions, when they come from the Holy Spirit. It is a great happiness to have the Holy Spirit, even greater — to act in Him, but the greatest happiness is to end one's days in the Holy Spirit.¹⁴

In the life of St. Elizabeth, too, the work of the Holy Spirit is evident. "When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Lk 1, 41). It is easy to see here that joy accompanies the Holy Spirit. But our author uses the opportunity to console those who do not have a reason to rejoice. "Consider, however, that you should not always avoid sadness for sadness is not always bad. Very often a great and true spirit continues to dwell in a sad heart, the spirit which compels this heart to sadness, so that it would not be distracted; as joy would cause its distraction. Therefore, be convinced that joy is not always good, and sadness is not always bad. Therefore even the prophet himself said, 'The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth' " (cf. Eccles 7, 4).¹⁵

For Father Papczynski, the words of Jesus addressed to the disciples after His resurrection: "Receive the Holy Spirit!" (Jn 20, 22) are an opportunity to consider what kind of spirit it is that seizes man and what kind of spirit it is that he usually gives in to in the daily practice of spiritual life. Objecting to the will of the superiors, condescension, eagerness for superiority and honors, a desire to exert control over others, to attain recognition and respect — all of these come from the evil spirit.

On the other hand, obedience, willingness to humble oneself, to bear burdens and suffer afflictions, to avoid honors and to put oneself at everyone's disposal, the ability to recognize that we are all contemptible creatures — these are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Whoever is filled with such a spirit, is a true disciple of Christ.¹⁶

The one who is filled with the Holy Spirit, loves the truth.

“For it is true that hiding the truth belongs to the spirit of the devil; forbidding the truth to speak is a matter of the evil spirit. Whoever does not proclaim the truth to others or does not allow it to be proclaimed to him; whoever does not listen to the words of God, which are the Truth, or does not proclaim them to others, is not of God. Therefore, if you accept reprimands and consider them to be valuable, you are filled with the Spirit of God. If you recognize the transgressions of your past and present life, if you do penance for them and reform your ways, you are filled with the Spirit of God. If you bring others to the recognition of their own transgressions, to remorse and contrition, to disgust with these transgressions, to reform and reparation, you are filled with the Spirit of God.”¹⁷

A man who received the Holy Spirit ought to try to correct his errors and free others from them. It is not sufficient to receive Him only spiritually. We must reveal this externally by avoiding any kind of imperfection and by practicing virtues with great zeal. We should keep in mind the remark made by St. Gregory, who said that while some people do receive the Holy Spirit, at times of temptation they forget what they had earlier renounced with compunction, and return to their old sins as if they had never deplored them.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit transforms people's hearts with His love, just as He transformed the hearts of the Apostles. As the tongues of fire appeared over them, their hearts, too, were set aflame.¹⁹

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz takes up the issue of the role played by the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian, especially a religious or a priest,

in his conference on prayer. He discusses this role precisely in this context because prayer is something very important for every Christian as it leads to the recognition of God and our dependence on Him. It helps us to worship Him in spirit and truth and to surrender to His will. Prayer is a means of obtaining God's grace and an aid in acquiring virtues, i.e., in attaining holiness. Through prayer we become worthy of heaven and prepare ourselves for the future life.

The Holy Spirit is a Teacher and the originator of the spiritual life and, thus, of prayer which fulfills such an important role. At this point Blessed George recalls the words of St. Paul: "The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8, 26). "No one can say: 'Jesus is Lord', except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 12, 3). The Holy Spirit inspires us to prayer, enlightens us, teaches us about its nobleness and effectiveness. It is a proof of tremendous grace when a person becomes convinced of the importance of prayer in the spiritual life.²⁰

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray well because He teaches us how to pray and what to pray for. He knows what we need, so He teaches us because He wants us to obtain salvation. He does all of this first by working from within — He awakens in us a desire, childlike trust, perseverance and tenderness. In this manner, as St. Paul teaches, the Holy Spirit prays in us and gives us wisdom, knowledge, piety and the fear of God. He also supports our actions and our prayers from without. He helps us in our private and public prayer, in the oral prayer as well as in meditation and contemplation. The liturgical year of the Church, the feasts of our Savior, of the Blessed Mother and the saints provide us with a great variety of prayer opportunities, and all of this is also the work of the Holy Spirit.²¹

The Holy Spirit will come to man if he removes all obstacles and starts to call upon Him. This plea to the Holy Spirit is to be made with deepest humility, with a feeling of powerlessness, with regret for the evil that we have committed, with trust and perseverance. Such a plea will

be all the more effective if we support it by receiving the holy sacraments, by living a life of virtue, by working for God and the people. It should be made daily before every important action. Then the Holy Spirit will come and guide us Himself.²²

In his conference on religious orders, which are considered to be schools of perfection, Blessed George discusses a very special role played by the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. These institutions originated on the foundation of the evangelical counsels and serve various purposes in the Church. Their very existence depends on the work of the Holy Spirit. He calls people, stimulates them, and shows them where various needs exist. This work is approved by the Church which ensures the conformity of a particular religious rule to the spirit of the Gospel, and which bestows rights and privileges. The Church is guided by the Holy Spirit and everything that happens in the Church, happens because of Him. The Holy Spirit prepares a home and family for every religious, where he and others are to become more and more holy and work on the sanctification of other people.²³

What testifies to the presence of the Holy Spirit in religious life is the fact that the purpose of a religious community is to strive for a more profound spiritual life and perfection based on love. What animates a religious community is the Holy Spirit Himself. He gives the gift of vocation and makes a person feel that the outside world is not sufficient for him any longer. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the person who has been called wants to strive for the freedom enjoyed by God's sons, for higher and more perfect things. It is He who has called thousands of those who have populated the deserts, mountains, forests, valleys, villages and cities. The Holy Spirit molds the soul, so that it will be able to live up to its vocation. For this purpose He purifies and enlightens it and, through love, takes its heart into possession. Thus the soul is united with God more closely and becomes one with Him.²⁴

b) Dispensing of the Sevenfold Gifts

The human soul, or the mystical temple of God, as Father Papczynski calls it, should be supplied with the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts were symbolized by the seven-arm menorah in the Jerusalem temple (cf. Ex 37, 17-23). Every Christian should shine with these gifts if he is to be a true branch of Christ's vine, because Christ Himself shone with them as was announced by the prophet Isaiah (cf. Is 11, 2).²⁵ Woe to the Christian, in whose mystical temple there is no such menorah, i.e., which is not adorned with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Without them, he cannot carry Christ's image in himself or obtain salvation (cf. Rom 8, 29-30). Therefore, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are necessary not only for attaining Christian perfection but also for obtaining salvation. Father Papczynski suggests that if the faithful want to obtain this very necessary grace from God, they should offer at least a short prayer, in which they ask the Holy Spirit, "the sweet guest of the soul," that He would always dwell in them and enlighten them.²⁶

As he discusses the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, our author devotes most attention to the gift of wisdom (*sapientiae*). He understands this gift as Christian wisdom in the sense in which St. Paul understood it as he juxtaposed it with the wisdom of this world (cf. 1 Cor 1, 25-27; 3, 18-19). Christian wisdom is not human but heavenly. The Venerable Servant of God admonishes the faithful that they should not be persuaded by the spirit of the world's wisdom, which (the author repeats St. Gregory's thought here) always reverses the meaning of the words and presents what is false as true and what is true as false. This kind of wisdom, or rather, perversion of mind, is foolishness in the eyes of God and leads to the loss of eternal salvation. Father Papczynski rejects such wisdom and wants the hearts and minds of the faithful to be ruled by the heavenly wisdom which he calls (after St. Gregory) the wisdom of the righteous. The essence of such wisdom is not to pretend anything, to reveal the true sense of every word, to love the truth, to reject falsehood, to bring good everywhere and never seek revenge. The author bemoans the fact that this heavenly wisdom is ridiculed by the wise of this world even though

such wisdom is the only way to our heavenly home. But he also addresses all those who fight against the righteous and the wise and tells them what end awaits them on the day of God's judgment, when they will finally see their own foolishness and, filled with remorse, will groan as their spirit is in anguish: "This is the man whom we once held in derision and made a byword of reproach — we fools! We thought that his life was madness and that his end was without honor. Why has he been numbered among the sons of God? And why is his lot among the saints?" (Wis 5, 4-5).²⁷

The next gift of the Holy Spirit, to which Father Papczynski pays special attention, is the gift of knowledge (*scientiae*). The author understands this gift as the knowledge of these things which are necessary for obtaining salvation. Through this gift, the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind, so that it would be occupied with those things of this world that are necessary for man to obtain a supernatural goal, and that it would turn away from such human wisdom which is being sought merely out of empty curiosity, which feeds pride and leads to neglecting one's personal sanctification. Such wisdom is not only useless in obtaining salvation but can cause outright harm.²⁸

The remaining gifts of the Holy Spirit: understanding (*intellecti*), counsel (*consilii*), fortitude (*fortitudinis*), piety (*pietatis*), and fear of God (*timoris*) also play an important role in spiritual life and in the realization of the ideal of sanctity. They are closely tied with virtues because they cause and support them.²⁹

The martyrs experienced the effectiveness of all these gifts. Because they possessed the gift of wisdom, they adhered to the scorned and crucified Christ, for the heavenly wisdom opposes the human wisdom of this world. Because of the gift of knowledge, they chose the teaching of the Gospel rather than the doctrine of philosophers, i.e., they chose the knowledge of the things that are necessary to obtain salvation. Because of the gift of understanding, they bore the fruits of eternal salvation, which means that they were endowed with discernment — the ability to choose good and reject evil. Because of the gift of counsel, they managed to avoid the dangers which threaten everything that is good,

because they had been given the ability to make a proper judgment (even in the most dangerous cases) as to how to protect themselves from evil and what path to follow in order to reach heaven. Because they possessed the gift of fortitude and were guided by their love of God, they were able to bear all kinds of suffering and torture for Christ. Because they possessed the gift of piety and were animated by filial love and adoration for the Heavenly Father, they kept the faith which they had promised to God till the end. Finally, because they had the gift of the fear of God, they preferred to choose death, rather than lose God's grace through which they were preserved from evil.³⁰

As he follows the thought of St. Gregory ³¹ further, Father Stanislaus emphasizes the fact that the gifts of the Holy Spirit strengthen the mind of a Christian on his way to perfection and in his struggle with the vices that are contrary to these gifts. They help him to fight foolishness, dullness of mind, bad counsel, fear, ignorance, lack of perseverance in prayer and useless fear.³²

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz does not develop a theology of the gifts of the Holy Spirit but approaches them from a practical point of view. In his spiritual conferences, he tells his readers that they need to prepare themselves to receive these gifts by removing all obstacles. He also shows ways of obtaining them.

Blessed George believes that one can best prepare himself to obtain the gifts of the Holy Spirit by removing those obstacles which man himself places on their path. The Holy Spirit walks away from those who do not give up earthly things, even though they see their uselessness, and do not mend their errors, even though they see the chaos of their lives. "Wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin. For a holy and disciplined spirit will flee from deceit, and will rise and depart from foolish thoughts, and will be ashamed at the approach of unrighteousness" (Wis 1, 4-5). Thus the main obstacle placed before the Holy Spirit is a disorderly attachment to the world and to one's own

self. The world loves everything that flatters the senses, and rejects the Spirit of Christ and the matters of God. The Spirit of Christ is the Truth, and the spirit of the world is a lie. There exists a contrast and conflict between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of the world: their goals, intentions and attributes are different, therefore there is no reconciliation between them. "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him" (Jn 14, 16-17). Once the world did not receive Christ, hence today it does not receive His Spirit.³³

People are attached to the foolishness of this world, to its comforts, to themselves; they do not have the courage to follow God's inspirations and His voice which warns, admonishes, and impels them to give up and divest themselves of earthly attachments, to deny themselves. This voice calls upon them to be zealous in the service of the Lord and to reform their lives, but people do not listen to it. They oppose the truth they already recognize. They would like the Spirit as Comforter to dwell in them, but they do not want to give up the consolations offered by this world. This moves them away from the Spirit and makes them unworthy. Herein lies the reason why so very few attain perfection. Many hear the voice of the Lord, but they do not follow it, because what He demands is difficult and inconvenient for them.³⁴

Our resistance to God's grace is disastrous for us because it is a source of confusion and spiritual discouragement. Meanwhile, we could attain a high degree of holiness and receive many gifts and graces if only we surrendered ourselves faithfully to the Holy Spirit. We experience moments in our lives when we are visited by the Holy Spirit and such moments decide our fate. There is nothing more important than to be able to recognize these moments. They require that we reject the spirit of this world and the flesh in us, for it is only then that we can become vessels of the Holy Spirit. "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2, 14).³⁵

Another thing which the author considers to be very important in our preparation to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit is avoiding spiritual distraction. The people who are striving after perfection should be always aware of what is happening in their hearts and minds and what kind of spirit has power over them. However, they do not pay sufficient attention to what the Spirit of God demands of them and to things that are necessary to respond to His inspirations. On the outside His voice is drowned by the world, inside — by confusion and a tumult of passions. The Holy Spirit, who wants to visit man, is pushed away by all this. He comes bringing light, advice, encouragement, inspirations to do good, but people pay no attention to Him. Therefore St. Paul admonishes: “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Eph 4, 30).³⁶

We obtain the gifts of the Holy Spirit by means of certain signs established by Christ Jesus, i.e., by the holy sacraments. These signs work infallibly and effectively, albeit according to the disposition of each individual person, who should not impede the work of these sacraments. In his arguments, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz uses a convincing analogy. Just as wet wood does not catch fire, and the green and fresh wood burns slowly; just as the growth of a seed thrown into the soil depends on how moist the soil is, similarly, the sanctifying grace works more effectively if the soul is better prepared to receive this grace and allows it to penetrate deeper. Here lies the secret behind the weak effect of the sacraments. Their effectiveness depends on faith, hope, humility and trust of the person receiving them. The effectiveness of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in particular, depends on the spirit of penance and repentance, and that of the Holy Eucharist — on love and purity of heart. The saints loathed even the smallest evil and fought it out of their love of God. St. Mary Magdalene, St. Peter and other saints can serve as good examples.³⁷

We also obtain the gifts of the Holy Spirit simply out of the Holy Spirit’s will and liking. He supports us with His grace which enlightens, stimulates and accompanies us in practicing virtues. He dispenses His graces to whom He wants, He may give many or a few of them, accord-

ing to the unfathomable decrees of His Divine wisdom and mercy. When He enlightens, visits, fills us with strength, showers with gifts, He is completely free in His actions. There is no injustice with Him because He works irrespectively of a person; He works without expecting any gain because He does not need the creature. He acts in such a manner because He is good and wants to dispense good when, to whom and how He wants — generously, without measure or according to measure. This is what He likes and this is in accordance with His eternal decrees. “The wind blows where it wills” (Jn 3, 8). “All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor 12, 11). He dispenses His gifts both to those who ask for them and to those who do not, even to sinners and stubborn ones, like St. Paul whom He knocked off his horse at Damascus. But He lavishes His special love on the righteous. “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Rom 8, 14).³⁸

Since Our Savior promised to send us the Spirit as Comforter, we have a right to expect and desire His gifts. Yet, not as a poor man desires the treasures of the rich one, but with complete trust based on the merits of Our Savior. Our Heavenly Father will give us these gifts because Jesus Christ said: “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (Lk 11, 13). St. Peter encourages us to trust: “He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world ... and become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1, 4). By these gifts we rise to the likeness of God, therefore we should cry: *Veni Sancte Spiritus*.³⁹

In their teaching on the Holy Spirit, both the Venerable Servant of God, Stanislaus, and Blessed George follow the theory of appropriation worked out by the great scholars like St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, which ascribes the work of sanctification to the Holy Spirit. This theory, based on the Holy Scriptures, on the symbols of faith and on liturgical prayers, ascribes the omnipotence and the creation of the

world to God the Father, the works of wisdom to the Son of God, and grace and sanctification, which are essential in spiritual formation, to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enlightens man, strengthens him with His power, enables him to act and supports him on his way to spiritual transformation. Today the theory of appropriation is recognized and accepted by all Catholic theologians.⁴⁰

Since Jesus Christ sent the Spirit as Comforter to the people, we must receive Him with love and open ourselves to His grace and gifts, which is precisely what the two authors strongly encourage us to do. Such an attitude makes us willing to undertake all necessary efforts on our way to sanctification. Since such sanctification takes place in the Church and through the Church, it will be beneficial to become more closely acquainted with the role played by the Church in this salutary work as presented in the teachings of Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz.

Notes:

¹ IC f. 52r.

² Ibid., f. 57r.

³ “Ecce Pater venit; surge; quid dormis? ecce Sponsus adest; prodi obviam illi: ecce Consolator advolat: cur maerore confectus gemis? Aperi illis cellam cordis tui, et in caelum mutabitur ab illis. O Trinitas! o Pater Sanctissime, Filii clementissime, Spiritus amabilissime, patet vobis mansio animae meae. Venite, accelerate, sed homo ego peccator sum.” Ibid., f. 56v.

⁴ Ibid., f. 47r.

⁵ De gratia, MP, Vol. II, 31 n.

⁶ Ibid., 29.

⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁸ “Id potissimum in quo tota vita consistit, est gratia Spirit. Sancti, quae datur per fidem Christi. Et ideo principaliter lux nova est gratia Spiritus Sancti” (St. Thom. I, II, q. 106, a. 1,2).

⁹ IC f. 54v.

¹⁰ Ibid.; cf. H. Urs von Balthasar, *Teologia dziejów*, transl. by J. Zychowicz, Cracow, 1996, 77.

¹¹ “Postremo tuam mentem ad Spiritus Sancti beneficia perpendenda converte: Cuius proprium est ad veram amplectendam fidem, ad veritatis agnitionem, ad notitiam detestationemque peccatorum nos adducere: ad emendationem vitae impellere, cor lumine speciali accendere, exque Daemonis habitaculo domicilium Dei constituere, inijcere sanctas inspirationes, adiuvere bona proposita, et perficere; atque alia plurima in anima hominis sibi conformi operari, donec ad perfectam totius Sanctissimae Triados fruitionem illam deducat.” IC f. 62v.

¹² Ibid., f. 55v.

¹³ Ibid., f. 57r.

¹⁴ Ibid., f. 107r.

¹⁵ Ibid., f. 124r.

¹⁶ Ibid., f. 146r.

¹⁷ Ibid., f. 55r.

¹⁸ “Considera, quid de mansione hac Spiritus Sancti Divus Gregorius disserat: In quorundam, inquit, venit corda Spiritus Sanctus, et mansionem non facit. Quamobrem? Quia, dicit, per compunctionem quidem dei respectum percipiunt; sed tentationis tempore hoc ipsum, quod compuncti fuerant, obliviscuntur, sicque ad perpetranda peccata redeunt, acsi haec minime planxissent.” Ibid., f. 57v.

¹⁹ Ibid., f. 57v.

²⁰ De oratione, MP, Vol. I, 125 n.

²¹ Ibid., 130.

²² De gratia, MP, Vol. II, 36.

²³ Religio — schola perfectionis, MP, Vol. I, 449.

²⁴ Ibid., 450 nn.

²⁵ TDM 86 n.

²⁶ “O Lumen septiforme, illabere pectoribus nostris, et haec aeter-

num inhabita!” Ibid., 93.

²⁷ Ibid., 87 nn.

²⁸ “Quid enim prodest magna cavillatio de occultis et obscuris rebus, de quibus nec arguemur in iudicio, quia ignoravimus! Melior est profecto humilis rusticus, qui DEO servit, quam superbus Philosophus, qui se neglecto cursum caeli considerat. Quanquam non est culpanda scientia, aut quaelibet simplex rei notitia, quae bona est in se considerata, et a DEO ordinata” (verba s. Gregorii). Ibid., 89 n.

²⁹ “Ad INTELLECTUM autem pertinet rerum discrimen, et usus ordinatus, prout de Servatore nostro Propheta dixit: Butyrum et mel comedet, ut sciat reprobare malum, et eligere bonum (Is 7,15)”:

“CONSILIUM docet, quid, quo loco, quove tempore, quibus mediis, quo fine sit agendum? quo pacto mala cavenda? quibus modis virtutes comaparandae, ac retinendae? qua via scandendum caelum?”;

“FORTITUDO in arduis amore DEI aggrediendis, et constanter perficiendis, in superandis tentationibus, in adversis laeto animo perferendis, in prosperis modeste nec insolenter admittendis, locum habet”;

“PIETAS ad cultum DEI ac religionem honoremque et amorem parentibus ac maioribus praestandum semper pertinet”;

“TIMOR denique Domini avocat a malo.” Ibid., 90 n.

³⁰ Ibid., 87-92.

³¹ Cf. S. Gregorius, Mor., 1.2, in c.1.

³² TDM 92 n.

³³ De gratia, MP, Vol. II, 34 n.

³⁴ Ibid., 35.

³⁵ Ibid., 35 n.

³⁶ Ibid., 35.

³⁷ Ibid., 32 n.

³⁸ Ibid., 34.

³⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁰ Cf. I. Rozycki, *Apropriacja*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka KUL*, ed. F. Gryglewicz, R. Lukaszuk, Z. Sulowski, vol. 1, Lublin, 1973, 841; cf. K. Romaniuk, *Duch Swiety*, in: *Encyklopedia Katolicka KUL*, vol. 4, Lublin, 1983, 282; cf. Y. Congar, *Wierze w Ducha Swietego*, vol. III, transl. by L. Rutowska, Warsaw, 1996, 27; cf. T. Spidlik, *U zrodel swiatlosci*, transl. by J. Zychowicz, Warsaw, 1991, 14 n.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ECCLESIAL DIMENSION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Church plays an important role in guiding the faithful as they try to live Christian lives and the two authors are very well aware of this fact. Therefore, they strongly emphasize in their teaching that Christian formation takes place in the Church and through the Church. Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz each bring out different aspects of this community of salvation. Hence, in this chapter, I depart from the pattern which I had adopted in earlier Chapters and discuss separately the concept of the Church as presented by each author. However, both of these concepts provide a very similar image of the Church: Jesus Christ is the Shepherd, and the bishops and priests are His representatives on earth. In their teaching, the two authors place a very strong emphasis on the need to support our shepherds and on the necessity to build the Church and see to its growth and development. For this reason, they make pastoral work one of the main goals of the Marian congregation.

1. The Biblical Vision of the Church

Father Papczynski's teaching on the Church draws from and elaborates on the biblical thought about the Church; the author brings the evangelical image of the Church closer to the reader. He adopts a characteristic manner of presenting the nature of the Church; the manner to be later followed by Vatican II, which consists in using various images associated with tending the soil and with the life of shepherds (cf. KK 6).¹

Through these images, the author demonstrates his understanding of the Church, his reverence, devotion and love for it. For Father Stanislaus, the Church is — to quote the words of St. Paul — “God’s

field” (1 Cor 3, 9) and the chosen vineyard planted by the heavenly farmer. The author further elaborates on such a formulation of this truth as he comments on the following image from the Gospel: “For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard” (Mt 20, 1). The householder is Christ, the vineyard is the Church, the vines are the souls of the faithful, the laborers are the clergy — both diocesan and religious. Christ’s vineyard was established and arranged by the Householder and the Apostles and it was watered by the blood of the martyrs. The lilies of the virgins and other flowers of virtues add beauty to the Church — the beauty that delights the whole world. The religious, in particular, were called to work in this vineyard and each and every one of them ought to dedicate himself to this work with all his strength — in the service of love.²

In the Church — the Lord’s vineyard — all workers have duties assigned to them. “Imagine that you, too, were assigned to work in a certain vineyard where many people are busy working: one is digging in the soil, the other is cleaning up sprouts, another is taking care of the vines, yet another is watering the vineyard. Notice that such, too, is the vineyard of the Heavenly Lord, the orthodox Church, in which countless workers continue to labor and bathe in sweat. One teaches, another is occupied with some other activity. One enriches the field of the souls of the faithful with the Word of God, another cleanses them from the dirt of sins by administering the sacrament of Penance. No one rests, all take turns working and through the various works of love strive for and care about only one goal — that the Lord’s Vineyard might bear abundant fruit, that it might delight the Lord.”³

Another parable which Father Stanislaus uses to represent the Church is that of a sheepfold — an image that was also referred to by Vatican II, with an emphasis on the role of Christ as the gate and the Shepherd (cf. KK 6). In Father Papczynski’s opinion, a religious order and every religious community is a sheepfold. Christ’s teaching is the gate to the sheepfold. Those who enter the Church, a religious order or some other community through this gate will be saved. To enter through this gate is

to receive the Savior's teaching, meditate upon His life and, first of all, His Holy Passion. There are many, however, who are devoted to Christ, love His teaching, confess it and meditate upon it constantly, but do not apply it in life and keep missing the gate of salvation. After all, "blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11, 28). Those who listen to the Word and fulfill it, will find safe and reliable pastures for themselves.⁴

Later, on the basis of Christ's words: "If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (Jn 10, 9), Father Papczynski wonders what this love for Christ's sheepfold is to look like in our daily practice. "Assuming that your order is the said gate of Christ, consider that salvation is obtained both by those who come in through it and those who go out. It means that not only those religious will enter eternal life who, having once been accepted into the monastery, are always free to devote themselves to solitude, prayer, penance and the practice of other virtues, who never appear in public, never make even one step outside, but that eternal life was promised also to those who go out into the world, stimulated by either obedience and love or by piety and the desire to help one's neighbor."⁵

It has been mentioned above that Father Papczynski called Christ's teaching, which constitutes the content of the Church's teaching, the gate of the sheepfold. He loved this teaching immensely and was proud to have been born and raised in the "Roman Catholic Faith" — as he confessed in his first testament — and that he could die in this faith believing what the Mother Church believes, what she teaches us to believe and what she will teach us to believe in the future. Concerned that he might have hastily thought, said or written something against the Church some time in the past, he revoked it all and expressed a wish that it would have never been thought, said or written.⁶ In his second testament, he confessed again that as he was about to leave this mortal life he did so in the Roman Catholic Faith, for which he was ready to shed his own blood during the time of the Swedish war.⁷ In the same manner he confessed the faith of the Church in his *Oblatio* where he emphasized

the truth about the Immaculate Conception⁸; the truth which was not generally accepted at that time, but which the Church always defended in its teaching. Hence the great role of its shepherds in guarding Christ's sheepfold and the entire deposit of the faith.

2. Love of the Church

In his teaching about the Church, the Renovator of the Marians focuses his attention on the matter of the love of the Church. The great love for the Church which filled the heart of the Founder of the Marians found its extension in the life, the activity and the teaching of the Renovator of this congregation. There is an entry in his Diary which can be called a hymn in honor of the Church: "O Holy Catholic Church, true kingdom of Christ on earth, my dearest beloved! If I should forget you, let my right hand be forgotten; let my tongue cleave to my palate, if I should not remember thee, if I should not deem thee, my dearest Mother, above all my joy! If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy! (Ps 137, 5-6)."⁹

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz wanted these words to be a never ending cry of his heart. He wrote further: "Grant us , O Lord, the grace to be dominated by that one great thought: to toil and suffer for the Church. May the Church's trials, tribulations and wounds be the trials, tribulations and wounds of our hearts. May our hearts burn with one desire: to dedicate our life to God and the Church, to become used up and consumed in toil and battle for the Church without hoping for anything in this world, without seeking or expecting any personal gain! (...). May we fear only this one thing: to die without having suffered or toiled or gained anything for the Church, the salvation of souls and God's glory!"¹⁰

In order to reach such a noble goal, we can use every honest means available. It might be a priest's clerical garb or a religious habit, even lay dress, if it should turn out to be more appropriate. Science, art, and mate-

rial goods may be helpful, too. Working for the good of the Church, we must make use of virtually everything that God created and anything good that exists on earth. “All things are yours, (...) And you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s” (1 Cor 3, 22).¹¹

One can almost see and feel the flame devouring the heart of this apostle at the beginning of this century when he expresses the desire to sacrifice even his life for God’s cause and the growth of the Church. No wonder, then, that the man animated by such a spirit can pray to God in these words:

“If I may ask, grant, O Lord, that in your Church I may be like that common, dirt-scouring rag-mop which, when worn out, is tossed into a dark and filthy corner somewhere. May I be used up and worn out in the same way as long as some tiny corner in your Church is cleaned, as long as your House is a little tidier and brighter. Afterwards, let me, too, be thrown aside like that soiled and worn out cleaning rag. O God, grant that I be used in your vineyard and fields as dung, as manure, so that your harvest would be more rich, your yield more abundant. Grant that I be despised, spent and worn if only your glory grow and spread, if only I may thus share in the growth of your Church.”¹²

It seems that in this song of love, Blessed George rose to the heights accessible only to the most ardent sons of the Church. He wanted to graft this love in the hearts of his religious confreres, therefore he gathered them under the motto: “For Christ and the Church!”¹³

Our author writes that it had to be a wise and discerning love because such were the demands of those difficult times for the Church in that part of the world. The religious life could be reborn only in clandestine and difficult circumstances, therefore Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz looked for a safe place and tried to hide there, so that no wrong people would find him and his confreres out. The confreres were obliged to keep silent about their intentions and works. And why not? Why should they not do so if various destructive organizations involving all kinds of revolutionaries and anarchists can hide and work in conspiracy? — asks the Renovator of the Marians. The first Christians, who had to hide and live

underground in catacombs for many years, are an example for him. They lived there, organized themselves and persevered in their faith. Therefore, it is necessary to follow in their footsteps, and they will help us with their prayers, intercessions and protection. “O you Christian warriors and heroes of our faith, who, with the help of Christ, shed your blood that the Church might grow, help us to be brave and strong enough to follow your example!”¹⁴

This is how this priest and religious saw his place in Christ’s sheepfold. Later, as a bishop, he became its shepherd, well aware of how important a place these shepherds hold in the visible structure of the Church.

3. Respect for the Pastors of the Church

Father Stanislaus knew that the Church is a complex reality containing both visible and invisible elements, that it is a hierarchical community and, at the same time, the Mystical Body of Christ, just as St. Paul had taught and what the later generations of theologians studied at greater depth.¹⁵ The duty of a Christian is to grow in the knowledge of the Church’s teaching and in the understanding of the truths which it proclaims. Our Founder was convinced that Jesus Christ Himself can explain God’s teaching and its instructions to man, especially when He is present in man’s soul after he has received the Holy Eucharist. However, there are various teachers in Jesus’ Church appointed by Him to do just that, and we should turn to them for help in case of any doubts. The superiors and spiritual directors are such teachers for those in the religious life. In order to demonstrate what great importance God attaches to their mediation, Father Papczynski refers to Abraham’s admonishment from the parable about Lazarus and the rich man: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Lk 16, 29). Thus, the people are to learn God’s wisdom from others, but only from those who have been trained to teach.¹⁶ Our author warns against the false teachers because every spirit that was not sent by Christ is mendacious. Such was

the spirit that spoke through the lips of the prophets of the king of Samaria and such, too, is the spirit that speaks through the mouths of heretics who proclaim new teachings and invent new gospels, rejecting old traditions, writings and truths established in the Church from the very beginning. Their spirit is the spirit of deceit because it was not sent by the Truth itself, i.e., by Jesus Christ, but was poured in by the father of deceit.¹⁷ Perhaps our author's words sound rather radical here, yet we can see in them his great concern for the impeccability of the Church's teaching. We can see what great importance he attached to the Teaching Authority of the Church.

As Father Papczynski received dispensation from his vows in the order of the Piarist Fathers, with a still vague plan of establishing a new religious congregation in mind, he promised, in the so-called *Oblatio*, obedience to the Vicar of Christ and his representatives, and confessed his faith in everything that the Holy Roman Church believes and what it teaches us to believe.¹⁸ Later, in the religious rule of his congregation, he ordered that, out of love of God, the confreres should respect the laws, orders, decisions, rites, customs and dogmas of the Catholic Church. For this is what Christ said: "If a man loves Me, he will keep My word" (Jn 14, 23). In Father Papczynski's opinion, this admonition refers not only to Christ's teaching but also to the orders and the documents of the Church which He Himself guides and rules by the Holy Spirit.¹⁹

The fact that Father Stanislaus ordered his confreres to read papal decrees at common meals is another testimony to his ecclesial spirit. The said decrees were to be complied with and the punishments which they imposed were to be applied.²⁰ Father Stanislaus renewed his order of daily reading of papal decrees in the so-called Recommendations for Marian Brothers²¹, and in his testament he once again called his confreres to be zealous in their Catholic faith and to respect and obey the Holy See.²²

Another expression of our author's devotion to the Church is his loving attitude towards the first Vicar of Christ here on earth. This attitude becomes evident as he meditates upon the words uttered by Christ to

Peter: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 16, 19). The Lord Jesus showed great wisdom when He made the sinner who had denied Him the head of the Church, the leader of Christian multitudes and His vicar on earth. He did not choose the innocent John or the righteous James to hold this office. He needed a shepherd who would be able to forgive the stray sheep and graciously receive them back into Christ’s fold when they show compunction, because he had fallen himself and had experienced how easy it is for man to fall, and he knows that a desire to do good can grow in man’s heart once he has risen from his fall. From Peter’s example, we can learn to feel compassion rather than anger for sinners. For it is a principle of Divine Providence to put even righteous superiors, who strive for perfection, through trials and tribulations, to allow them to fall, so that, after they have come to their senses, they can support others and hasten to help those who are unaware of evil. Sometimes sins become a salutary medicine for the soul.

The telling example of St. Peter, of his fall and subsequent rise from sin, prompts Father Stanislaus to express a conviction that it may be more beneficial for many Christians that they should not be completely free from temptations, but that they should experience them more often; that they should even fall sometimes, so that they would not feel too safe and become proud.²³

Father Papczynski’s concern for Christ’s sheepfold, which is expressed in his prayer for the Church and its shepherds, is, therefore, quite understandable. It can be seen clearly in his order given to the superiors of Marian houses that fervent prayers for the Roman Catholic Church be offered to God in each of these houses.²⁴ The Marians are to remember the Church constantly in their prayers, and through their pious exercises they are not only to support their own congregation but also provide spiritual assistance for the Holy Catholic Church. At the same time, Father Stanislaus emphasized the priority of the common recitation of the Canonical Hours (which are a public prayer of the Church) over the private recitation of this prayer.²⁵

The warm and loving attitude towards the Church and its shepherds, which is so characteristic for Father Papczynski's spirituality, is also reflected in the teaching of Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz. It is expressed, among others, in the words of encouragement contained in his religious constitutions and directed to his confreres, advising them to show the greatest reverence, love and devotion to the Catholic Church and to adhere wholeheartedly to the representatives of the Church hierarchy.²⁶ Both the congregation as such and its individual members must try in everything they do, only to promote the greater glory of God and to seek their own and their neighbor's salvation with the Catholic Church, in the Church, and through the Church. Therefore, they should always remain in very close communication with the Holy See, with the Local Ordinaries and with the entire Catholic Hierarchy. They should consider themselves humble servants of the Catholic Hierarchy and try to give it all the help they can within the norms of their constitutions. They should always try to choose work that is more humble, difficult, and dangerous, but which is of greater benefit to the Church and the souls.²⁷ And when Blessed George encourages them to conform their will to the will of God, to submit themselves to it and fulfill it, he also encourages them to observe the commandments of God, of the Church and their own constitutions faithfully.²⁸

According to Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, our love of the Church is to manifest itself in service to God's people, to the priests and bishops. "We must be especially loyal to and cooperative with bishops. We should sometimes even offer our services to be used in whatever manner they consider best for the glory of God. We should be particularly available to take up the duties and tasks that no one else wants and to go to dangerous places. Priests and bishops should be held in highest esteem; let none of us dare to speak ill of priests or censure them. And if at times we happen to observe anything evil among the clergy, by penance, self-denial, prayer, sacrifices, good works and zeal, let us do our best to compensate for it and cover it with a mantle as good sons

would their father's nakedness (cf. Gen 9, 20-27). Loving the Holy Father with all our heart, let us be most obedient to him; let us observe his precepts, instructions and laws; let us defend his honor, mandates and acts; let us strive to arouse love and veneration for the Holy Father in the hearts of others."²⁹

Blessed George confesses that he read *Acta Apostolica Sedis* attentively and jotted down whatever might be interesting and important for the Marians. In the evening, he related to the brethren what he thought might be of interest to them. He considers it to be a special grace from the Lord that he came to understand that it is from the Holy Father's various writings, addresses, and letters that he can come to know what the Church needs most, with what maladies mankind is afflicted, what remedies are prescribed, what errors and unhealthy opinions should be avoided, what truths are to be inculcated among people. He admits that formerly he used to examine only the encyclicals, but now he also reads the ordinary letters of the Holy Father. And when he mentions the errors of modernism which were spreading at that time, he thanks God for the gift of the Infallible Teacher whose addresses and letters illuminate the darkness. He considers the gift of infallibility to be a splendid favor and he rejoices in the fact that the Holy Father warns, teaches and indicates where the perils lie, because it is so easy to inhale opinions which are not wholly tenable, especially when such opinions are propagated by people who are reputed to be Catholics. He believes that it would be very beneficial for the Congregation to have one or two of the brothers who would always read the documents of the Holy See attentively and present the matters contained therein to the whole community for general discussion. In this manner, they would truly live the life of the Church, be seized with its spirit and understand the Church's intentions better.³⁰

Frequent prayer for the Church will be a telling manifestation of the love of the Church and its hierarchy. The Renovator of the Marians fervently recommends such prayer in his constitutions. He tells the confreres to pray for the Holy Mother Church, the Supreme Pontiff, the local

Ordinary and the clergy. He also remembers the need to pray for the conversion of sinners, for non-Catholics and the unfaithful. He encourages them to combine prayer with mortification and other good works.³¹

One might add at this point that Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's acceptance of the duties of the Bishop of Vilnius was a heroic act of love and obedience to the Church on his part.

4. Supporting the Church in Its Pastoral Work

According to the principles of contemporary ecclesiology, the task of the Church is to give witness to Christ, i.e., to show His person, proclaim His teaching and fulfill His instructions. The Church is to continue Christ's mission — to teach people about the truths revealed by God and to lead them to eternal participation in the life of God. It is to remind the faithful that they are called to holiness and to help them to attain it through all its works, especially through the sacrifice of the Holy Mass and the administering of the sacraments.³²

Father Stanislaus Papczynski undertook the idea of service to the Church through pastoral work, thereby emphasizing the ecclesial character of the Christian life. In order to encourage his confreres in this service, he emphasized the greatness of Christ's co-workers who, out of love for Him, teach others, especially the children, the simple people, the non-Christians, and those who err, everything that is necessary to obtain salvation, to live a Christian life, to avoid sins and to acquire virtues. In his opinion, there is nothing more distinguished than this pious work, nothing more blessed. He, too, asks Christ for the grace to be allowed not to neglect anything in this matter. We know that he did not neglect anything for he would often go from his hermitage in the Korabiew Forest to nearby parishes to hear confessions and proclaim the Word of God. When he set about establishing the Congregation, he wanted to form it in such a way that it would not close itself completely in its solitude but remain open to providing pastoral care to neighbors.³⁴ He included an instruction in his *Rule of Life* which read that the priests who

have the necessary gifts are permitted to support the pastors in their work. But he wanted it to be a humble service. The priests should obtain authorization from their superiors and ordinaries. The Venerable Servant of God points out that while the Marians are an eremitical community, their contemplative lifestyle does not bind them to such a degree that they would be forbidden to get involved in apostolic work.³⁵

When Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz renovated the Congregation of Marians, he gave it a highly apostolic character from the very start. His entire reformatory work was guided by the idea of service for the Church. Since many perfidious people and God's enemies fight against Christ's Church and religion with hatred, trying to eradicate it from our lives, the Marians, animated by the love of God, should all the more undertake any works, make sacrifices and overcome dangers and obstacles in order to best serve the Church. Blessed George was affirmed in such an attitude by the words of Pius X, who called upon the loving sons of Mother Church to become zealous and brave warriors, bringing her consolation at the time when the hostile and wicked sons sadden her.³⁶ The loving sons should keep in mind that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. They should always remember the countless works undertaken by the Apostles for the salvation of souls, in particular, the constant vigils, concerns, prayers, travels, sufferings, efforts and magnificent battles of St. Paul.³⁷

The situation of the Church and the world at that time awakened in Blessed George the spirit of a soldier fighting to defend God's Kingdom on earth. His inspiration in this fight were the words of St. Paul directed to Timothy: "This charge I commit to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophetic utterances which pointed to you, that inspired by them you may wage the good warfare" (1 Tim 1, 18). Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz understood his service to the Church as *bonam militiam*. He was impelled to assume such an attitude by the threats which began to emerge at the beginning of our century. One of them was

far-reaching atheism. It was advocated by powerful parliaments, governments, newspapers, and centers of capital, authority and knowledge. They all proved very shrewd and able in their activity. Blessed George emphasized the fact that while earlier atheism influenced mainly the higher levels of society, now it infected the middle class with liberalism and the lower class with socialism. All of this was happening in the favorable climate of apathy, half-heartedness, ignorance, formalism and departure from the Christian spirit. The houses of God were still standing, but the spirit ceased to grow in them.³⁸

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz compared the sad situation of his contemporary world to the functioning of scales and drew appropriate conclusions from this technical phenomenon: when one side tilts, we must tip the scale by throwing more weight onto the other side. We must counter atheism with the spirit of faith, pride with humility, licentiousness with self-denial and virginity, egoism with sacrifice, godless teaching with the true teaching, stagnation with action and common moral degradation with the sanctity of life. Our model in this “fight” is Christ who crushed everything in this world with the weight of His Spirit. In Him everything soars. And His Apostles became the light of the world. Our weapon in the fight with the evil world is not a threat or some kind of rant, but the superiority of the Spirit and His power. Following St. Augustine, we are to conquer it [the evil world] *vi verborum et caritate*. We must, therefore, throw great teaching, zeal, unselfishness, generosity and patience on the scales. Our weapons are the Holy Mass, confession, homilies, fraternities, retreats, congregations, associations, congresses, reading rooms and newspapers. The spirit of the world should be countered with the Spirit of Christ. The driving mechanism behind these works and behind the entire spiritual life is the idea of a priest who is to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, a steward, a messenger, an intermediary, a column, a sentry, a friend, a man of God and another Christ.³⁹

Zeal for souls is to act as a stimulus to organize people of good will who love God and the Church. It is to stimulate them to work for the

Church, to fight against demoralization and atheism.⁴⁰ Such people should be organized in various circles and associations, and centers of sound piety and intensive religious life should be established. We may not abandon those who wander about in darkness because they may have simply never learned the faith or they may have lost it. They may not be forgotten but should be brought back to Christ.

“Naturally, it is pleasant to work among and for people who are pious, but it is not easy to approach those who are prejudiced against the Church, disapprove of it, hate it and even fight it. Yet, we must also bring the doctrine of Christ to them, and we must try to save their souls. The good laborer does not leave any part of Christ’s vineyard neglected, unsprinkled by his sweat, and if need be, by his blood because he wants Christ’s Kingdom to grow and flourish.”⁴¹

In order to encourage others to work zealously in Christ’s fold, Blessed George recalls the figure of the shepherd in the Gospel who, having left ninety-nine sheep grazing quietly, goes through the mountains, forests and valleys to look for one lost sheep, to put it over his shoulders and bring it back to the fold. He tells us to imitate the good and merciful father who awaits the return of his prodigal son, goes out to meet him, embraces him, leads him to his house, clothes him in new robes and arranges a feast for him.⁴²

The field of apostolic work presented by Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz is vast and wide. We should not narrow the field of our work, we must clear many paths which other brethren can then walk on. “When selecting our work, its place and manner, means and tools, we should act only on the basis of God’s greater glory, the welfare of the Church and the salvation of souls; on the other hand we should consider our members’ talents and qualifications and permit them to go toward their goal along the road on which they would do most for the glory of God; or, if possible, we may direct them to places where there is an urgent lack of workers, where the fields are neglected, where dangers

threaten.”⁴³ The brethren should carry on their apostolate especially in those regions where the Church encounters the greatest difficulties, where it is most oppressed by evil laws, where religious life suffers persecution or is entirely suppressed.⁴⁴

Although Father Renovator sees such vast perspectives for apostolic work, he essentially encourages the brethren to work, first of all, in their native countries and fight for the salvation of the souls of their fellow countrymen. The Catholic countries are plunged in the darkness of idolatry, and it is there that we must set to work. This, however, does not relieve the brethren of concern for the entire Catholic Church and for all mankind. They should be particularly concerned about the regions of Russia and Siberia where so many souls wander astray because they have no one to guide them. Next comes America with its fervent and tumultuous life. Then we must evangelize the pagan nations and carry our apostolate to the members of other faiths.⁴⁵

The zealous shepherd of souls that Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz was, he wanted to make his confreres sensitive to these very important characteristics of the apostolate, namely, to zeal and fervor. It is often the case that the sons of darkness surpass the sons of light in diligence, zeal, fortitude and audacity as they toil at their occupations. Therefore, the sons of God should go especially to those places where they can save the most souls, where atheism, immorality and tepidity abound. The place of their work should be in all kinds of societies and institutions, various countries and states, big cities, universities and workers’ unions. They must strive to find their way and penetrate every place where something can be gained for Christ and the Church.⁴⁶

In Blessed George’s conviction, the apostolic zeal should impel man to use every opportunity to do something good, render a service, help, encourage, lift someone up towards God. The priests will serve the faithful by willingly hearing confessions, proclaiming the Word of God, teaching catechism and giving retreats. The lay brothers, too, can serve the people and attract them to God.⁴⁷

The Sacrament of Penance is to play a particularly important role in

the Church's work in the area of moral formation, and Father George pays special attention to this sacrament. This, in his opinion, is an exceptionally important and, at the same time, delicate sphere.

"While listening to confessions, priests should remember that whatever they whisper into the ears of their penitents may later be broadcast and revealed to the whole world. Confessors must shun the desire to attract penitents to themselves rather than to God. Charity and true mercy should reign in the hearts of confessors and take precedence over all other feelings. Their greatest desire should be to bring men as close as possible to God. Confessors should strive to give penitents not only absolution but also spiritual guidance."⁴⁸

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz was convinced that it is possible to make an effective contribution to the greater good of the Church by administering and directing parishes with great zeal. It seemed to him that even though the religious often administered parishes before, they may not have appreciated their role in the life of the Church. And yet, the body of the Church consists of parish communities which like little cells make up the tissues of the body. Therefore, parishes may become a source of spiritual rebirth. If the religious have heretofore worked outside parishes, leaving them to the diocesan priests, it would be possible now to join them in the work of pastoring the parishes and try to govern them in an exemplary way. The parish church along with its parochial rectory could form a religious house occupied by two or three priests and as many religious brothers, thus creating together a true center of spiritual life. The priests would exercise their sacerdotal ministry, while the brothers would support them working as organists, sacristans, catechists or performing various other tasks.⁴⁹

Blessed George admits that he experienced some concern as to whether the work in parishes could be successfully reconciled with the discipline and duties of religious life. He was not certain whether the Sacred Congregation for the Affairs of the Religious would not be against it. Later he was able to rid himself of these doubts, for the Holy Father not only approved of but even praised this kind of work per-

formed by the religious. It was life itself that imposed this style of work, but now they could all be at peace and follow this path with confidence, serving the bishops wherever possible.⁵⁰

Serving the Church in such an important field requires special talents as well as preparation so that parishes can be efficiently organized and run. The author rejects a notion that education and intellectual capability are necessary only to write books or teach in schools. They are also very useful in parish work which cannot be done well by just anybody. A particular effort should be made not to neglect the rural parishes because a well organized parish life there will bear fruit for the entire area. A well organized parish may become an example, inspiration and support for other parishes. The lay brothers would be of great assistance in this case.⁵¹ This is very important in the situation of a constant shortage of people to perform various works and tasks in the Church. Therefore, nothing should be spared in order to provide proper training and education of the brothers because all the costs and efforts will bear abundant fruit. But, in the training of the brothers the concern should be also to instruct them in matters of faith, to give them a solid foundation in spiritual life, to imbue them with the apostolic spirit which would later enable them to enkindle the faith in the hearts of the people whom they meet.⁵²

Father Renovator sees a special field of work for the brothers full of apostolic zeal in the fight with all kinds of immorality and vice. They could visit poor workers in their shanties and basements. They could bring Christ into many places, some of which a priest cannot reach. They could distribute alms, instruct the poor, give them worthwhile books and encourage them to go to Church. Directed and supervised by priests, such brothers could really be a great help.⁵³

Apostolic zeal inspired the Renovator of the Marianists with the idea to get lay people involved in the evangelization of society as well. Even before the contemporary Church worked out a theology of the laity, long before the decree on the apostolate of lay people, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, was promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, he read the

signs of the approaching times — he tried to get the broad circles of society involved in the work to defend and propagate the faith. In Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's opinion, apostolic work should be popularized in such a way that Catholics would be concerned for and devoted to not only the charitable institutions but also to the defense and the propagation of the faith, the glorification of the Church. "How much good laymen and laywomen could do if they were only instructed and enlightened beforehand in matters of faith, informed about the needs of the Church, enkindled with the fire of holy zeal and then well organized into groups and attracted to the work of spreading the faith! They would be able to bring Christ into places we priests could not even approach."⁵⁴

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz pointed out that there are many other kinds of apostolic work. One of the most effective means of spreading and defending the faith is religious knowledge.

"Perhaps the greatest calamity of our times is intellectual departure from the real truth and the way of faith, and the chaos and confusion in the realm of ideas. To repair this evil, we ourselves must acquire knowledge of the true, Catholic doctrine — know our faith well, fully, comprehensively. This accomplished, we must strive to enlighten the minds of others with this light of faith (...). Just as there are all kinds of charitable institutions with their rosters of numerous, registered members, so also there should be organizations for the propagation, teaching and defense of the faith. And we should try to attract as many people as possible into them (...). Domestics, teachers, laborers, craftsmen and farmers could be organized into societies (...). Whoever loves God and the Church, whoever cherishes God's glory and the prosperity of the Church, let him join the crusade for God and the Church."⁵⁵

This appeal issued by the Renovator of the Marians reads like a summary of his teaching about the Church. One might also say that it reflects the spirit of the Founder. Both authors teach that Christian formation is essentially ecclesial, that it takes place in the Church and is based on the Church. They do not practice dogmatic or fundamental theology. Rather, as they teach about the Church, they point to the practical ele-

ments which we should consider and follow as we live in the community of the Church. They are aware that they touch upon a complex, divine and human reality, which is both a visible hierarchical society as well as a spiritual community.⁵⁶ However, their primary concern is that their spiritual sons would love the Church, contribute to its growth and, if necessary, defend it and totally sacrifice themselves for it.

Notes:

¹ Cf. S. Nagy, *Chrystus w Kosciele*, Wroclaw, 1982, 71.

² *Considera, Patremfamilias esse christum; Vineam, Ecclesiam; vites Vineae, animas fideles; operarios, viros spirituales, tam saecularem, quam Religiosum Clerum; quos iam multi praecesserunt, uti Sancti Apostoli, qui primo vineam hanc fundarunt cum ipsomet Patrefamilias Christo, et excoluerunt: Martyres, quorum sanguine rigata est: Virgines, quarum virginitate lilii, et variegatis virtutum fragrantissimarum floribus exornata nitet. Te quoque ad istam Vineam vocatum agnosce; quod tibi gratulans, pro viribus tuis quibuscunque in animo, et corpore polles in ea Charitatis operibus incumbere.*" IC f. 23 v.

³ *Ibid.*, 24 r-v.

⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 59 v, n.

⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 60 r.

⁶ "Quia ego natus, et aeducatus in Fide Catholica Romana, in eadem morior, credendo quidquid Sancta mater Ecclesia credit, et ad credendum praecipit, et credendum (atque hoc per fidei meritum) deinceps praecipiet; Cui si quando aliquid inconsiderate cogitavi, vel dixi, vec scripsi contrarium, revoco, imo incogitatum, indictum, non scriptum, esse volo." Tes. I in: Pos., 487.

⁷ Tes. II in: Pos., 493.

⁸ "Profiteor me credere, quidquid Sancta romana ecclesia credit, atque deinceps ad credendum praecipiet, maxime vero Sanctissimam Dei Genitricem Mariam absque macula Originali

esse conceptam profiteor, eiusque honorem etiam cum dispendio vitae polliceor a me propagatum ac defensum iri.”

Oblatio, in: Pos., 214.

⁹ DD 24.

¹⁰Ibid., Cf. Listy polskie, vol. I, Warsaw, 1987, 126; cf. A. Szostek, Wokół godności, prawdy i miłości. Rozważania etyczne, Lublin, 1995, 369 n.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 41.

¹³ “Tessera Congregationis sit: Pro Christo et Ecclesia.” CM 784; Ibid., 167; IM I, 1.

¹⁴ DD 22.

¹⁵ Cf. W. Granat, Dogmatyka Katolicka. Synteza, Lublin, 1967, 276; cf. R. Guardini, Kościół Pana, translated by K. Wierszyłowski, Warsaw 1988, 127; cf. Encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ promulgated by Pope Pius XII — June 29, 1943. The theologians who contributed to its promulgation were — Emil Mersch and Sebastian Tromp. See: T. Pulcyn, Powracaj_cie pytania, WAW, 1988.

¹⁶ IC f. 50r; cf. C. Bartnik, Kościół Jezusa Chrystusa, Wrocław, 1982, 363 n.

¹⁷ “Considera omnem spiritum esse mendacem qui non mittitur a Christo. Talis fuit in ore prophetarum Regis Samariae, talis in modernorum linguis haereticorum: qui novas doctrinas serunt, dogmataque iam inde ab ipsis initijs Christi in Ecclesia usurpata rejiciunt, falsitatis magistri: horum Spiritus, est mendacij spiritus, non a Christo ipsa Veritate missus, sed a Patre mendacij cacodaemone instillatur.” Ibid., f. 54v.

¹⁸ “Promitto praeterea Sanctissimo Jesu Christi Vicario eiusque delegatae potestati, ac omnibus meis mediatis et immediatis Superioribus obedientiam sano modo intellectam... Profiteor me credere, quidquid Sancta romana Ecclesia credit, atque deinceps ad credendum praecipiet.” Oblatio, in: Pos., 214.

- ¹⁹ “Praecepta DEI et evangelica consilia, Ecclesiae S. Romanae Catholicae leges, instituta, sancita, ritus, consuetudines, dogmata... ex amore DEI servantur. Sic enim caelestis Praeceptor intonat: Si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit (Jn 14,23). Quod non solum de sancta eius doctrina, et sacris literis, sed pariter de S. eius Ecclesiae, quam Ipse per Spiritum Sanctum erudit, et gubernat, mandatis ac documentis, maiorumque placitis ab ea defluentibus, aut confirmatis intelligendum est.” NV, ch. II, no. 2, in: Pos. 465.
- ²⁰ “Summorum Pontificum decreta praescripto tempore omnino legantur ad mensa: nec putent Superiores sibi fas esse ea interpretari, sed cum omni possibilitate servantur, et paenae in iis contentae in transgressores extendantur.” Ibid., ch. VI, no. 6, in: Pos. 475.
- ²¹ Zalecenia dla braci Marianow, [1701], in: Pos. 502.
- ²² Tes. II in: pos. 495.
- ²³ “Multis utilius est, ait quidam, ut non penitus tentationibus careant, sed saepius impugnentur, (et quandoque cadant) ne nimirum securi sint, ne forte in superbiam eleventur.” IC f. 122v.
- ²⁴ “Quorum tamen curae erit, ut continuo sit aliquis in recollectione, et ibi ferventer pro Ecclesia Romana catholica... Divinam Bonitatem depreetur.” NV, ch. V, no. 5, in: Pos. 472.
- ²⁵ “Horas Canonicas in communi potius, quam privatim recitent, lectioni Sacrae, et Theologiae moralis insistant, orationi sine intermissione vacent; ut vitae probitate, et pietatis exercitiis non solum Congregationem illustrent, fulciant, promoveant, sed toti sanctae Ecclesiae catholicae sint saltem spirituali adiumento.” Ibid., ch. VIII, no. 2, in: Pos. 480.
- ²⁶ “Ecclesiam Catholicam, quae est regnum Dei in terris et sponsa Christi, omni veneratione, amore ac devotione prosequantur, eius principiis ac spiritu dirigantur, eius Hierarchiae fideliter adhaereant, eius votis et desideriis obsecundent eique pro

viribus omni conatu ac ratione inserviant, fortiter superando omnia obstacula et pericula neque dubitando, postulante id Ecclesiae necessitate vel bono, ardua et adversa aggredi atque se ipsos prorsus impendere et sacrificare.” CM 5.

²⁷ “Sicut tota Congregatio ita singula eius membra in omnibus, quae susci[antur, operibus unice intendant maiorem Dei gloriam procurandam atque suam proximorumque salutem assequendam cum Ecclesia Catholica, in Ecclesia et per Ecclesiam. Hinc continuo cum Sancta Sede Apostolica et Ordinariis loci, cum Hierarchia scilicet catholica in artissimo nexu permaneant, se ut humiles ministros Hierarchiae Catholicae considerarent, eique in omnibus validum ad normam Constitutionum pro viribus ferre auxilium studeant praesertim in iis, quae humiliora, magis ardua et periculosa, ex altera parte Ecclesiae et animis magis proficua sunt.” IM I, 22.

²⁸ “Suam voluntatem conentur omnino conformare voluntati divinae, cui se submittant, quam faciant et adimpleant; praecepta Dei et Ecclesiae necnon proprias constitutiones fideliter servando, consilia evangelica generose adimpleando, divinis gratiis fideliter cooperando, Sancti Spiritus ductum attente, discrete ac dociliter sequendo, adversa superando et tolerando atque suam crucem praesertim quotidianam patienter, fortiter et alacriter cum Christo ferendo.” CM 174.

²⁹ DD 92.

³⁰ Ibid., 97.

³¹ “Sodales frequenter orent pro S. Matre Ecclesia et Summo Pontifice, pro peccatorum, acatholicorum et infidelium conversione, pro Ordinario loci et universo clero, pro propriis Superioribus, confratribus, alumniis, universa Congregatione eiusque benefactoribus, atque saepe suas consuetas preces, mortificationes aliaque bona opera eadem intentione Deo offerant.” CM 410.

³² Cf. W. Granat, *Dogmatyka Katolicka*, Lublin, 1967, 298; cf. J.

Bagrowicz, Uwarunkowania skuteczności katechezy. Studium pastoralno-katechetyczne w oparciu o dorobek Josepha Colomb, Włocławek, 1993, 67.

- ³³ “O quam egregii Christi cooperatores, qui solo amoris eius intuitu necessaria ad salutem, ad vitam, Christiano more ducendam, ad vitia devitanda, virtutes amplectendas, sincere ac diliguntur pueris praesertim, rudibus aut barbaris, aut errantibus, proponunt. Nullum est hoc praestabilius pietatis opus, nullum beatius... Mihi quoque eius (i.e. Jesu Christi) Majestas impertiri gratiam dignetur, ne quid in hac parte negligam.” TDM 190 n.
- ³⁴ “Caeterum quamvis haec Congregatio in exposito statu Eremitarum sit erecta, non tamen ita solitudine inhaeret, ut non meritorium sibi quandoque ducat, proximorum etiam spiritualibus obsequiis, quantum fas est, absque praeiudicio alieno, occupari.” NV Praefatio Informatoria, 3, in: Pos. 461 n.
- ³⁵ “Quanquam prohibebuntur, qui fuerint eiusmodi talentis dotati, Parochos in laboribus Ecclesiasticis humiliter adiuuare; si quando praeuia facultate Ordinariorum et Superiorum ab illis fuerint advocati: cum non rigore adeo contemplativa vita vobis conveniat, etsi in statu Eremitarum fundati sitis.” Ibid., ch. I, no. 3, in: Pos. 463.
- ³⁶ “Ubi Ecclesiae matri filii perduelles et impii hostes afflictionis et moeroris causam dant, non desint filii amantes et studiosi, strenui et pleni fortitudine bellatores, qui ei consolationem pro viribus afferant et reparationem” (S. Pius X); cf. E. Ozoroski, Kosciol, Wrocław, 184, 172.
- ³⁷ IM I, 15; cf. Ibid., 19.
- ³⁸ Conspectus piae exhortationis, MP, vol. II, 287 n.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. J. Pryszmont, Struktury społeczne a spaczne postawy moralne, in: A. Marcol, editor, Korupcja. Problem społeczno-moralny, Opole, 1992, 71.
- ⁴¹ DD 45.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 50.

⁴⁴ IM I, 18.

⁴⁵ “Ad proximorum saluti incumbendum sodales ordinarie ad eas destinabuntur nationes, ad quas ipsi pertinent; attamen, Ecclesiae vel Congregationis bono id exigente, paratos se quoque reddant, divina gratia adiuvante, ad Superiorum mandatum, propter Deum et animarum salutem etiam diversa loca peragrarare et in quavis mundi regione degere.” CM 7; cf. DD 51.

⁴⁶ DD 20.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 47.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 99.

⁵¹ Ibid., 91.

⁵² Ibid., 89.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 73.

⁵⁶ Cf. W. Granat, Kosciol, in: *Katolicyzm A-Z*, Z. Pawlak, editor, Poznan, 1989, 213.

CHAPTER FIVE

MARIAN CHARACTER

Before Jesus Christ came into the world and, through His saving sacrifice and the Church He established, gave humankind the opportunity to return to moral order, He had chosen some helpmates to carry out this work. The first and the most exceptional place among them belongs to the Blessed Virgin Mary who, in God's eternal plans, had been chosen to be the Mother of God. The fact of her being the Mother of God lies at the foundation of all her privileges and the special veneration which she receives in the Church.¹ It is this kind of Marian theology that the two authors uphold, and it is in the Blessed Mother that they see a source of indispensable assistance in our Christian life, especially on our path to holiness and thus in the formation of a Christian moral attitude.

There is one privilege among Mary's many privileges on which both the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians place particular emphasis. It is the privilege of her Immaculate Conception and it is to this truth that they devote the most attention in their teachings on the Blessed Mother. They bring her person closer to the reader through other mysteries of her life — known from the Gospel. The fruit of such contemplation is a desire to fill both the members of the congregation and all the faithful with the spirit of Mary. The consequence of such an attitude is a call to imitate the Heavenly Mother addressed to all who venerate her.

1. Mary in the Mystery of the Immaculate Conception

The truth about the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary was always very precious to Father Papczynski who begins his meditation on the mysteries of Mary by expressing his faith in this truth.

Although this truth was not considered a dogma of faith at that time, he treated it as if it had already been formulated. When, in his *Oblatio*, he confessed his faith in everything that the Holy Roman Catholic Church believes and instructs us to believe, he stated that the truth about the Immaculate Conception, thus far present in the ordinary teaching of the Church, will be among the truths to be solemnly promulgated in the future.²

The privilege of the Immaculate Conception takes our thoughts back to the origins of humankind. The Revelation says that the first people created by God were free from evil and carried His image in themselves. They were ideal and absolutely perfect beings. Later original sin hurt their humanity and blurred God's image in their souls. Ever since that moment human beings had been wandering the earth carrying the sad burden of the original fault until the time when the new Star for humankind — the Immaculate Mother of the Savior — appeared; an ideal being, free from sin, endowed with the fullness of humanity “after the image of its creator” (Col 3, 10) and “conformed to the image of His son” (Rom 8, 29). The image of God has never been darkened in her because the “old man,” the man of sin, has never inhabited her. Who else could have repeated, with greater joy than she did, after St. Paul: “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness” (2 Cor 3, 18). The expression “beholding the glory of the Lord” is probably the best expression of the truth about her Immaculate Conception. She becomes filled and radiant with this glory. It is the glory of Jesus Christ Himself whose Mother she is. It was her very person that so delighted Father Stanislaus Papczynski who always presented her as an ideal and a model to be imitated by all of us.

The truth about the Immaculate Conception as presented in his writings has a strong foundation in the Bible. In the liturgy, Mary by accommodation speaks of herself: “I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon” (Sir 24, 13). Father Papczynski follows this analogy and says that the Blessed Virgin Mary rightly compared herself to a cedar because: “Just as the cedar is the most precious among other trees, so also is the Blessed

Virgin most precious among all other creatures. Moreover, you do know how highly king Solomon, the richest and the wisest man of all people, valued the cedar trees which he decided to use to adorn the interior of the temple he built, the first and the most famous on earth. Therefore, why shouldn't Mary be called a cedar if she herself is a temple of God?"³

In Father Papczynski's vision, Mary by accomodation also compares herself to a terebinth (i.e. a tree similar in look to an oak): "Like a terebinth I spread out my branches, and my branches are glorious and graceful" (Sir 24, 16). Man crushed by the burden of his sins and oppressed by the anguish of his troubles can approach the Blessed Virgin without hesitation. She spreads her hands like a terebinth spreads its branches, so that anyone can hasten to her with trust and hope that she will obtain for him any kind of grace from God. One cannot even imagine the graces that she can obtain from her Son on this particular day when we remember the exceptional privilege granted to her, the privilege which separated her from the lot common to all other people as one conceived without the stain of original sin, adorned with infinite gifts and exulted above all creatures.⁴ Therefore, she can say after the Eternal Wisdom: "The remembrance of me is sweeter than honey" (Sir 24, 20). The Holy Church professes this truth calling the Most Holy Virgin not only pious and gracious but also sweet. "O, you are truly sweet, Virgin Mary! For has there ever been anyone who, filled with bitterness, called upon you, the Sweetest One, and left without being comforted? Has there ever been anyone who, heartbroken and filled with grief, approached you and was not immediately strengthened? Has there been anyone who, tormented by vexing temptations, did not experience the sweetness of your heart? You comfort, strengthen, support, and uplift all those who are oppressed, crying, tempted, and depressed. You are sweet to all, gracious to all. I wish I could express how sweet you are as well as I understand that you are sweet! For even though the entire Christian world experiences and tastes your sweetness, it is not able to express it."⁵

This meditation expresses Father Stanislaus's conviction that the Most Holy Virgin is like this because she was conceived without the

stain of original sin. The Blessed Virgin “came forth from the mouth of the Most High” (Sir 24, 3). God had promised her to our first parents when He announced that the sin which was committed by one woman will be eradicated by another, better woman. For He did say to the serpent: “I will put enmity between you and the woman. ... She shall bruise your head.” From the moment when God’s command in the Garden of Eden was disobeyed, mortal man became the friend of the serpent of hell and the enemy of God. Only the Blessed Virgin was the devils’s enemy from the first moment of her life because she was conceived without the stain of original sin. Therefore, she crushed the serpent’s head both by her own conception and when she gave birth to the Savior of the world.⁶

Jesus could come into this world because the perfect dwelling in which He was to remain for nine months had already been prepared. Mary was this very sanctuary which was later sanctified even more by the presence of the Son of God. “Today the most precious work of the right hand of the Most High filled the heaven, the abyss and the people awaiting the Messiah with admiration and joy. O my soul! I do not know who you will turn to with your joy — to the future Mother of God, born today? To the future Savior of the world, still to come? (...). Joining the angels, the cradle, and the newly born Virgin, turn [O my soul] your grateful congratulations to her and cry out with these words: I salute you, O Morning Star, the brightest harbinger of the eternal day! I salute you, the brightest Moon, which illuminates the great night. I salute you, O Mary! The greatest ornament of heaven and earth, who are to give birth to the true Savior.”⁷

Father Papczynski points to a profound connection that exists between the Immaculate Conception and the Divine Motherhood. In his opinion, the fact that Mary was so richly endowed with graces and natural attributes, with which she surpasses all other creatures, proves that she was being prepared to become the Mother of God. She was created at the very beginning, many ages ago, according to the witness of the Holy Spirit (cf. Prov. 8, 23), and this is why we may call her God’s Only Daughter, although a daughter not by flesh, blood or birth but by the fact

that He had adopted her.⁸

The truth about Mary's Divine Motherhood is for the Venerable Servant of God the most important evidence of the Immaculate Conception. Yet, he seeks other arguments to justify this privilege. He made an attempt to justify the Immaculate Conception *ex consequentibus*, i.e., from the lack of consequences of original sin in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which proves that she was never, not even for a moment, stained by it and thus, she was immaculately conceived. Mary was conceived without original sin because even her thoughts were free from evil; not even one of them was stained by a desire to sin. She crushed the head of the serpent with her foot and gave birth to her Son without any pain. Her body was not affected by decay but was glorified in heaven. All of this happened because Mary was free from original sin and no one should doubt this truth.⁹

In order to show the greatness of the privilege of the Immaculate Conception as fully as possible and to honor the Blessed Mother who was endowed with it, Father Papczynski assumed the role of a theologian as well as that of a poet and orator who proclaims Mary's triumph. An opportunity to do so presented itself upon the publication of a book by D. Kochanowski entitled *Novus Asserendae Immaculatae Conceptionis Deiparae Virginis Modus* in 1669. Since, in Father Papczynski's opinion, the book contained a new, convincing argument in support of the truth about the Immaculate Conception, he took the opportunity to have his lofty hymn entitled "Triumphus" included in the book. In this piece, he proclaims the triumph of the Immaculate Virgin who crushes the head of the writhing serpent with her foot. The serpent managed to poison our first parents with its venom but was unable to stain the Great Mother of God ever Virgin. All who are born from Adam are born as sons of anger, but the sin which stained all mankind is far from the Virgin of Grace. She was conceived contrary to the order of nature so that she herself might conceive the Son of God.¹⁰

This is the ideal which the Founder of the Marians puts before anyone who undertakes the labor of forming a perfect man, both in himself

and in others, after the example of the Immaculate Mother of God.

In his Diary Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz describes his experience and attitude towards the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was an almost mystical experience as he chose the following words to express it:

“I thank you, O Lord, for having granted me extraordinary feelings of love toward the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. In the past I found this prayer difficult. But now how sweet it is to fall at her feet and immerse myself in prayers. Pervaded by the sweetest of sweet sensations, my soul swoons, as it were, and my body is overwhelmed by wondrous, incomprehensible, inexpressible tremors.”¹¹

In Blessed George’s teaching on the Blessed Mother, there is no broader justification of the privilege of the Immaculate Conception such as we find in the writings of the Venerable Servant of God, Stanislaus, even though this truth was very close to his heart, too. His contemplation of the mystery of Mary encompassed her entire life. He described her as the inimitable ideal that we should yet strive to imitate.

2. Mary in the Mysteries of Her Life

Father Papczynski continues his meditations upon the life of Mary and its meaning for moral formation by referring to and pondering various events from the Gospel. In the mystery of the annunciation, he emphasizes the great honor that was bestowed on Mary. “The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary” (Lk 1, 26-27). The great leader of the angelic hosts himself was sent with a solemn mission to the Untarnished Virgin because God’s great plans connected with the mystery of the

Incarnation of the Word were involved and because it was necessary to emphasize Mary's eminence. "For just as the kings of this world choose people who are extraordinary because of their name or personal value, people who enjoy high esteem in the state, and send them as envoys to other eminent people, similarly, the greatness of God's majesty and that of the most eminent of all mortals, the Blessed Virgin, required that the highest of the Archangels be sent to her."¹²

Mary "was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be" (Lk 1, 29). There were two reasons for her uneasiness. First, Mary feared that what she saw and heard was simply an illusion. Secondly, she was troubled because the words of reverence which she heard from the heavenly messenger did not correspond to her own opinion about herself. She did not want to listen to them but, at the same time, she wanted to be totally submissive to God. She did not accept the greeting of the angel credulously because she wanted to discern whether it was a message from heaven or merely a temptation and delusion. Mary knew that the angel of darkness often assumes the look of the angel of the light, therefore she realized that she should not believe this message without pondering it first, so that she would not make a hasty decision in such an important matter.¹³ But, when she became convinced that this was indeed a message from heaven, she cried out: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1, 38). In these words, she gave an example of submissiveness and deepest humility. "The angel greets her as the Mother of God, and she professes that she is His handmaid and that she would even want to become the servant of His Mother. She is called 'full of grace' but pronounces herself a deeply contemptible creature. She is pronounced to be the Temple of the Holy Spirit, but she places herself below everyone. And even though each one of us may call himself the son of God, at least due to the fact that we were all created by God, this Most Humble Virgin states that she is merely the handmaid of the Lord (...). From now on how can you, then, sustain all the proud and conceited thoughts in your heart, when you have heard that the most Noble of

Virgins, indeed, the Most Perfect of all creatures, thinks so very humbly of herself?"¹⁴

The Archangel infused the Most Holy Virgin with courage and calmed her fears, assuring her that she should not be afraid of any trick or deceit in this matter (cf. Lk 1, 30), just as if, at the same time, he wanted to tell all those who are in the state of sanctifying grace not to be afraid even of hell itself.¹⁵

When the angels's promise: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son" (Lk 1, 31), was fulfilled in Mary's life, this Most Holy Virgin, enriched with the highest gifts and privileges, acquired even greater holiness after she had conceived the Son of God. Just as fruits are the most perfect ornament for trees, so also Mary's Most Holy Fruit endowed her with unparalleled beauty, splendor and holiness.¹⁶ The dignity of her motherhood comes from the dignity of her Son, and He is the Lord of the Angels and the King of the universe. As Mother of the Son of God, Mary is the Divine Bride, the Lady of the Angels and the Queen of all creatures. It is from her Divine motherhood that all honors, graces and privileges come.¹⁷

After she received the joyful news that the Son of the Most High had descended into her womb, Mary went to see Elizabeth: "In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth" (Lk 1, 39-40). She wanted to assist the one who was less worthy than herself and to serve her in the spirit of love. Although she walked laden with God's burden, she did not feel any fatigue. By leaving the valleys and taking a journey into the mountains, Mary teaches us to choose what is higher and more perfect, by her haste she encourages us to use our time properly and fill it with worthwhile work.¹⁸

"When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb" (Lk 1, 41). John the Baptist stirred with joy feeling the presence of Christ enclosed in Mary's womb. He has not yet seen the light of the sun, but he felt the closeness of the Sun of Justice and rejoiced in it. The closeness of God always evokes joy. This joy was shared by John's

mother when “Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit” (Lk 1, 41) because joy is the fruit and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth cannot contain this joy in herself and filled with the Holy Spirit cries out to Mary: “Blessed are you among women” (Lk 1, 42). She, too, gives us an example of humility for even though she had been filled with the Holy Spirit, she did not swagger above Mary: the blessed one among women. Such an attitude is appropriate for a heart dedicated to God; it recognizes others and forgets itself.¹⁹

In his further reflections upon Mary’s life, the author addresses the peculiar matter of her virginity and motherhood. He recalls the witness of the Evangelist: “When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 1, 18). Father Stanislaus advises his readers not to scrutinize but rather to admire how profound this mystery of unity between virginity and motherhood is. He encourages us to ponder it because this grace was given for the salvation of all people. The Virgin remains intact and yet, she is a mother. She has a spouse and yet, she is a virgin. Both spouses carry the lily of virginity even as they both adore their Son. It is a wondrous and glorious mystery. The Virgin never knew her husband, yet she carries in her womb the one who is both God and Man — God eternally begotten of the Father, without a mother, the Man fashioned within the Mother by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is no other mystery that should be more venerated, admired and wondered at.²⁰

There was, however, a difficult moment in this wonderful union between Mary and Joseph, the moment when Joseph “resolved to divorce her quietly” (Mt 1, 19). Even the saints may be distrustful of other saints when some outward cause exists. Who is more holy than Joseph and more pure than the Most Holy Virgin? And yet, Joseph wanted to leave her. He was a saint, therefore, he wanted to do it wisely. He did not want to disgrace her, he wanted to leave secretly in order to preserve her good name. There was something he did not understand in this whole situation, but he did not want to act against his conscience or to tarnish Mary’s good name. By being so righteous he earned an explana-

tion of this incomprehensible mystery, an explanation that came from God Himself: "An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream ..." (Mt 1, 20). God's goodness usually makes the truth known to those who have doubts but consider them prudently and are slow to suspect.²¹

As he studies Mary's further life, Father Papczynski draws conclusions from subsequent events, conclusions that are important and pertinent to the matter of spiritual formation. At virtually every opportunity he finds concrete instructions in these events. In the scene where Jesus is presented in the temple, Father Papczynski sees an example of dutiful obedience. Jesus the Child and His Mother comply with the requirements of the Mosaic law even though they were exempt from it by the power of a special privilege. "For you must know that there is no entrance, no ladder to heaven, to the land of eternal life, other than [the ladder of] humility."²²

But the joy of the presentation is also accompanied by the pain foretold by an old man inspired by the Holy Spirit: "And a sword will pierce through your own soul" (Lk 2, 35). Divine Wisdom can intertwine what is joyful with what is unfavorable. During this joyful ceremony, Divine Wisdom pierced the heart of the Mother of God with the sword of pain. Every joy she experienced was accompanied by sadness, so that her spirit would become stronger and so that she would be able to enjoy even greater glory later in the land of eternal peace.²³ It is precisely this kind of relation between the experience of pain and the experience of glory that Father Papczynski finds in Mary's life. The Most Holy Virgin was called the Queen of Heaven only after her Son had risen from the dead. The messenger from heaven who came to announce her future motherhood did not use this title as he addressed her. There is no doubt that she received the scepter of the heavenly kingdom only after she had experienced the pain during Christ's Passion.²⁴

At Cana in Galilee, the author shows Mary in the role of a mediatrix. She honored the wedding feast with her presence. She showed there how very concerned she is about human poverty and need. She expressed this concern in a very simple statement and, at the same time, a request

addressed to her Son: "They have no wine" (Jn 2, 3). Then she told the servants to do whatever her Son told them (cf. Jn 2, 5).²⁵

Father Papczynski expresses an opinion that Mary takes care of us in just the same way as she took care of her only Son: "I almost understand the essence of the particular benefits bestowed upon us through Mary, but I lack the words to offer these benefits for consideration. Therefore, I will be brief: We have everything through Mary and, after God, it is in her that we live and move and have our being (cf. Acts 17, 28)."²⁶ After God, she is the principle of all grace in us.²⁷ Mary's Son was the one who charged her with the task of distributing graces and mediating between God and His people. He did so from the Cross when, in the person of John, He commended His Church to her care (cf. Jn 19, 26).²⁸ Father Papczynski interprets the words of Jesus directed to Mary: "Woman, behold your son!" and to John: "Behold, your mother!" (Jn 19, 26-27) both in their literal and spiritual sense. First, he congratulates St. John on his good fortune that the Lord, dying on the Cross, entrusted him with the care of His Mother. At the same time, Father Papczynski rejoices in the fact that, in the person of John, the Lord entrusted all people to the Mother of God as her sons.²⁹ From then on this courageous woman was to be the mainstay and the column of the Church, she was to support it with her power and destroy all temptations which threaten it.³⁰

The crucified Jesus entrusted the entire Church to His Mother, He entrusted to her all the people in it, both the good and the bad, the chosen and the rejected.³¹ Therefore, in Father Papczynski's opinion, we may all consider ourselves to have been entrusted to the Most Holy Virgin. He does not claim, however, that Mary's motherhood in relation to people is of a physical nature, it is so only in relation to Jesus. Her motherhood in relation to all people is spiritual in nature because in Mary we are born into the supernatural life.³²

Father Papczynski does not provide a systematic course of Marian theology. In his meditations, he only refers to the various episodes from Mary's life in order to venerate her and give her as an example to imi-

tate. He believes that the Mother of God is a living book written and given by God to the people. They will not find in any other book what they find in Mary, and no one else can give them what is contained in her. It is a book of virtues and all perfection. It contains as many chapters, as many virtues as it describes. We should all join in reading this book and draw from it what is necessary for us.³³

It is this very book, Mary, that was a continual inspiration to Father Papczynski both in formulating his teaching on the necessity and the ways to achieve perfection as well as in the realization of the greatest task of his life, i.e., establishing a religious order in honor of the Immaculate Mother of God.

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's Marian attitude also has a deep theological foundation. As he sought to justify the veneration of the Most Holy Virgin, Blessed George pointed to her Divine Motherhood. After all, every word uttered in veneration of Mary is a confession of faith in the Incarnation. Christ is the object of each worship and each worship, especially in honor of Mary, brings us closer to Him. Mary stands closest to Christ, therefore, whoever gives himself to her, comes closer to Him. She is most like Christ, therefore, whoever imitates her, becomes more like Our Savior. Besides, it was through her that Christ became more like us. He came into this world through Mary, therefore, we can come to Him through Mary. Mary is the most perfect model of holiness, thus our veneration of her, who is like Christ, is the best encouragement to strive after perfection.³⁴

After Christ, Mary is the most perfect model of holiness. But she is also something more. Just as Christ is not only the model but also the source, the originator of holiness and the Divine power that propels us towards what is good, in a similar manner, Mary is the Mother the Divine Grace. Just as the Lord of grace came to this world through Mary, so also does grace come through her. She is the one through whom we receive the graces earned for us by Christ. She is full of grace, she is a

sea of grace, she distributes graces. Christ is the source of grace and Mary is its vessel. The Holy Spirit pours graces flowing from Christ's wounds into this vessel, so that we might draw from it abundantly. Therefore, whoever wants to receive graces from God, should turn to Mary, so that he might receive them through her hands. The entire Church was entrusted to her. We should not be afraid that we might be accused of exaggeration because it is her Divine Motherhood that gives her the privilege to dispense graces. There are three things which God could not have made more perfect: Christ's humanity, the happiness of the blessed ones, and, yes, the dignity of Mary's motherhood which entitles her to mediate in the distribution of graces.³⁵ The fact that these graces are distributed through her mediation is of great importance to one's spiritual formation — through her we can ask for and receive so much. Mary surpasses all creation by her personal holiness and her exultation. She is great not only because she was chosen by God, but also because she earned this greatness by cooperating with God's grace. She was elevated above all people and angels and she stands closest to God's throne both because of God's grace and because of her cooperation with it: she cooperated in the process of redemption and in attaining her own holiness. She responded to the miracle of grace with her personal effort.³⁶ She demonstrated by her entire life to what heights a man, who is faithful to God's plan and cooperates with God, can rise.

The matter of man's cooperation with God is of great importance in spiritual formation. Such an approach to this matter allows Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz to elaborate on it with great conviction.

3. Mary in the Life of the Congregation

Father Papczynski founded the Congregation of Marian Fathers out of love for Mary Immaculate and in order to spread her honor. It was already at the time when the idea of establishing a new religious order began to take shape in Father Papczynski's mind that he offered, leaving nothing to himself, his heart, soul, intellect, memory, will, feelings,

mind, interior and exterior senses and his body “to the Almighty God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” and “to the Mother of God, Immaculate Mary ever Virgin,” so that, in this manner, he might be a servant to the Almighty God and to the Blessed Virgin Mary.³⁷ Later, he passed his special love and devotion to the Blessed Mother onto the congregation which he founded.³⁸

In the rule of the congregation, he ordered that the honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Elect Blessed Virgin Mother³⁹ be spread as much as possible. He emphasized this again in his letter addressed to the Marians in the first monastery which he established.⁴⁰ He often recommended that his confreres nurture steadfast veneration for “the Immaculate Virgin” and often recall what they had vowed to “God and the Most Elect Virgin.” He wanted all of them to find “the sweetest delight in the Most Elect Virgin Mother of God, the Mother of Mercy, the only Hope and Refuge of all sinners.”⁴¹

In his testament, Father Stanislaus strictly forbade his successor to “wickedly destroy the honor of the Most Holy Virgin Mary whose Majesty we, though unworthy, venerate.” This veneration was shown by, among other things, reciting the Office of the Immaculate Conception and the entire rosary.⁴² Daily practice of these exercises in honor of the Blessed Mother was already prescribed and required by the visitation document of the first Marian house, i.e., by the act of approbation for Father Papczynski’s institute.⁴³

As he prepared to leave this world, Father Papczynski fell at the feet of the Most Elect Virgin Mary, Mother of God and, together with the whole Congregation of her Immaculate Conception, entrusted himself to her for all eternity, begging her with tears in his eyes for graciousness, intercession, guidance and protection.⁴⁴ It was his desire that Jesus Christ Himself and Mary Mother of God would be the true and only Guides, Defenders and Protectors of this Congregation of the Immaculate Conception.⁴⁵

The person of Mary, to whom Father Papczynski was bound by what might be described as veneration, delight, fascination and all-encom-

passing love, was for him not only an object of contemplation but also an example to imitate. He makes her a model for himself, for his confreres and for every Christian.

Just like Father Papczynski, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, considered the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God to be the titular patroness of the congregation. Therefore, he left a note in his Constitutions saying that the members of the congregation should show special veneration, filial love and devotion to her as their Queen and Lady, a very powerful Succor and the Most Beloved Mother. They should make their way to Jesus through her, call upon her with earnest pleas, and turn to her with greatest trust in all their needs. They should also imitate her virtues with all their strength. He emphasized that the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is to be the titular feast of the congregation.⁴⁶ In a short paragraph of his Constitutions, the Renovator of the Marians covered their entire Marian character. In words used sparingly but rich in theological content, he expressed everything by which the Marians, inspired by the spirit of the Founder, have lived from the very beginning. The paragraph mentioned here contains lofty titles with which Blessed George describes the patroness of the congregation. It expresses the personal attitude of its members towards Mary. It points to her maternal mediation and gives her as a model to imitate. It would be difficult to point out anything essential that our Renovator did not say in the paragraph under discussion and what should be included in the rule of the “resurrected” congregation of Marians. Honor for the Immaculate Conception should be emphasized already at the beginning of the novitiate: Father Renovator ordered that a medal with the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on one side and the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the other be given to the novices.⁴⁷ He also ordered that a particular devotion to the Mother of God Immaculately Conceived be promoted, along with the devotion to the Most Holy Eucharist and the Sacred Heart of

Jesus.⁴⁸ As he encouraged others to be always concerned about preserving the virtue of chastity amidst temptations and dangers, he saw the greatest help in the devotion to the Immaculate Virgin as well as in ardent prayer, in frequent reception of Holy Communion, in invoking one's Guardian Angel, Saint Joseph and, first of all, Our Savior Jesus Christ Himself.⁴⁹

Blessed George wanted to love the Most Holy Virgin more and more each day, to put ever greater trust in her, and to value her unmatched protection more and more. It was to her powerful protection that he entrusted the congregation. He was convinced that those who bear her name may count on such protection. This is how he prayed to Mary:

“O Most Blessed Virgin, obtain for me from your Son the grace to love you more, to have more and more confidence in you, to cherish your glorious patronage more and more. Take our Congregation under your powerful protection, O our Mother, if not for any other reason, since we are poor spiritual beggars, then at least because of the name which we bear. Grant that our life be pure and unsullied.”⁵⁰

The congregation did experience the protection for which Blessed George prayed in a certain special case when Mary protected it from an agent of the Csar's secret police. When the agent declared his intention to leave the Russian Orthodox faith, accept Catholicism and become a priest, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz prayed to the Most Holy Immaculate Virgin for guidance. On the one hand he was afraid that he might push this man away from the Church if he showed him his distrust, on the other, he feared that he might be letting a wolf into the sheepfold and cause harm to the Church. The Blessed Mother helped to unmask the lies of the would-be candidate and to remove him from the congregation. As the author writes in his Diary⁵¹, this was only one of many examples of Mary's protection and support.

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz believed that devotion to the Blessed Mother was of great importance to the Christian life. In order for us to

understand how great this importance was, let us take a closer look at one of the practices typical of the Marian devotion which he recommended, namely, praying the rosary. This example will help us to demonstrate the tremendous profundity of this prayer which is so often considered to be a manifestation of shallow and superficial religiosity.

The Renovator of the Marians instructs his confreres that they recite a part of the rosary every day and meditate piously upon the appropriate mysteries.⁵² In the month of October special rosary devotions are to be celebrated in all houses of the congregation.⁵³ Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz also instructs the Marians to pray the rosary for the deceased.⁵⁴ He calls the rosary one of the main pious practices which the Church uses to honor Mary. In his opinion, it is a wonderful and profound devotion which is also amazingly simple and available to anyone. The rosary is recited in many different languages, throughout the entire Church; it is appropriate for all times and countries, all states and conditions of life. Sanctified by the ages and praised by the saints, recommended by popes and enriched with many indulgences, it has supported the Church in times of greatest need. In his conviction, it is “the bravest and an always victorious prayer.”⁵⁵

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz emphasizes what is most essential in praying the rosary. As we recite each decade of the rosary, we should meditate upon its appropriate mysteries. The form of this meditation is free and will depend on individual ability and spiritual preparation. What matters here is the right attitude, simplicity, freedom of spirit and concentration of which man’s heart and mind are capable as they turn to the mystery.⁵⁶

In response to the potential objections against the rosary, charging that this prayer is wearisome because it consists in repeating the same words over and over, the author asks: Why does a painter look at the same beautiful view of the vast sea or the starry sky again and again and always with pleasure? Why does one stand in front of a masterpiece painting and look at it for hours? Why do we keep listening to the same piece of music? During the rosary, too, the soul sings and creates spiri-

tual variations on the subject upon which we meditate. Common recitation of the rosary is important because it brings inner peace and strengthens the spirit of faith. "Love has only one word, it is expressed in one word and as we repeat it frequently we always say it in a different way. Therefore, a mother never tires of her child climbing onto her lap chirping the same words over and over again, repeating the same caresses and kisses. True pain, too, has one word, one complaint in which it is expressed and one cry in which it seeks relief." Jesus repeated the same request three times in the Garden of Olives: "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Mt 26, 39).⁵⁷

One who has faith and a good heart, will continue to repeat the same words and actions, and will not become weary as he repeats the same things each day. Repeating God's thoughts and words not only does not make man's soul weary, but enriches it with new words and evokes different feelings each time round. Every Our Father and Hail Mary are like pieces of the heavenly bread which strengthens us. Every decade of the rosary combined with meditation on a particular mystery is like the recurring seasons where each sunrise is a greeting with which God welcomes His creation. The days following one after another, similar to one another, bringing us the changes of the seasons in their sequential regularity, are like the image of the rosary prayers which, albeit the same, bring to our minds the mysteries in their sequential order, the mysteries which are like the seasons in the lives of Jesus and Mary.⁵⁸

In Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's opinion, the rosary is a prayer adorned with the flowers of the fifteen mysteries, it is a great image of the work of Redemption. Jesus the God-Man and Mary are present in each mystery. Each mystery gives us an example of virtues in different conditions and under different circumstances and a certainty that God's grace will not fail us. A person who prays the rosary in this spirit, feeding his heart and mind with the thoughts contained in this prayer, turns his own life into a rosary and a crown of virtues. For this, God will reward him with a crown which Jesus and Mary will put on his head.⁵⁹

The rosary is the souls's way to God because it leads to God through Jesus and Mary according to the words: "Your anointing oils are fragrant ... Draw me after you, let us make haste" (Song 1, 3-4). But the Mother of God wants only such prayers and greetings which come from a pure heart and a soul that is not stained by sin. She only accepts prayers from a sinner if he does penance, regrets his sins and promises to reform his ways. The sinners may seek her protection but she does not protect sin, only the man who regrets his sins and enters the path of reform.⁶⁰

4. Imitating Mary

Wishing to encourage those who venerate Mary to imitate her in their lives, the Founder of the Marians extolled all the virtues of the Most Holy Virgin. She, "planted in the house of God," guided by the Holy Spirit, appears to be the vessel of all virtues "like a fruitful olive tree."⁶¹ The author supposes that she nurtured these virtues ever since the early years in the Jerusalem temple, and though the revealed sources are silent on this subject, it is easy to picture her as a girl free from the temptations of the young age, from the stubbornness and resistance of a child pursuing trifle matters, a girl full of dignity and God's inspiration.⁶² Father Stanislaus imagines her also as a person not so much given to the kind of play that was typical of the children of her age, but rather to ardent prayer and worthwhile studies. It was already at that time that her entire conduct was characterized by wisdom, piety and sanctity.⁶³

The Most Holy Virgin was filled with God, separated from the world, free from imperfections and dedicated to the practice of virtues. "O maiden full of God! Subject to this world only in minimum, free from imperfections, filled with virtues to such a degree that St. Ambrose, admiring them, cries out as if in ecstasy:

"How many kinds of virtues shine forth in one Virgin. The mystery of modesty, the banner of faith, compliance with devotion, Virgin inside a house, Attendant at ministry, Mother in the Temple."⁶⁴

Mary always mortified herself, she was always busy with something and devoted to her duties. “So, how will I describe the meagerness of her nourishment compared with the abundance of duties? (...) With regard to the duties — never a moment without something to do; regarding nourishment — the entire day spent in fasting. Even when she felt the need for nourishment, the food was usually simple, sufficient to keep death at bay, not to give pleasure. She desired sleep only when it was necessary, and when the body was resting, the spirit kept vigil; the spirit which, during our sleep, often repeats things read, fulfills tasks assigned or announces future works.”⁶⁵

And what could be said about Mary’s other virtues? — asks Father Papczynski with a certain pathos. Mary was a virgin not only in her body but also in her thoughts because she did not in the least oppose the vow of chastity. She did not put her hope in riches but in poverty, she was always occupied with some kind of work. She was humble of heart, full of dignity in her words, discerning and moderate in speech, good and understanding for everyone, full of respect for the elderly. She was never jealous of anybody or anything and never proud. She was also perfect in her attitude and gestures because everything in her flowed from the most noble heart and was an expression of the highest perfection.⁶⁶ This is what Mary had to be like as she was designated to be the Mother of God. Therefore, no one should be surprised that God Himself adorned her with so many virtues that it is difficult to enumerate them all and no other mortal being is able to possess all of them.⁶⁷

Father Papczynski encourages us in particular to imitate Mary’s fortitude which manifested itself in various adversities: for example when Jesus was born in poverty and cold, when the Holy Family had to flee to Egypt to escape Herod’s cruelty, and especially during Christ’s Passion. She watched her Son’s death without any interior breakdown and became an admirable example of great spiritual strength.⁶⁸ “She stood as still as a rock, exposed to all the dangers of the heaviest of tempests; steeped in the waves of immeasurable grief, she did not allow them to beset her; consumed by the highest wave of depression, she did

not allow it to defeat her. For as much as her human heart was in pain, she was also strengthened by her fortitude, the harbinger of future joy at her Son's resurrection."⁶⁹

The author draws our attention to one more moment when he remembers Mary standing at the foot of the Cross and points out what the Sorrowful Mother experienced when her Son's body was pierced with a spear. It was certainly a manifestation of cruelty as Longinus, the centurion, pierced Christ's side after He had already died. This is why a cry of horror escapes Father Stanislaus's lips — who is it that dares to torment a dead person? Even animals, even dogs do not torment another dog if it has already been killed, but leave it in peace. What pain must have pierced the heart of Christ's Mother at that horrible moment? Empathizing with her feelings, Father Papczynski says that at that moment the soldier's spear also pierced her heart and side.⁷⁰

Then a time of great sadness and tears followed when Christ's body was taken down from the Cross, rested in His Mother's arms and was laid to rest in a tomb. "Consider the unspeakable sadness, grief and pain with which the Most Holy Virgin was tormented when she left all her love, all her joy, all of her treasure in the grave. As she was returning home along the same path, she could see the drops of the Most Precious Blood and, undoubtedly she was picking them up. In this, O my soul, try to accompany her. Notice that she constantly meditated upon her Son's suffering and shed many tears of pain. Ask her that she would obtain for you not only a true knowledge and awareness of your sins, but also grief and disgust with them and a prompt resolution to make penance for them, because it is for these sins, too, that her Most Beloved Son suffered so much and she herself shared in this pain."⁷¹

The love that Mary showed to others in so many, and such painful, moments requires a magnanimous response. If she accepted and undertook so much in her life for the salvation of all, each one of us should venerate, honor, love her and imitate her virtues in every possible way. Besides, this is the only way to join her at some point in eternity. Father Stanislaus warns that "those who do not imitate her in their earthly lives,

who do not always serve her with ardent love, will never get to see Mary in the heavenly fortress.”⁷² The imitation of Mary’s virtues is a simple consequence of our contemplation of her person, because her life is like an image, a mirror, in which we see a model of perfection, from where come clear instructions to be honest and examples of what should be corrected and what should be avoided. “The primary thing is the nobility of the teacher which we must ardently learn from. And who is more noble than the Mother of God? Who is more splendid than the one who was chosen by the Light? Who is more pure than the one whose body gave birth without prior corporal relations? This is what Mary was like and her life became a model for all.”⁷³

For Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, Mary is the most perfect model of holiness. The higher and purer the holiness, the more universal, the easier and more approachable model of holiness we have to imitate. It is not possible to imitate the Lord’s saints in everything, but Jesus and Mary are models for all people in every period. We should imitate Jesus as our Brother and Mary as our Mother. Holiness may seem too lofty, too sublime, but when we look at Mary, we see the ordinary, easily perceivable matters in her life. We see examples of ordinary daily virtues and duties. Yet, she surpasses the angels and the saints in everything and is second only to Jesus. There are no miracles or great penances in her life, but we can see from her example that “this one is the greatest who is great in small things.”⁷⁴ Mary always wanted to be the smallest. When she became the Mother of God, she called herself a handmaid. She did not participate in her Son’s triumph, she was not at Mount Tabor, but she did stand at the foot of the Cross.⁷⁵

Everything in Mary’s life can be imitated because everything about it is so simple and attractive. We must love more, do more for God and the salvation of souls. We do not need to do great things, we need great fidelity in small things. It is not important what we do but how we do it, in what spirit; whether we do it out of love for God, with all our hearts

and souls. What truly matters is real virtue rather than famous deeds. What truly matters is not the gifts and talents that we possess or the offices we hold, but how we use the gifts that were given to us. What we admire in Mary is not her knowledge, riches, or a gift of eloquence, but her love of God and fidelity in both her exterior and spiritual life. She obeyed God's law, prayed, accepted and fulfilled any tasks associated with the service of the Lord, took great care to preserve the purity of her soul, united her external and her spiritual life and thus elevated it to pre-eminence. Even though she tried to be the smallest here on earth, she became the greatest in the Kingdom of God.⁷⁶

In order to encourage us to imitate Mary, especially in her ordinary life and the plain day-to-day routine, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz leads us to Nazareth. The house in Nazareth is clean and filled with an air of work. It is poor, but tidy. Jesus is at the center of everything. Mary and Joseph work for Him. On the outside, they are not different than other families, but there is a difference in the way they do everything. Everything takes place in an atmosphere of love, purity and modesty. Mary is occupied with housework, Joseph works in his workshop, and Jesus helps both of them. There are no harsh words there, no quarrels, no slander. There is no idleness, wasting time, or conversations about trifling matters. The house is filled with the spirit of prayer, with the Spirit of God and His matters. We must transport this atmosphere to our religious houses and make each one of them like the house in Nazareth.⁷⁷

As we studied the particular elements of Father Stanislaus's and Father George's teachings on the Mother of God, we could easily see how precious to their hearts the figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary was. Father Papczynski called Mary "the Mother of God," "the Immaculately Conceived One," "the Virgin Most Chosen" and contemplated her in the entire depth of her unique mystery. It was also his desire that we would all imitate her in what was the song of her life, her delights and sacrifices. Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, exhibited great veneration for Mary. He showed ardent love and great honor for her Immaculate Conception. He made Mary a special patroness of the renovated con-

gregation and taught his confreres to imitate her virtues. We can safely say that such Marian attitudes as were presented by the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians in their respective teachings not only point to the best way for proper Christian formation but also prepare us for a joyful entry into the eschatological realm.

Notes:

¹ Cf. W. Granat, *Dogmatyka Katolicka*, Lublin, 1967, 311.

² “Profiteor me credere, quidquid Sancta Romana Ecclesia credit, atque deinceps ad credendum praecipiet, maxime vero Sanctissimam Dei Genitricem Mariam absque macula Originali esse conceptam profiteor, eiusque honorem etiam cum dispendio vitae meae polliceor a me propagatum ac defensum iri.” Oblatio, in: Pos. 214; cf. F. Marin-Sola, *L’évolution homogène du dogme catholique*, Fribourg, 1924, I, 327-328.

³ IC f. 144r.

⁴ “Terebintho se comparat extendenti ramos, et quidem ramos honoris, et gratiae; ut ad eam cum fiducia maxima festines et omnigenam gratiam Dei, et honorem beatitudinis aeternae tibi obtenturam. Quid enim illa non impetret mortalibus a Filio hac praesertim die, qua singulari privilegio a communi omnium mortalium sorte exempta est; qua sine labe originali concepta; qua infinitis charismatibus exornata, cumulata, et penitus super omnes creatures evecta est?” Ibid., 144r-v.

⁵ “Fatetur id Orthodoxa Ecclesia, cum post clementem, piam, etiam dulcem Virginem Sanctissimam compellans appellat. O vere dulcis es, Virgo MARIA! Quis enim plenus amaritudinum ad te unquam confugit, et sine consolatione recessit suavissima? Quis plenus maeroris te accessit, et non illico recreatus est? Quis felle tentationum maceratus, in sinu tuo non sensit dulcedinem? Afflictos, gementes, tentatos, oppressos, tu, consolaris, reficis, adiuvas, elevas. Omnibus suavis, omnibus dulcis es. Utinam sic possim

exprimere quam sis dulcis; uti concipio, quod sis dulcis! Experitur tuam dulcedinem totus Orbis Christianus, gustat, haurit; sed exprimere non potest. O igitur clemens, et pia, et dulcis Virgo! JESUM nobis tui ventris benedictum fructum et hodie reconciliatum, et in mortis hora ostende propitium.” Ibid., f. 144v.

⁶ “Considera Virginem Beatam ex ore altissimi prodixisse, id est oraculo Dei promissam fuisse adhuc primis illis Parentibus nostris; quando culpam, cuius erat mulier auctor, auctore alia sed meliore muliere delendam fore praedixit. Dixit enim serpenti: *Inimicitias ponam inter te, et mulierem; ipsa conteret caput tuum* (Gen 3,15). Ab illo enim tempore, quo divinum in paradiso mandatum fuit perfractum omnes mortales infernalis serpentis amici facti fuere, inimici vero Dei: sola Virgo Beatissima in ortu statim suo inimica esse apparuit diabolo, cum sine primaeva labe fiut concepta. Contrivit ergo caput serpentis et in ortu suo, et tum, cum peperit mundi Salvatorem.” Ibid.

⁷ “Te saluto, Aurora, aeternae diei prodroma lucidissima! Saluto te, Luna candidissima, noctis magnae illuminatrix. Saluto te caeli, et Terrarum maximum Decus, O MARIA! verum Salvatorem paritura.” Ibid., f. 133r.

⁸ “Ipsa vero superat omnes, quod *ab initio et ante secula*, testante Spiritu Sancto, creata sit (Prov 8,22-23)... Solam Dei Filiam Sanctissimam V. Mariam dicere possumus, quamvis absque carne, sine sanguine, non natam ex eo, sed adoptivam.” LD par. 2, in: Pos. 594.

⁹ “Quis Te primaevo, tactam Virgo asserat ausu?

Cui tetigit mentem nulla cupido mali?

Quae stygium gaudes pede contrivisse colubrum,

Amisit vires qua pariente dolor;

Cuius, non mortis vi, sed vi tractus amoris,

Spiritus ex famula sponte migravit humo;

Cuius perpetuo membra incorrupta manebunt,

Iamque dato lucent glorificata Polo;

Quae nulla primi poena ausus tacta fuisti,

Hoc te quis tactam, Virgo fuisse putet?”

PRA P. II, c. X, par. 7, in: Pos. 601.

¹⁰ “Io triumphe! Mariano sub pede

Draconis infesti caput

Gemit: canamus absque labe conditae.

Io triumphe! VIRGINI.

Potuit cerastes stygius inficere suo

Primos Parentes toxico:

Non potuit afflavisce Magnam VIRGINEM,

Dei Parentem VIRGINEM;

Nascuntur omnes, quotquot ex lumbis Adae

Nascuntur, irae filii:

Ex matre nata gratiosi nominis

Est Nata, VIRGO Gratiae.

Quae culpa totum polluit hominum genus,

Abest abest a VIRGINE.

Concepta naturae ordinem contra fuit;

Ut ipsa concepit DEUM.

Posterius ergo quando creditur, prius

Cur non sit aptum creditu?” (...).

Triumphus Sine Originali macula conceptae Magnae Virgini, nova methodo, celeberrime adornatae, 1669, in: D.C. Kochanowski, *Novus Asserendae Immaculatae Conceptionis Deiparae Virginis Modus*, pp. [XVIII-XIX], in: Pos. 602.

¹¹ DD 42.

¹² IC f. 108r.

¹³ Ibid., f. 108r-v.

¹⁴ Ibid., f. 109r; cf. R. Kostecki, *Pelnia laski Maryi*, in: *Gratia Plena. Studia teologiczne o Bogurodzicy*, ed. B. Przybylski, Poznan-Warsaw-Lublin, 1965, 232.

¹⁵ IC f. 109v.

¹⁶ Ibid., f. 109v.

¹⁷ Ibid., f. 134r.

¹⁸ Ibid., f. 123v.

¹⁹ Ibid., f. 123 v, n.

²⁰ “Non est tibi tam profundum mysterium coniunctae Virginitatis cum Maternitate, Maternitatis cum Virginitate, perscrutandum; sed potius in stuporem eundum, tuae gratia salutis haec fuisse. Quid hoc est? Quid est hoc? Virgo manet intemerata; et tamen Mater est: Sponsum habet; Virgo tamen est: Uterque Sponsus Virginitatis incorruptum lilium gerit; tamen inter eos medius filius cernitur, adoratur. O admirabile mysterium! plenum stupore! dignum veneratione! Virgo virum non cognovit, et in utero gestat, Deum simul et hominem, hominem simul et Deum: Deum ante saecula sine matre ex Patre Natum; hominem in tempore sine Patre, in matre Spiritus Sancti opera formatum. Profecto nullum est mysterium, quod magis veneremur, amiremur, stupeamus. Nullum ex Divinis operibus excellentius.” IC f. 106v, n.

²¹ Ibid., f. 107v.

²² Ibid., f. 11r-v.

²³ Ibid., f. 12r-v.

²⁴ “Considera, tunc vere omnipotentiam Christi humanitatem acquisivisse, et universae creaturae obtinuisse dominium, postquam fuerit in crucis exaltata patibulo, et inauditis cruciatibus extincta. Sic etiam Virginem Beatissimam Reginam caeli post Filij resurrectionem appellatam; quae tamen hoc titulo nan fuit a legato caelesti exornata, cum illi castam maternitatem pollicetur, et solum gratiae plenitudinem manifestaret: Nimirum per dolores in Christi Domini passione toleratos caelestis regni sceptrum videtur fuisse consecuta.” Ibid., f. 134v, n.

²⁵ Ibid., f. 15r-16r.

²⁶ “Capio mentem fere singula eius in nos beneficia; sed verba mihi desunt, quibus ea proponam aliis considerata. Unde breviter aio: Omnia habemus per Mariam, et in ea post Deum vivimus, movemur, et sumus.” TDM 159; cf. F. Dziasek, *Wszechposrednictwo Najsw. Maryi Panny*, in: *Gratia Plena. Studia teologiczne o Bogurodzicy*, ed. B. Przybylski, Poznan-Warsaw-Lublin, 1965, 303

n.; cf. T. Urdanoz, *La Mediacion de la Santissima Virgen en la distribucion de las gracias*, La Vida Sobrenatural 5 (1941), 81-89; cf.

²⁷ “Ipsa post Deum (sentit hoc Albertus Magnus in lib. Mar. 1. Gen. N. 12) est principium omnis gratiae in nobis.” TDM 159; cf. S. Matellan, *Actuacion de Maria en la regeneracion de los hijos de Dios*, Eph. Mar. 11 (1961), 281-312.

²⁸ OC III, 1.

²⁹ “Gratulor hanc felicitatem castissimo Joanni, quod ei Dominus noster moriturus in Cruce Virgini Matrem Virginem commendaverit. Sed una vehementer gaudeo: eidem pientissimae Genetrici DEI peccatores quoslibet pro Filiis in Joanne fuisse commendatos.” Ibid.

³⁰ “Eruditus enim Divini verbi paraphrastes Cornelius ita hic in persona Christi Matrem sacratissimam alloquitur: *O Mater! esto deinceps mulier fortis et generosa: quae mei loco sis basis, petra, et columna meae Ecclesiae; ut eam robore tuo fulcias, et omnes contra eam tentationum procellas tua constantia, consilio, oratione, elidas, et dissipēs, non tantum nunc, sed et deinceps omnibus saeculis usque ad finem mundi.*” Ibid.

³¹ “Bono animo estote peccatores. Ecclesiam suam crucifixus Jesus pientissimae suae Matri commendat: illam, dico, Ecclesiam, *in illa*, teste Gregorio, *mali cum bonis, reprobis cum electis admixti sunt.*” Ibid.

³² TDM 159; cf. D. c Biali... D., *Duchowe Macierzynstwo Matki Zbawiciela, in: Gratia Plena. Studia teologiczne o Bogurodzicy*, ed. B. Przybylski, Poznan-Warsaw-Lublin, 1965, 246.

³³ “Hactenus, Anima mea, libris inhaesisti variam doctrinam complectenibus; hodie novum, recentem, invisum librum, sanctissimam Dei Genetricem, librum inquam ab ipso Deo conditum, conscriptum, exornatum, inspice. Quid alicubi possis invenire, quod in MARIA non habeas? Quid eorum, quae MARIA complectitur, quispiam tibi suppeditabit? Liber hic, virtutum, et omnium perfectionum est: in tot capita distinctus, quot virtutibus refertus. O igitur huic volvendo libro te totum applica, flosculosque tuo statui pernecessarios ex hoc

decerpe.” IC f. 140v.

³⁴ *De B. Maria V.*, MP, Vol. II, 231.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 232.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ “Ego Stanislaus a Jesu Maria Papczynski... offero, ac dedico Omnipotenti Deo Patri et filio et Spiritui Sancto, ac Deiparae semper Virginis Mariae, sine macula Originali Conceptae, Cor meum, animam meam, intellectum, memoriam, voluntatem, affectus, mentem totam, animum totum, sensus interiores, et exteriores, et corpus meum, nihil mihi penitus relinquendo, ut sic deinceps sim totus eiusdem Omnipotentis, ac B. V. Mariae Servus.” *Oblatio*, in: Pos. 213 n.

³⁸ Cf. Z. Proczek, *Maryja w zyciu i dzialalnosci marianow w XIX w.*, in: B. Pylak, C. Krakowiak, editors, *Niepokalana. Kult Matki Bozej na ziemiach polskich w XIX wieku*, Lublin, 1988.

³⁹ “Ne tamen otiosi stetis in Vinea Domini cultum Immaculatae Conceptionis Electissimae DEI Matris Virginis pro modulo virium Vestrarum promovebitis.” NV c. I, n. 2, in: Pos. 463.

⁴⁰ *List do marianow w Puszczy Korabiewskiej* [letter to the Marians in the Korabiew Forest], April 19, 1690, in: Pos. 484.

⁴¹ Tes. I in: Pos. 487.

⁴² Tes. II in: Pos. 493.

⁴³ An official record of Bishop S. H. Swiecicki’s visitation of the Korabiew Hermitage, October 24, 1673, in: Pos. 343.

⁴⁴ “Substerno me pedibus Electissimae Virginis Dei Genitricis Mariae cum tota Ejus Immaculatae Conceptionis nostra Congregatiuncula tota aeternitate, implorans clementiam, intercessionem, directionem, protectionem efficacissimam...” Tes. I in: Pos. 488.

⁴⁵ “Congregatiunculam hanc, cuius indignus Praepositus Domino meo Jesu Christo, et electissimae Virgini Genitrici Ejus Mariae, ut veris et solis huius Congregatiunculae Immaculatae Conceptionis Defunctorum Suffragatricis Fundatoribus, Directoribus, Protectoribus, Patronis devotissime in aeternum committo.” Tes. II

in: Pos. 495.

⁴⁶ “Titularis Congregationis Patrona est Immaculate Concepta Beatissima Virgo Maria, Mater Dei; quam tamquam Reginam Auxiliatricem ac Matrem Dilectissimam peculiari veneratione ac filiali amore et devotione prosequantur; per Eam ad lesum eant; Eam supplici prece saepe invocent; ad eam in omnibus suis necessitatibus maxima cum fiducia confugiant; Eius virtutes pro moribus imitentur. Festum titolare Congregationis erit festum Immaculatae Conceptionis Eiusdem Beatae Mariae Virginis.” CM 14; cf. Ibid., 377; cf. IM I, 12.

⁴⁷ CM 53.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 216.

⁵⁰ DD 84.

⁵¹ Ibid., 103.

⁵² “Tertiam Rosarii partem, devote considerando convenientia mysteria, recitent.” CM 242.

⁵³ Ibid., 250.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 416-418.

⁵⁵ *De Rosario B. M. V.*, MP, Vol. I, 294.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 295.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 295 n.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 296.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 296 n.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 297.

⁶¹ “Nec aliter factum esse Virgineus Panegyristes Damascenus, testatus: In domo Dei, inquit, plantata atque per Spiritum saginata, instar olivae frugiferae virtutum omnium domicilium efficitur.” Migne, PG 96, 847: *In Nativitate B. V. Mariae*; cf. LD par. 3, in: Pos. 594 n.

⁶² “Non illa teneritudine aetatis seducta puellares levitates sectabatur, sed in immaturo vultu maturam gravitatem referens, aspectu solo coaetaneas suas ad virtutes stimulabat. Non pertinaci spiritu imple-

ta, Magistrarum voces ac mandata respuebat sed divino affaltu plena vel minimos earum nutus diligentissime observabat, accuratissime exequabatur.” Ibid., 595.

⁶³ “Non propriis iuvenali levitate lusibus unquam sese dedebat, sed vel profunda contemplatione, vel ardenti oratione, vel fructuosa lectione semper occupabatur. Iam denique seu tam sapienter, pie, sancte, divineque in omnibus gerebat, ut etiam Instructricibus suis esset Instructrix.” Ibid.

⁶⁴ “O puellam Deo plenam! mundo minime subiectam, imperfectionibus vacuum, virtutibus refertam adeo, ut has eloquentissimus Ambrosius miratus, quasi raptus extra se clamet: *Quantae in una Virgine species virtutum emicant! Secretum verecundiae, Vexillum fidei, Devotionis obsequium, Virgo intra domum, Comes ad ministerium, Mater ad Templum.*” Migne, PL 16, 164-166: De virginibus, lib. II, c. II; cf. Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ “Itaque nemo miretur illam Dei Matrem destinam fuisse, quae tantis ab ipso deo fuerit virtutibus exornatam, quantas vix quispiam enumerare potest, nullus unquam mortalium potest habere coniunctas.” Ibid., 596.

⁶⁸ “Atque hanc Matris generositatem Nazianzenus ille Sol admirans tantopere laudat: *O virilem animum in corpore muliebri! O admirabile magni animi incrementum!*” Migne, PG 35, 288: Oratio XV *In Machabeorum laudem*; cf. ibid., 598.

⁶⁹ “Stabat immobilis, petra ad omnem gravissimae tempestatis casum exposita, configebatur durissimis aculeis dolorum, non tamen corruerat; obruebatur immensi maeroris fluctibus, non tamen immersa fuit; conficiebatur maxima vi tristitiae, non tamen deficiebat. Nam quidquid natura doloris sentiebat, hoc virtus levabat, praesaga futuri gaudii ex Filii resurrectione promanaturi.” Ibid.

⁷⁰ “Inauditum illud centurionis Longini facinus expende, qui cum accessisset ad Crucem reliquis cum militibus, CHRISTUM que

Dominum iam extinctum animadvertisset, ab omnibus saeculis inaudita crudelitate, nec unquam cogitata, lanceam vibrans in latere Salvatoris demortui eam magno impetu, ac furore demersit. O deus! O caelum! O universae res creatae obstupescite super hoc! Quis inquam in mortuum desaevijt? Ipsa ferae, ipsi canes in iam lacertum canem non amplius saeviunt: sed eo extincto abscedunt. O immensam CHRISTI Domini humilitatem, quae se his omnibus postposuit, et post mortem etiam humanam rabiem, suo in corpore voluit experiri. Sed anima mea cogita CHRISTUM ignominiam plagae huius pertulisse, dolorem in Beatam Virginem MARIAM fuisse derivatum, quae non secus affecta tunc fuit, atque si ipsius latus, ac cor fuisse transfixum. Quare debes multa Filio, sed Matri quoque non pauca deberi a te considera.” IC f. 183r.

⁷¹ Ibid., f. 183v.

⁷² “Sed nemo Mariam in caeli arce visurus est, qui in terrestri domicilio non fuerit imitatus, quive illi non summo affectu semper inservierit.” LD par. 13, in: Pos. 598.

⁷³ “Itaque cum Ambrosio loquor orationi finem imponens: *Sit vobis tanquam in imagine descripta Virginitas Vitaque B. Mariae, de qua, velut in speculo, refulget species castitatis et forma virtutis. Hinc sumatis exempla veivendi, Mariani Sodales, ubi, tanquam in exemplari magisteria expressa probitatis, quid corrigere, quid fugare debeatis, ostendunt. Primus discendi ardor nobilitas est Magistri; quid nobilius Dei Matre? Quid splendidus ea, quam splendor elegit? Quid castius ea, quae corpus sine corporis contagione generavit? Talis fuit Maria, ut eius unius Vita omnium sit disciplina.*” Migne, PL 16, 163, 166: De virginibus, lib. II, c. II; cf. LD par. 13, in: Pos. 598 n.

⁷⁴ De B. Maria V., MP, Vol. II, 233.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 234.

⁷⁷ SS. Familia in Nazareth, MP, Vol. II, 49 n.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DIRECTION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

There is a chapter in every textbook of Catholic theology which deals with the ultimate things concerning man and reveals the prospect of attaining the fullness of our humanity when God's gift of our becoming His adoptive sons will be realized in the heavenly kingdom. The Church makes it possible for the faithful to achieve this fullness because it is in the Church that, by the grace of God, they acquire holiness and thus the right to the glory of heaven. The universe itself will also partake in this fullness, the universe which is so closely related to man and which attains its destiny through him. The universe, too, will be perfectly reestablished in Christ (cf. KK 48).¹

Such assumptions are also present in Father Stanislaus Papczynski's teaching. The ultimate fate of man is one of the leading subjects of his teaching. Man's entire relation to God, his involvement in the life of the Church, his relation to the Mother of Christ should bear fruit in the form of eternal happiness in heaven. In his discussion of the ultimate things concerning man and the world, the author reveals this future reality towards which every man should draw.

Father George Matulaitis-Matulewicz treats these matters in a little different manner. In his writings we do not find the apocalyptic images so typical for Father Papczynski, but man's ultimate fate and the matter of aiding the souls of the deceased through prayer are also close to his heart.

Two common areas can be distinguished in the writings of the two authors: the first one encompasses what relates to the ultimate fate of each individual person, and the other, what concerns the fate of all humankind and the universe. Both of these spheres should prompt a Christian to constant vigilance and prayer.

1. The Ultimate Affairs of Man

The founder of the congregation, which comes to the aid of the souls of the deceased in a special way, reminds the living that each man must ultimately “be destroyed” because he was created from corruptible matter.² We are mortal and we are bound to die according to the words of the Holy Scriptures: “We must all die, we are like water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again” (2 Sam 14, 14).

Father Papczynski paints a very vivid picture of the ultimate things concerning man in order to show his fate in a very sharp light and to impel him to a radical change of his life, to renouncing sin and becoming reconciled with God. This can be seen, among others, in the following words:

“Therefore, we cannot find anyone strong enough, rich enough, proficient enough in any kind of law or knowledge that could break this law, dispense himself from it or avoid it by means of some arguments. It is a law which the Creator of everything once established for our first parents and, consequently, for each human person: ‘You are dust, and to dust you shall return!’ (Gen 3, 19). Indeed, not only can’t anyone prevent his own death, he cannot, in a natural way, even extend his life if but for a short moment longer. ‘Be it a king, an emperor, or a pope, a common subject or a lord, a rich man or a poor man, a man of learning or a simple man, healthy or ill, whoever he might be, he should remember that any given moment may mark the end of his life.’ ”³

Fear of the moment when we will part from this world is intensified by the uncertainty as to the day and the hour of our death, “For man does not know his time” (Eccles 9, 12). But Divine Wisdom admonishes us to be always mindful of the end of our life: “You also must be ready; for the Son of man is coming at an unexpected hour” (Lk 12, 40). The same One, who will judge each man right after death, is coming. “Therefore, if you cannot make sure that you will be alive tomorrow, or that you will

even complete this hour of meditation, pay close attention to each one of your thoughts and deeds, take serious care to correct your ways, begin to live a holier life, be more diligent as you strive for perfection.”⁴

As he draws the reader’s attention to the circumstances of our death, which are essentially unknowable, Father Papczynski raises the issue of fear which is supposed to prompt man to conversion. Man does not know the place of his death. He does not know whether he will die in his own or in someone else’s home, while he travels or while he rests, on land or on water. Many people finish their lives far away from their homeland, on a journey, even while they are in a doctor’s care in the hospital or on a battlefield. Neither can man foresee the kind of death that he will have to die. It may come suddenly, like a thief, or it can be something we have been expecting. It will find man during the day or at night. It may be peaceful or violent. Man may die due to natural causes or in an accident without experiencing any pain or in agony. Therefore, he should not postpone reforming his life or miss any opportunity to earn some merit, he should not look forward to his old age but keep in mind the words of Christ: “But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ and begins to beat his fellow servants, and eats and drinks with the drunken, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the hypocrites; there men will weep and gnash their teeth” (Mt 24, 48-51).⁵

According to Father Papczynski, meditation on our own death is very beneficial in giving our Christian life a proper direction. “Consider or imagine a man, perhaps even yourself, at the moment of final struggle at the end of life. At such a moment the evil spirits attack the soul and try to evoke in it a feeling of pride by recalling its merits, or, to drive it to despair by exaggerating its sins. Imagine then that you are surrounded by friends, members of your family and people close to your heart, that a candle is lit at the head of your bed and a crucifix or a holy card is put in your hands as you lie dying and moaning in pain.”

“O how terrible is this meditation on your agony when the mighty

power of illness will try to tear out the soul from the body and the soul will oppose, linger and resist, unwilling to leave its dwelling, aware of the evil it had committed there. What is it that you will try to say with your words then? What will you try to express in your prayers? Which patron saint will you call upon? Which of your friends (divine or human) will you call to help you? Nothing will be able to help you but the awareness of your deeds, rightly based on Christ's merits."⁶

But then the moment of death comes and the soul goes before God where, after its deeds have been judged, it will receive the verdict and will either enter the heavenly glory, or go into the purifying flames, or be sent to eternal damnation. We must always keep this reality before our eyes and begin to cultivate in our hearts the honor for the Mother of the dying and for our Guardian Angel right now. Thus we will be able to secure their assistance at the moment when man cannot help himself any longer.⁷

As he tries to appeal to our imagination in a very profound manner, Father Papczynski gives a detailed and realistic description of the consequences of death for the human body. When the soul leaves it, the body will become cold, pale and will begin to decay, all its limbs will stiffen and shrink. Then the body will be placed in a grave. The same people who, while the man was alive, wished him a long life, will hastily return him to earth. ... In this manner, the author wishes to persuade every Christian to work diligently on his character, to be humble, modest, to mortify his body and to submit it to the power and authority of God over the immortal soul.⁸

As we read Father Papczynski's thoughts on this entire subject, we also encounter certain paschal elements there. After all, Jesus did say: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also" (Jn 14, 1-3). We must therefore, follow the Lord, so that we might enter the gate of life together with Him. It is His wish

that we would follow Him in everything that we are capable of, in virtues and in holy conduct. And wherever He is, we will be also.⁹

In such a perspective of our future life, the necessity of death “imposed” upon us is, in Father Stanislaus’s opinion, something very desirable. In our hope of resurrection, too, he sees the motives which should stimulate us to diligent work on self-improvement while always taking into account the call to perfection in the Christian life. For while it is true that death came by a man, it is also true that resurrection will come by a man. People die in Adam, but they will be made alive in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15, 21-22). In this manner the perishable will put on the imperishable, and the mortal nature will put on immortality (cf. 1 Cor 15, 53).¹⁰

To support the faith in the resurrection, the Founder of the Marianists also uses a rational argument borrowed from St. Augustine, in whose opinion the entire order of the universe testifies to a future resurrection. “St. Augustine was quite right when he said:

“ ‘All creation speaks of the resurrection. It is winter, but the trees now dry and parched will surely come forth in leaves in the spring. I ask you who doubt the resurrection’ — continues St. Augustine — ‘whence do these things come, whence do they return again? To what secret places do they depart; from what hidden places do they come to us again? They cannot be seen anywhere, but God generates them with His mysterious power. The grass which was alive and is now dying, will come alive again from the seed. And our bodies, too, will return to life from the dust.’

“There is nothing more consistent with reason than this eternal endurance of our Mystical Temple. ‘The example are caterpillars and butterflies. We see them being born, die and come alive again (...). All this is done by nature. And God, will He not do even more perfect things with my body which is His Temple? In whatever grave our mortal limbs may be found, still, due to the power of God, they will come out of it immortal.’ ”¹¹

In the opinion of Tertullian, with whom Father Stanislaus agrees, our body reposes in God and Christ is the depositary. Because of Him the annihilation of the body has been withheld, and it is only temporarily that the body has its recesses in the water, fire, food and animals. It remains hidden there like in vessels till the time when it “reappears.”¹²

It is Father Papczynski’s conviction that if we seek the complete truth about man’s eternal fate, we must also emphasize the fact that the human soul, too, is immortal. The atheists think that after the soul leaves the body, it “dissolves into thin air.” Meanwhile, the Holy Scriptures testify that God created man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living, not a dying, soul (cf. Gen 2, 7). “While it is true that what came from dust, will return to dust, yet, the breath of life which came from the mouth of God is as immortal as God Himself is immortal. It is not only in the Holy Scriptures that the testimony to this fact can be found, our reason provides it, too. Therefore, even people who do not believe, but who possess adequate knowledge about the human soul, teach that the soul is immortal and receives its reward or punishment after death.”¹³

In the author’s opinion, this common conviction regarding the immortality of the soul should strengthen the Christian faith, which teaches that, after the soul leaves the body, it enters eternal glory or suffers punishment. The punishment can be temporary or eternal. The Holy Spirit teaches about it through a wise man who says that the evil ones moan because their spirit is in anguish, and the righteous ones receive a magnificent kingdom and a beautiful diadem from the hands of the Lord.¹⁴

As he paints the prospect of eternal life, Father Papczynski does not stop at the borderline between death and resurrection. He wants to unveil at least some small part of the secret of the life which will follow after the [soul’s] temporal dwelling is destroyed. He says that this is such an inconceivable reality that there is no way in which it can be comprehended or described. St. Paul was able to see a small part of it when “caught up to the third heaven ... he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter, and added that the glory of the Mystical Temple is not only inde-

scribable but also inconceivable” (cf. 1 Cor 2, 9-10).¹⁵

It is also in the mystical experience of St. Augustine that Father Stanislaus finds circumstances testifying to the glory of man which exceeds any comprehension: “St. Augustine, the Prince of Doctors, who has a similar understanding of this matter, says: ‘The beauty and splendor of the future Mystical Temple defy description and surpass any comprehension by the human mind. What God has prepared for those who love Him can only be comprehended through faith or reached through hope.’”¹⁶ This is why the author prefers to yearn for this glory rather than to attempt to describe it with his pen. And yet, he does try to make use of what some happy souls already managed to taste here on earth in moments of ecstasy. It follows from their experiences that after resurrection, our bodies will be adorned with such attributes as freedom from pain, discrimination of judgment, agility and clarity.¹⁷ This will be the result of the transformation of a perishable body into an imperishable one, of a sensual body into a spiritual one, of a terrestrial body into a celestial one (cf. 1 Cor 15, 35-44).¹⁸

Father Papczynski points to yet another motive, which should prompt man to live a zealous Christian life, when he draws his readers’ attention to the truth that our senses will also share the happiness of our glorified bodies. In his conviction, it will be unutterable happiness for all of man’s senses: “Who would dare to speak of the senses of the body which are to be made unutterably happy? With what splendid fragrance will the sense of smell be refreshed! What great delight will our sight obtain from looking at God and all the most noble, most beautiful, most perfect creatures! What great pleasure will our taste take in sampling all kinds of flavors! In what great, if I may say so, symphony of the most splendid melodies will our hearing rejoice! And with what great delight, constantly felt because of the body’s glorification, will our sense of touch be filled!”¹⁹ Father Stanislaus sees the confirmation of these hopes in the Word of God, where the inspired authors paint a vision of heavenly delights in which the saved ones will share (cf. 1 Cor 15, 42-44; Ps 149, 5-6; Ps 36[35], 9-10; Is 60, 5; Is 35, 1).²⁰

Following the same line of argument, the author emphasizes that the happiness of the soul will be even greater than the joy of the glorified body. The soul will be able to delight in God's love and wisdom and fully participate in His glory. It is difficult to describe this reality, so the author simply prefers to ask God to help him to attain the glory of heaven and reach the purpose for which He has created us:

“For I do not even want to mention the happiness of the soul. Let us be silent, let us be silent about what we cannot explain in an adequate manner. For who can fathom God and understand how in Him we see the true glory of all things: knowledge, love, wisdom, memory, will? May God help us to understand these things rather than to describe them. May the Holy Trinity help us to understand this for the sake of the purpose for which we were created, redeemed and called to faith.”²¹

The crowning point of the eschatological prospects presented by Father Papczynski in his vision are thoughts borrowed from St. Bernard which describe his mystical experiences and express his great longing for heaven: “O Heavenly Country, a safe dwelling, a fruitful and vast homeland containing everything that brings joy, a nation that does not murmur, quiet inhabitants, people who experience no want! How many glorious things have been said about you, O City of God! For example, in you there is a dwelling for all those who rejoice. They are all joyful and elated, they delight in God whose gaze is beautiful, whose face is magnificent, whose speech is gentle. To see Him is pure delight, to possess Him — sweetness; He is pleasant to taste. He alone is pleasing and He alone suffices to earn merits, to earn a reward. No one looks for anything else besides Him, for in Him he will find everything that he might desire.”²²

The course of Father Papczynski's reasoning sketched above vividly demonstrates his approach to the ultimate affairs of man — on the one hand, he shows the horror of leaving this world, on the other — the hope and joy after resurrection, and he does so always with an intention to inspire us to live truly Christian lives.

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz presents his reflections on the eschatological fate of man in his conference on judgment and death. He poses some questions there about why it is that some people do not want to think about the eschatological reality, why they deny it and want to forget about it. After all, an escape into various forms of entertainment and shielding one's eyes from the undeniable truth cannot help us at all.²³

Death is sure to come and Blessed George emphasizes that it is a very obvious truth. We find its confirmation in daily experience and in the Holy Scriptures. He recalls the poignant words of the prophet Isaiah to King Hezekiah who lay mortally ill: "Thus says the Lord, 'Set your house in order; for you shall die, you shall not recover' " (2 Kings 20, 1). This sentence hangs over every person. Fame, greatness, wealth or beauty are to no avail. Human gratitude is fallible, beauty is fleeting and everything is vanity: "O men, how long shall My honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words and seek after lies?" (Ps 4, 3).²⁴

Imagine that you will die in just a moment — the author continues his eschatological reflection — Look at your life in the light of the waning lamp. Recall your past. ... For death is sure to come and we must all stand before the throne of Christ where "each man will have to bear his own load" (Gal 6, 5). The soul will not be accompanied, but will stand alone before the judgment seat. Upon seeing its deeds, it will be overcome with fear and shame. It will not be able to erase anything or hide it from the Divine Judge. He will judge the sins committed with the senses, with the powers of the soul, with our thoughts, speech and deeds. He will assess the time lost and pass judgment.²⁵

This reflection on the eschatological fate of man is directed towards his conversion. The time has come for man to stop and think about his life, to look deeply into his conscience and to effect a spiritual change.²⁶

Participation in monthly retreats is very helpful in maintaining a readiness of spirit and an attitude of penance. Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz particularly recommends such retreats to people dedicated to the service of God. Among the exercises prescribed for such days of

recollection are meditation, examination of conscience, renewal of the resolutions from the last monthly or annual retreat, confession and preparation for death.²⁷ This last exercise is particularly important because it requires us to face eternity and thus to look at all things in a proper light, so as to make a true assessment of them. The exercise entails meditating on our own death. We are supposed to come to the realization that we will die and leave everything that binds us to this world behind, even though we do not know when, where and in what condition we will die. We must be ready then to accept death from God's hands. Our realization of this truth will make us stop and think about whether we are prepared for death at the present moment, should we have to stand before God right now and give an account of our life. Would we be free from worry about our previous confessions, about how we fulfilled our duties, about our relations with other people? Would the Lord find us vigilant, free from sin, dedicated to apostolic work? From such meditation a resolution will be born to conduct ourselves in such a manner next month that the Lord, should He come, will find us ready to give an account of our stewardship. Then a heartfelt plea to God should be made that He would help us to live now and always in such a frame of mind and such a state as we would want to be in at the hour of our death.²⁸

In their reflections on the ultimate affairs of man, the two authors are not merely interested in the eschatological fate of a single individual. They also ponder the future of all humanity and the world.

2. The Eschatological Reality of Mankind and of the World

In Father Papczynski's opinion, the vision of the future, in which all humanity and the visible world will share, should influence man's conduct even more profoundly and prompt him to live a truly Christian life. As he searches more deeply into the revealed teachings, the author reminds his spiritual sons that each man will stand twice before the Highest Judge. First, alone, at the particular judgment, which will take

place right after his death, and then, for the second time, at the Last Judgment. It will be conducted by Christ at the end of the world as it was announced by the psalmist: "... He judges the world with righteousness, He judges the peoples with equity" (Ps 9, 9). All people will be gathered there, from the first man, Adam, to the one who was the last man to die. The saints from heaven, the purified from Purgatory and the condemned from hell will be there to give exact accounts of their thoughts, words and deeds.²⁹

The Venerable Servant of God recalls the words of Christ about the signs which will precede the Last Judgment: "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth distress of nations in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves" (Lk 21, 25). "Whenever we see in our times some turmoil or bloody wars, epidemics, hunger or the world stirred up with various disturbances, we usually say that the day of judgment has come or we express it in similarly extreme terms. What will you say, then, when you see things unseen before, when you hear of matters you have never heard before, when the most merciful God forgets His mercy altogether, when the angels tremble in fear, when the righteous are horrified to death?"³⁰

In those final days, nations, kingdoms and states will wage terrible wars against one another; there will be revolts, riots and rebellions. Added to this will be the "sisters of war": people will be tormented by plagues and calamities to such a degree that whoever is not destroyed by force, violence and iron, will be obliterated by hunger and epidemics. Human suffering will be intensified by sea tides and unusual floods; many islands, seashore towns and localities will be washed away and devoured by the waves along with their inhabitants. Various cosmic catastrophes will also take place. Changes will occur in the configuration of the celestial bodies, collisions and pollution will take place. The sounds of terrible thunder will be heard, terrifying lightning will be seen, people will be dying everywhere and houses will be burning. The earth will shake violently, the powers of the heavens will be shaken, stars will fall from heaven, the moon will not give its light. Everything above and

under the earth will undergo a sad change. This sorry condition of everything will terrify the people so much that they will act as if they have been deprived of their senses and they will look for places to hide themselves. Having run away from their destroyed houses, they will look for uninhabited places, even for animal lairs. The wild animals, in turn, running away from the tremors of heaven and earth, will be coming out of their hiding places and approaching human settlements, seeking shelter from the imminent danger.³¹

The author explains these cosmic signs which will occur when “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven” (Mt 24, 29) in yet another way. The Savior of the world Himself is the sun because He is the Sun of Justice. The Most Holy Mother of God is the moon because her greatness, splendor and dignity are proclaimed by the words: “fair as the moon” (Song 6, 10). All the saints and the righteous are the stars because it is about them that the Holy Scriptures say: “[they] will shine ... like the stars” (Dan 12, 3). And so, even though Christ will appear in extraordinary brightness, such as that which His disciples once saw radiating from His countenance on Mount Tabor, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat the light of His mercy and graciousness will be darkened. The light will also be extinguished on the moon of graciousness and refuge because the Most Holy Virgin, our Mediatrix with her Son, will not be able to intercede for us at this terrible tribunal. The stars, i.e., our patron saints will be divested of mercy and will not have the ability to mediate or intercede.³²

As he begins with the words of the psalmist: “Fire goes before Him, and burns up his adversaries round about” (Ps 97, 3), the author encourages his readers to concentrate their thoughts and imagine the end of the world when globes of fire fall from heaven and everything is being engulfed in flames. When the entire world has been consumed by the conflagration, the Prince of the angelic hosts will descend from the highest throne of heaven and, with a powerful and horrifying sound of the trumpet directed to the four corners of the world, will summon the dead to rise and stand for judgment. The power of this sound will be so great

that all the spirits of the dead will hasten in response to its call.³³

In Father Papczynski's biblical reflection, Christ's Second Coming will be very different from the first one which brought peace. For after all mortals have been gathered at the site of judgment, the hosts of angels will descend from heaven in procession preceding their immortal King. The most holy tree of the Cross — the instrument of our salvation will appear among the clouds. The Son of Man will also appear in great power and majesty. The Most Holy Queen of Heaven will take her place on the right, Michael, the Archangel, and his host — on the left. The sight of the Judge will be so terrifying that at first it will frighten even the righteous ones because He will come to judge what is righteous, too. When He descends into the world, he will immediately occupy His throne and the twelve Apostles will take their seats by His side to judge the twelve generations of Israel. At that moment, sinners will be overcome with great fear and despair because their consciences will testify against them and they will sentence themselves to eternal damnation. The hope of the righteous will be sustained by the virtues that they practiced, the good deeds which they performed and by the Passion and merits of Christ the Lord. Their bodies will be transformed and imbued with amazing joy at attaining immortality.³⁴ Then the implacable Judge will assume a stern and inflexible countenance and turn to those standing on His left, to the sinners condemned to eternal damnation and will deliver His verdict for them in a thundering voice: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire" (Mt 25, 41). At that moment the earth will immediately open up and they will be swallowed by the abyss of hell along with all evil spirits. The Divine Judge will then turn to the righteous standing on His right and, in a sweet, friendly voice, invite them to enter eternal joy: "Come, O blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt 25, 34).³⁵

In order to move his readers' hearts even more deeply and encourage them to live pious lives, Father Stanislaus makes them realize that at the end of the world they will stand not before some imaginary judge but before the true Son of the Most High. After the horrible death on the

Cross, this Only Son of God rose from the dead and after forty days assumed the reign of the Heavenly Kingdom. It is from there that He will come to judge the living and the dead.³⁶

Those who during Christ's earthly life treated Him with contempt and did not want to follow Him, will now be overcome with confusion and embarrassment. In their opinion, they killed Him justly and treated Him like the worst criminal. Now, as they see His Majesty and Glory, they will realize what terrible disgrace they have brought upon themselves. All those, in turn, who had once followed the scorned Jesus, proclaimed His teaching and, out of love for Him, accepted not only contempt but also death, will now share in great joy.³⁷

Christ will come to the judgment with all those who have accepted their personal cross. It will be just then that the lovers of the Cross will take their places at the right side of the Crucified One, full of hope and certain of their salvation. But those who treated the Cross with contempt will stand at the left side. Their consciences will be filled with unspeakable anguish as they come to realize the enormity of the evil which they have committed. All evil will be revealed to the entire world. The virtues and the merits of the saints will also be revealed to the entire human community and to the inhabitants of heaven.³⁸

Turning both to the Bible and to his own imagination, the author depicts the fate of the condemned in a very vivid and, at the same time, shocking manner. He provides a detailed description of the various punishments of hell in order to warn man against this terrible reality which he prepares for himself when he turns away from God. This description is an example of the 17th century catechesis on the ultimate affairs of man.

As Father Papczynski paints his vision of hell, he tells us to imagine a deep abyss in which we can experience various punishments. Then he shows us two areas: one is an area of unquenchable fire, the other — an area of unbearable cold. There he sees the souls in the form of sparks flying from the flames into the cold and then, like thick snow or icy hail, they return to the flames. Like iron, the souls become burning-hot in the

flames and at this same moment freeze like ice. Father Papczynski emphasizes that all this can be avoided by fighting now against the flames of passion and spiritual frigidity.³⁹ In this way, the author wishes to encourage his reader to live a life that is impeccable and full of mortifications, all of which is so important in the entire process of moral formation.

Further, the author gives rein to his imagination as he describes the types of punishments in hell. The fire in hell burns very brightly but gives no light. It is so strong that it penetrates the souls even though they are incorporeal. This fire will continue to burn even after the Last Judgment. Added to the torment caused by the fire are the sneers of Satan which torment the condemned, including quarrels, moans, curses, blasphemies, wailing and gnashing of teeth which never leave the condemned.⁴⁰

There are also spiritual punishments which affect the three powers of the soul: mind, memory and will. "The mind will be the first to experience torment as it ponders the heavenly glory enjoyed by the saints and fully comprehends its own punishment and damnation. The memory will suffer remembering and recalling the worldly delights and pleasures and now truly understanding the torment it is in because of them. The will is going to scold and torment itself with indescribable anger accusing God of being an unjust, wicked and cruel tyrant who punishes it so severely and will continue to torment it forever, even though the condemned rightly deserve all their sufferings. Last, but not least, will be the oppressive pain caused by the worm of remorse and constant hopeless recollection of one's sins. This worm will eat at the spirit of the condemned so cruelly that each one of them would rather bear all possible kinds of torture than be tormented by it."⁴¹

In order to help his readers to realize the enormity of the punishments of hell, Father Stanislaus, in the spirit of his times, uses yet another very realistic image. He is convinced that should any one of the condemned be given a chance to return to life and do penance, he would gladly accept even this kind of punishment whereby his body would be torn

apart one day and heal over the period of a thousand years, only to avoid the flames of hell.⁴²

Although the punishments suffered by all the condemned are beyond human comprehension and imagination, they are, nonetheless, quite varied. For just as the extent of the reward in heaven is balanced by the amount of merits, similarly, the amount and the severity of crimes is balanced by the amount and extent of punishment. Therefore, in addition to the general punishments inflicted upon all the condemned, there are also individual punishments imposed according to the kind and extent of the crimes committed, as stated in the book of Revelation: "As she glorified herself and played the wanton, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning" (Rev 18, 7). For whatever man sins by, by the same he will be more severely punished. There will be no fault which does not carry appropriate punishment.⁴³

In order to evoke true horror in the hearts of his readers in face of the ultimate fate that awaits them, Father Papczynski recalls the essential thesis of Christian teaching regarding this particular aspect, namely that all the punishments of hell put together are exceeded by the punishment of rejection which consists in being deprived of happiness at the opportunity to see God. "For just as all joy, happiness, delight and contentment experienced by the inhabitants of heaven results from having possession of this exalted vision, by the same token, being deprived of it results in wailing, misery, torment and the punishment of each condemned soul. O, what great misery this is! What terrible pain! What unbearable punishment when man becomes stripped of this good for which he was created and is forever excluded from the Heavenly Kingdom."⁴⁴

In these dramatic words, Father Stanislaus emphasizes this truth of our faith that "the punishments which are inflicted upon the condemned will have no end for as long as God exists, the condemned will be dying but they will not die." As long as the saints experience the delights of heaven, the condemned will continue to suffer in hell. Therefore, their suffering will never end. One can imagine a large, high and wide mountain from which, upon God's order, a tiny bird picks up one speck of soil

and moves it to a different place. If the condemned were allowed to do the same in order to be relieved from their punishment, if such a mountain were already moved somewhere else in this manner, these poor wretches would be full of joy hoping for an end to their torment. But, alas, such an end will never come and they will continue to suffer for ever. Therefore, we must pray with St. Augustine: "Lord, burn here, cut here, but pardon for ever."⁴⁵

But this terrible reality of eternal damnation does not have to be man's ultimate fate. His destination is meant to be the holy city of Jerusalem as described in the apocalyptic vision (cf. Rev 21, 9-27) — the eternal dwelling of all the heavenly spirits and saints, radiating with the glory of God. The walls of this city are a hundred and forty-four cubits long, built from jasper, its foundations adorned with every precious jewel. The twelve gates are twelve pearls, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass. The temple of the city is the Lord God the Almighty One and the Lamb. "The inhabitants of the City are the Lord's angels, saints — both men and women — among whom there is now and will always be such peace and love that any good of one inhabitant is considered to be common good. Each one of them feels such joy because of the merits, the glory and the happiness of another as if he himself were experiencing this happiness. There is no envy or jealousy there, but everything is a common good to all."⁴⁶

Father Papczynski concludes his meditation upon the ultimate affairs of man with a thought that all the goods in which the saints in heaven share are nonetheless something lesser than the privilege to see God. After all, He is the source of all glory and happiness in which the inhabitants of heaven share, and the entire heavenly heritage, which the Savior of the world promised to his followers, is contained in this one exalting vision, as stated in the book of Revelation: "They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they shall need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev 22, 4-5).⁴⁷

The purpose of Father Papczynski's very realistic teaching about the

punishments awaiting the sinners in hell and, on the other hand, about such a wonderful prospect of happiness in glory experienced by the saved ones, was to exert an influence on man's conduct in such a way that he would firmly renounce sin and become seized with the desire to live a truly Christian life to the fullest.

In Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching, in his meditations upon our future life, we can also find strong statements which are to inspire the reader to turn away from himself and cling to God. Casting off the inordinate love of self gives us the true freedom of the sons of God and clothes us in the garment of Christ's Spirit and grace. Renouncing the self, the world and Satan enables us to give up our corrupt body and the narrow abode of this world, to immerse ourselves in God and make our dwelling in the tabernacle of the Most High. How clear our mind becomes, then, how free our spirit, how big and open our heart! Only then do we truly begin to feel that all men are brothers, that mankind is but one family; and with a warm heart, we begin to embrace all men and press them to our hearts with love. "We feel then, cries out Blessed George, that we would give all our blood, drop by drop, to bring our brethren, that family of God, to God, and to unity with Christ and the Church! When God's love enters, our heart dilates and becomes large enough to contain all mankind, without class or national distinction."⁴⁸ When the human soul, transported by the Holy Spirit, rises and soars to those lofty heights where the Most Blessed Trinity glows and shines forth eternally in infinite splendor, it sees, as it regards this world from those altitudes, how small and wretched it is. Man learns then how to appraise everything on this earth and to put it in its proper place. He is then able to employ earthly things as instruments for the greater glory of God. He regards everything in the light of eternity, the good of the Church, the salvation of souls and his own progress towards attaining perfection.⁴⁹

How wonderful is the world viewed by Blessed George from the

heights of eternity and how splendid is the vision of man from this perspective. The man in this vision is truly free, endowed with an open heart and mind. He feels close to all men and considers all mankind to be his family. He is dedicated to God, to the Church, to the matters of both earthly and eternal life.

As they lead us through the ultimate truths of our faith, the two authors want to encourage us to begin serious work on ourselves. It should manifest itself in our constant readiness to meet God, in constant vigilance and prayer. It is also their desire to encourage us to ardent prayer for the souls suffering in Purgatory.

3. A Call to Vigilance and Prayer

When Father Papczynski quotes the following sentence from the Gospel: “The powers of the heavens will be shaken” (Lk 21, 26), he wants to shake every Christian to the core and inspire him to genuine repentance. In view of man’s ultimate fate, repentance is something that suggests itself, for how will a sinful man stand before the Divine Judge, how will he dare to lift up his head when even the purest hosts of the heavenly spirits, free from the tiniest speck of sin, will tremble on the last day? And so, the time of salvation has already come — the time of work, effort, good deeds, prayer, mortification, humble service, patience and acquiring virtues.⁵⁰

In order to inspire man to be always ready to meet the Lord, Father Stanislaus encourages him to ponder Christ’s call to vigilance after the example of the men waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast. They should open to him at once when he comes and knocks. They will be happy if the Lord finds them awake. He will invite them to sit at the table and will serve them (cf. Lk 12, 36-37). These are the men that should be imitated rather than those who follow their passions and the urges of nature.⁵¹

Father Papczynski points out that it is not without import with whom we keep company because at the time of God’s judgment we will stand

together with those with whom we associated. It is possible that we will be counted among the sinners at this tribunal if we gave in to their influence. This is why we must avoid their company even now and refuse to participate in their crimes.⁵² We must renounce all evil and transform ourselves into true Christians. A true Christian should be devoted to fasting, vigil and prayer. He should be totally dedicated to the fulfillment of God's will. He should keep daily vigil at the door of his heart waiting for God's will, which will be expressed by the inspirations from above or other signs. Happy is this servant of God who keeps vigil and is at peace with regard to his fate. The Lord tells him to rest, sit at the table and He will serve him. This is already a path to contemplation and to attaining great spiritual peace.⁵³

No one will rise to heaven if he does not die to earthly things. "For just as the bird trapped in the snares cannot fly up into the air, so also the human spirit lured by pleasures, ensnared by the worldly attractions, immersed in sins, cannot rise up to heaven. The Heavenly Teacher instructs: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12, 24). Similarly, the man who loves what is temporal will not have eternal life."⁵⁴ And again, keeping vigil is very helpful here. For just as we do not know when the lightning will strike during a storm, but we see the light that precedes the strike, so also no one knows the time when Christ will come to judge, yet we do know that the judgment will be preceded by a severe verdict striking the sinner. Therefore, we must conduct ourselves in such a manner as if we were being judged every day. We must live in such a way as to be ready to give an account of our lives before the Divine Judge without fear and at any given moment.⁵⁵

In Father Papczynski's opinion, the method of keeping vigil that is most beneficial to our spiritual life is prayer, which he calls interior silence. It consists in acknowledging, worshiping and blessing God present everywhere, walking in His sight modestly, faithfully and piously, as it is proper for servants to behave in the presence of the Master. We should contemplate Him in all creatures, not only in ourselves, because

“in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17, 28).⁵⁶ True prayer can be, therefore, reduced to the acts of faith, hope and love which flow to God from the altar of the human heart. They rise to the Creator like the pleasing odor of Noah’s sacrifice which he offered to God after he had left the ark (cf. Gen 8, 20-22).⁵⁷

Father Papczynski sheds some light on understanding and types of prayer when he speaks about feelings rising from inside of the Mystical Temple. He compares them to the singers’ voices: “Feelings that are well controlled give best praise to God like a harmonious symphony. Allow me to introduce a certain practice here, borrowed from the Royal Psalter itself, which is often used for this purpose. Look, how beautifully all the feelings make their way to the same God, even though they do so along different paths or, should I say, in different tones.”⁵⁸ In the psalms Father Stanislaus hears the voice of feelings rising to God in a choir. They resound with love (cf. 18[17], 2-3) and regret (51[50], 6), joy (20[19], 6) and sadness (6, 4-5), hope (31[30], 2-3) and fear (119[118], 120), desire (38[37], 10), resignation (143[142], 8-11) and gratitude (34[33], 2). The psalms give voice to the sighs of the afflicted (25[24], 17), the penitent (32[31], 5), the tempted (70[69], 2), the defamed (71[70], 13), the besieged (27[26], 1) and the deceived (13[12], 4-5).⁵⁹

As he concludes his poetic call to constant prayer, the Founder of the Marianists brings to our attention the short ardent prayers composed by various saints. He also states that in our need, God Himself teaches us such prayers, too. Finally, he admonishes us: “Therefore, let the pious soul be on guard only so that it would not reject God by some grave fault. And let it not be overly concerned about similar matters because a king is followed by his musicians everywhere. If I should admit something good to the ancient masters of good philosophy and accept some of their admonishments, allow me to make this confession with Tullius: There is nothing sweeter than a concert of virtues. This harmony is most pleasing to God, the Most High, who wants us to be perfect just as He is perfect.”⁶⁰

As we ponder the author’s thoughts on vigilance and prayer, we

should pay some attention to his emphasis on the great effectiveness of prayer in the Christian life. Whoever relies on it and practices it, will, in Father Stanislaus's opinion, erase all his sins, even the gravest ones, and obtain God's favor to such a degree that he will become His friend and son. A man united with God through prayer will be able to accomplish anything in God, with Him and through Him.⁶¹ Father Papczynski claims that the best way to help the Church is through ardent prayer: "Souls dedicated to prayer can in one instant help the Church more than all the preachers by their sermons, the scholars by their lectures and confessors by administering the Sacrament of Penance. They can awaken the dead to life, bring the evil ones back to the path of righteousness, they can annihilate entire armies, avert the threat of hunger or pestilence, and do it all with two hands raised in prayer and supported by faith and love (...). Therefore, it is my most earnest advice to you, O Christian, to ask some wise and pious man's recommendation and choose several approved prayers which you will never stop reciting. You should also assume the habit of pious meditation on the Lord's Passion, on the four ultimate affairs of man, on the lives of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints in heaven, so that by these pious practices you might be purified, enlightened and become more like those in communion with whom you want to be after death."⁶²

As a priest, Father Papczynski knew that many of the dying went to God's judgment unprepared. That is why he wanted to assist them through prayer in the effectiveness of which he believed so strongly.⁶³ In order to encourage his confreres to prayer, he ordered them in his rule that they should pray ardently and piously for the souls suffering in Purgatory, especially for soldiers killed in battle and for those who died because of pestilence.⁶⁴ This regulation was already included in the first visitation document of the Marian hermitage in the Korabiew Forest in which the bishop ordered, probably upon Father Stanislaus's suggestion, that an office for the dead should be recited daily.⁶⁵

As he ordered his confreres to pray for all the deceased, Father Papczynski made this one of the main tasks of the congregation. This

task, so strongly emphasized by the Founder, was accepted and treated very seriously by his spiritual sons and became a specific characteristic of the Marian community.

It was Father Stanislaus's desire that the Marians would particularly remember their own confreres in prayer. Whenever one of them was dying, he ordered all of them to gather at the sound of the bell to support their dying brother with pious admonition and commend him to God's goodness and mercy with ardent prayer. Guided by charity, the superior was to make an effort not only to provide medical assistance for the sick person, but especially to give him the remedies for eternal life. These are: a sincere confession of sins, penance, a profession of faith, a renunciation of evil spirits, entrusting oneself into God's hands through the confessor, a pious reception of the Holy Eucharist and the Anointing of the Sick, invoking the aid of those who are already in heaven and placing complete hope and trust in the merits of Our Savior.⁶⁶ The customary prayers at the side of the dying person were to be recited devotedly and his soul was to be fervently entrusted to God. The body of the deceased was to be fittingly washed and piously laid to rest within three days. Other Marian houses were to be notified about the death as quickly as possible so that all members could support the deceased confrere with Holy Masses, prayers and mortifications.⁶⁷

What the Renovator of the Marians said on the subject of the deceased in his religious legislation amounts to one great call to prayer. His loving heart encompassed the souls of all the faithful departed suffering in Purgatory. That is why he ordered his confreres to aid these souls with prayers and sacrifices.⁶⁸ They were to offer the Holy Sacrifice of Mass for them, too.⁶⁹ They were to offer special prayers for the dead on the day of the Commemoration of All Souls and the seven following days, and during the whole month of November.⁷⁰

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz ordered his confreres to offer special prayers for the deceased Pope and the local Ordinary. After the Holy

Father's death one Holy Mass was to be said for him in all houses of the congregation, and after the death of the local Ordinary a Holy Mass was to be said for the peace of his soul in all Marian houses on the territory of his diocese. The rosary was to be recited for either of them for a week. The superiors were to see to it that prayers were also being offered for the recently deceased who had been notable benefactors of the congregation.⁷¹

Drawing from the spirit of the Founder, the Renovator of the Marians provided very good spiritual care for all the members of the congregation. In case of a confrere's death, the Superior of the House was to notify the Superior General, the Provincial Superior and every house of the province immediately, so that the prescribed prayers might be initiated as quickly as possible. The closest relatives of the deceased were to be notified as well. The Superior of the House was to see to it that a short biography of the deceased was prepared and sent to the Major Superiors. A copy of the biography was to be kept in the archives.⁷² Five masses were to be said for a deceased confrere, whether professed or a novice, in the house to which he belonged: on the day of his death, on the day of his funeral, on the seventh and the thirtieth day after his death and on the anniversary of his death. One Mass was to be said for him in other houses of the province to which he belonged. All the confreres of the province were to offer up their regular rosaries for his intention for a month and the lay brothers were to receive the Holy Eucharist. Prayers for the Superior General who died in office were to be redoubled. One Mass was to be said in the house for the recently deceased father or mother of a confrere and all the confreres in this house were to offer a third part of the rosary. Three Masses were to be said for a deceased postulant in the house to which he belonged and all confreres were to recite a third part of the rosary for his intention. In addition to this, all members were to commend the soul of their deceased confrere to God's mercy in their private prayers.⁷³

All the priests were to say one Mass each year for all the deceased members of the Congregation; the individual members were to partici-

pate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the same intention and receive the Holy Eucharist.⁷⁴

Perhaps recalling this detailed list of prayerful obligations contained in Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's constitutions somewhat disturbs the synthetic character of this work, nevertheless I felt it was appropriate to quote them at this point because they give us an idea of how much the Renovator cared about the souls of the deceased, how he wanted to assist them in freeing themselves from the punishments of Purgatory and how he put this particular goal set by the Founder of the Congregation of Marians into practice.

In conclusion, we can say that the entire effort undertaken by Father Papczynski in the process of establishing the Congregation of Marians and by Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz in the process of renovating it, was aimed at helping man to meet God here on earth, to love Him and serve Him faithfully; to seek, in constant union with God, the strength to live such a life which will bear fruit in the form of eternal happiness.

Notes:

¹ Cf. W. Granat, *Kuczlówickowi i Bogu w Chrystusie. Zarys dogmatyki katolickiej*, vol. 2, Lublin, 1974, 471 n.

² Cf. Boros L., *Mysterium mortis. Der Mensch in der letzten Entscheidung*, Olten und Freiburg i. Br. 197310, translated by B. Bialecki, *Mysterium mortis. Człowiek w obliczu ostatecznej decyzji*, Warsaw, 1977, 20n.

³ IC f. 176v.

⁴ Ibid., cf. W. Boloż, *Eklezjalne aspekty moralności chrześcija, skiej*, Tuchów, 1991, 168.

⁵ Ibid., f. 176 v., n.

⁶ Ibid., f. 177 v.

⁷ Ibid., cf. J.M. Girardin, *Miesiąc dusz czysccowych*, Warsaw, 1996, 109 n.

⁸ Ibid., f. 178r.

⁹ “Considera enitendum tibi esse, ut cursum Domini assequaris, et cum illo vitae ianuam ingrediaris. Quod futurum est, si operam seriam virtutibus navaveris; si crucis ferendae summo desiderio teneris, et impositam tibi indefesso studio tuleris; si strenue laboraveris in vinea Domini; et non contentus quavis simplici perfectione, solidiorem secteris. Nam si maiora olim a Discipulis facienda esse miracula Dominus dixit, quam ipse fecerit, idem vult omnino te sublimioribus virtutibus operam dare, et e vulgari vivendi consuetudine discedere; optatque, ut, si homini fas esset, illum ipsum virtutibus, et sancte gestis assequaris: ut ubi ille est, tu quoque propter virtutes, sancte gesta ibidem sis.” IC f. 114r.

¹⁰ TDM 216.

¹¹ Ibid., 217 nn.

¹² Ibid., 219 n.

¹³ Ibid., 220 n.

¹⁴ Ibid., 222 n.

¹⁵ Ibid., 226.

¹⁶ Ibid., 226 n.

¹⁷ “Et corpora quidem quatuor illis dotibus admirandis et praecellentissimis ornabuntur: impassibilitate, ut dicunt theologi, subtilitate, agilitate, claritate.” Ibid., 226.

¹⁸ Ibid., 228 n.

¹⁹ Ibid., 223 n.

²⁰ Ibid., 234 n.; cf. IC f. 185 r.

²¹ TDM 235 n.

²² Ibid., 237 n.

²³ *De morte et iudicio*, MP, Vol. I, 436.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ *Recollectio menstrua*, MP, Vol. I, 364.

²⁸ Ibid., 366 n.

²⁹ IC f. 179 r.

³⁰ Ibid., f. 3 v.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., f. 3 r-v.

³³ “Diligentiori cogitationis intuitu conspicias, igneos de Caelo globos decedentes omnesque quae ibi locatae erant, flammās labentes, et totum consumentes universum. Hoc enim vaticinatus Rex psaltes canit: *Ignis ante ipsum praecedit, et inflammabit in circuitu inimicos eius*. Postquam totius mundi conflagrationem [’conflagratio] progreditur, ex sedibus Empyrei Caeli Angelicae Princeps militiae, illudque non minus horrendum quam potens efficacissimo tubae sonitu ad singulos quatuor angulos Orbis praecinet. *Surgite mortui et venite ad iudicium*. Cuius vocis tanta erit vis, ut ad eam omnes mortalium spiritus ex Caelo, purgatorio, infernalibusque tormentis se prorepturi sint, membraque pristina assumpturi, et in CHRISTI Domini aetate, vallem Josaphat occupaturi.” IC f. 180 r-v.

³⁴ Ibid., f. 180 v.

³⁵ Ibid., f. 181 r.

³⁶ Ibid., f. 3 r.

³⁷ Ibid., f. 4 v.

³⁸ Ibid., f. 4 r-v.

³⁹ Ibid., f. 182 r.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 182 v.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., f. 125 r.

⁴³ “Considerandum tibi est, ut in Caelo meritorum amplitudinem praemiorum amplitudine coaequari; sic in damnatorum perenni carcere, multitudinem magnitudinemque scelerum, magnitudine multi[tu]dineque paenarum compensari. Itaque praeter communia damnatis omnibus tormenta, singula singulis preferenda esse iuxta qualitatem quantitatemque delictorum, asserente id Apocaliptico vate his verbis: *Quantum se quis glorificaverit, et in deliciis fuit; tantum date illi tormentum et luctum*. Neque ab hoc Religiosus quidam abludit Doctor inquires, *In quibus homo peccavit in illis*

gravius punietur. Ibi acediosi ardeatibus stimulis perurgebuntur, et gulosi ingenti siti ac fame cruciabuntur: ibi luxuriosi et voluptatum amatores ardenti pice, et faetido sulphure perfundentur, et sicut furiosi canes prae dolore invidiosi ululabunt: ibi superbi omni confusione replebuntur, et avari miserrima egestate arctabuntur. Nullum vitium erit, quod suum proprium cruciatum non habebit.” IC f. 183 v.

⁴⁴ Ibid., f. 184 r.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., f. 184 v, n.

⁴⁷ “Considera omnia, quae beati in Caelo possident, bona unicam Dei visionem antecellere. Ex qua omnis gloriae fons promanat: omnis copia beatitudinis descendit, omnis felicitas in omnes Caelites derivatur, ita, ut ipsa caelestis haereditas, quam Servator mundi sui[s] sequacibus promisit, in hac ipsa beatifica visione sita sit. Optime hoc expressit Apocalypticus vates, inquiens: *Videbunt faciem eius: et nomen eius in frontibus eorum. Et nox ultra non erit: et non egebunt lumine lucernae, neque lumine solis, quoniam Dominus Deus illuminabit illos; et regnabunt in saecula saeculorum*. O quantis, vides, bonis, miseri peccatores se spoliant; imo quantis tu teipsum spolias, quoties legitime certare non vis?” IC f. 185 r-v.

⁴⁸ DD 31.

⁴⁹ Ibid., cf. H.U. von Balthasar, *Teologia dziejow*, Cracow, 1996, 77.

⁵⁰ IC f. 4 r.

⁵¹ Ibid., f. 143 r.

⁵² Ibid., f. 125 r.

⁵³ Ibid., f. 143 v, n.

⁵⁴ Ibid., f. 113 v.

⁵⁵ “Nescit homo scilicet neque scire potest, quando fulmen erupturum sit ex nubibus, sed tum primo videtur, cum resonat, ac aliquid percutit. Sic ignoratur ab universis adventus Christi universos iudicaturi. Tunc primo apparebit, cum peccatores gravissima fulminabit

sententia. Quare, cum tibi iudicij illius hora penitus occulta sit, quotidie sic te geras, quasi quotidie sis iudicandus. Sic vive, ut singulis momentis de singulis actionibus, cogitationibus quoque, et verbis tuis, sine metu reddere possis Iudici Deo rationem.” IC f. 92 r-v.

⁵⁶ NV, ch. V, n. 1.

⁵⁷ OC, IV, 4.

⁵⁸ TDM 103 n.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 104-108.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 109.

⁶¹ Ibid., 62 n.

⁶² Ibid., 64-66.

⁶³ Cf. A. Skwierczynski, *Milosć oczyszczająca. Współczesna interpretacja katolickiej nauki o czyszczeniu*. Warsaw, 1992, 115.

⁶⁴ 62”...et fidelium defunctorum piacularibus paenis addictorum animabus praecipue militum, et peste extinctorum, summo studio, pietate, fervore, suffragabimini.” NV, ch. I, n.2, in: Pos. 463.

⁶⁵ An official record of Bishop S.H. Swiecicki’s visit to the Korabiew Hermitage on October 24, 1673, in: Pos. 343.

⁶⁶ “Ultimo congregabuntur omnes communi signo campamae ad animam alicuius Socii iuvandam ex hac mortalitate decedentis, piis monitis, orationibus, lachrymisque humilibus, Divinae bonitati et misericordiae commendandam, totis viribus fraterne adnites, ne quis in hoc supremo agone de salute sua periclitetur. Superior sane dabit operam, ut aegro non solum remedia sanitatis tempestive summa charitate provideat, sed praecipue vitae aeterna; qualia sunt, seria peccatorum confessio, et detestatio, fidei professio, contra machinationes Daemonium protestatio, animae suae in Divinas et Confessari manus resignatio, Sanctissimae Eucharistiae devotissima susceptio, et Extremae Unctionis; invocatio auxiliorum Supernorum, in meritis Nostri Salvatoris absoluta spes et fiducia.” NV, ch. IX, n. 5, in: Pos. 483.

⁶⁷ “Consuetae preces Ecclesiae circa agonizantem devote absolvantur, anima ferventer DEO commendetur, Defuncti cadaver ablu-

atur decenter, pie intra triduum tumuletur, obitus quam citissime per alias domos divulgetur; ut iam missarum Sacrificiis, quam orationibus et mortificationibus defunctus ab omnibus adiuvetur.”

Ibid., n. 6.

⁶⁸ CM 16.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 418, 413.

⁷⁰ “Die Commemorationis Omn. Fidelium Defunctorum et septem sequentibus diebus necnon per totum mensem novembrem sodales suffragia pro defunctis singulariter promovere studeant.” Ibid., 419.

⁷¹ “Post obitum Summi Pontificis in omnibus Congregationis domibus et post obitum Ordinarii loci in domibus eius diocesis offeratur unum Missae sacrificium et per hebdomadam consueta recitentur rosaria. Pro insignioribus benefactoribus recens defunctis Superiores suffragia peragenda curent.” Ibid., 417.

⁷² Ibid., 404.

⁷³ Ibid., 416.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 418.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AN ATTEMPT AT A THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF THE FOUNDER'S AND THE RENOVATOR'S DOCTRINE

By analyzing the writings of the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians, we have familiarized ourselves with the theological foundations of the Christian life as presented by these two authors. A Trinitarian approach is evident in the teachings of both Father Stanislaus Papczynski and Father George Matulaitis-Matulewicz; always present in these teachings are God the Father, Jesus Christ, His Word and His saving deeds and the Holy Spirit who teaches, enlightens, comforts and leads to the heights of the Christian life. All of this takes place in the Church and through the Church where an important role is played by Mary, Mother of the Church; and the Church is bound for eschatological fullness.

As we make a critical evaluation of these two authors' teachings on the Christian life, we must take into account the sources from which they drew their knowledge. Thus, we will be able to see the origin of their views, the directions of their theological thought as well as its originality. It will be very useful to study the formal aspects of Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teachings because it will allow us to give a more complete evaluation of the essence of these teachings.

1. The Sources of the Doctrine of the Founder and of the Renovator of the Marians

Even the very first contact with the writings of Father Stanislaus Papczynski and Father George Matulaitis-Matulewicz makes us realize that their teachings come primarily from the Bible. The proof of this can

be found in the frequently quoted texts from the Scriptures, both from the Old and the New Testament. For example, in his *Rule of Life*, which is not a really voluminous work, Father Papczynski quotes the Holy Scriptures more than twenty times. These quotations are the basis on which he builds the content of the particular paragraphs of this fundamental legal document. His extensive work entitled *Inspectio cordis* is simply a commentary to the pericopes in the Gospel taken from the liturgy of a given day. In his teaching, the entire anthropology is biblical, with its basic assumptions that a Christian is an image of God (cf. Gen 1, 27) and His temple (cf. 1 Cor 3, 16; 2 Cor 6, 16). It is from the Bible that the main principles of the Christian life like the love of God (cf. 1 Cor 13, 1-7), the obedience to God's will (cf. 1 Sam 15, 22; J 4, 34), the imitation of Christ (cf. J 8, 12; Mt 4, 34) and the Blessed Mother (cf. J 19, 26-27) are taken. The process of the Christian life is also biblical and evangelical in nature, the life into which our Founder initiates us as he calls us to renounce sin (cf. J 8, 12; Eph 5, 8) and to practice virtues (cf. Mt 5, 44-45; 25, 35-36).

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, frequently quotes fragments of the Holy Scriptures, be it in his Spiritual Diary or in his ascetic conferences. These quotations are a starting point for his theological reflections. The biblical thought gives support to the foundations of the Christian life: the concern about salvation (cf. Mt 8, 36) and the renewal of the Church (cf. Eph 1,10), the duty to strive for perfection (cf. Mt 5, 48), the need for constant conversion (cf. J 12, 24).

It is obvious that the two authors knew the sacred books very well and used them with great ease. Their favorite texts were the four gospels and the letters of St. Paul. Father Stanislaus's favorite call: *Omnia ergo apud vos in charitate fiant*, which is a kind of summary of his teaching on God's love, is literally taken from the Apostle of the Nations (cf. 1 Cor 16, 14). Like St. Paul, Father Papczynski sees the perfect model of obedience in Our Savior who humbled Himself and was obedient unto death (cf. Phil 2, 8). Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, often gave St. Paul as an example to his confreres. He wrote: "We intend to observe the exam-

ple of St. Paul — his active life, his resoluteness and fortitude. Wherever we shall happen to be, even if in prison or exile, we intend to preach Christ and not to depart from our way of life.”¹ The writings of our authors also contain many quotations from the Old Testament, from its books of history, wisdom and prophecy, and from the psalms. With the aid of the biblical texts, they tried to justify their claims as flowing directly from revealed teaching. On the other hand, it is clear that these claims took shape under the influence of the inspired books and were a fruit of contemplation of the Word of God. The Bible was, therefore, the basic source of their spirituality and it is mainly from there that they drew as they formulated the content of their teaching.

Their next source was the works of the Fathers of the Church, especially those of St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Basil and St. Gregory the Great. They turned to these works not only to find there elements of the truths revealed by God but also to become acquainted with their interpretation.

Father Papczynski quoted the Fathers of the Church many times in his writings, and it is particularly evident in *Templum Dei Mysticum*. He used the teaching of St. Ambrose to support the biblical truth about man’s likeness to God. He saw this likeness in man’s interior perfection. Following the thought of this great Father of the Church, he saw similarities between the human soul and the Holy Trinity, which he substantiated in a rather original manner.² St. Augustine’s writings provided him with an argument to support many of his own statements like, for example, the one about the need to take care of the mystical temple of God, i.e., the human soul, so that God might take delight in it.³ He explained after St. Gregory the Great that the gifts of the Holy Spirit encourage us to acquire the seven virtues, which correspond to these gifts, by instructing our mind against various temptations.⁴ In the teaching of St. Basil, he saw arguments to justify defending one’s good name against unfair attacks such as he himself experienced in his life. Following St. Basil’s thoughts on the matter, he stated that we should not be silent when we are faced with slander, so as not to condone the spreading of lies.⁵

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz also availed himself of the teachings of the Fathers of the Church with great enthusiasm. His conferences are peppered with Latin quotations from St. Augustine like: “Non colitur Deus nisi amando”⁶ or the evil world should be overcome by “vi verborum et caritate.”⁷

The two authors reached for the writings of the Fathers of the Church because they wanted to base their own teaching on a solid tradition. They drew from it abundantly as the treasury of the Church. In the teaching of the Fathers, they saw the best interpretation of revealed truths.

Their spirituality has a strong theological foundation because it is based on the works of the most prominent theologians such as St. Bernard, St. Albert the Great and, especially, St. Thomas Aquinas. It was on their teachings, among others, that Father Papczynski based his teaching on the Mother of God. Following St. Bernard, he called upon us to venerate the Blessed Mother in every possible way: “Let us venerate Mary with all the depth of our hearts, with all the warmth of our feelings and with all possible sacrifices because such is the will of the One who wanted us to receive everything through Mary.”⁸ As he meditated upon the truth about Mary being the Mediatrix of all graces, he stated that we have everything through her and looked for an argument to support this conviction in the writings of St. Albert the Great who, in turn, had claimed that “after God, she is the beginning of every grace in us.”⁹ Just like St. Thomas Aquinas, he distinguished three stages of Mary’s sanctification: the moment of her Immaculate Conception, the moment when she gave birth to Jesus and the Assumption.¹⁰

Father Papczynski simply adored St. Thomas Aquinas, and he gave an expression of his admiration for him in the famous speech which he delivered in St. Thomas’s honor at the Dominican church in Warsaw. In this speech, he quoted an extraordinary praise of the Angelic Doctor’s teaching written by a man who was, as Father Stanislaus put it, a man “as eloquent as he was wise, a pearl among the writers.” This is what it said: “The wisdom of St. Thomas is splendid, thorough and divine to such a degree that even great, penetrating and rich minds admire it and

delight in it. There is nothing so sublime in the entire theology, nothing so difficult or unclear in philosophy, that he would not be able to explain; nothing so incomprehensible that he could not elucidate; nothing so deeply hidden and tangled up that he could not bring to the surface and untangle. Indeed, he does all this in such a terse manner that it seems that there is as much meaning in his writings as there are words. In short sentences he contains everything about a subject on which other Doctors [of the Church] composed large volumes. Furthermore, the clarity of his teaching, its precision, the division of and the mutual connection among various issues are so wonderful that when his teaching is compared to the physical light, it seems to be nothing else but the light.”¹¹ Father Papczynski claims that the teaching of St. Thomas is accepted or at least admired by almost all Churches. In his opinion, this teaching is like an ocean of knowledge and a refreshing and enriching source for the Church.

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz also held St. Thomas in high regard. He made him a patron of the renovated congregation¹² and ordered that the Marians complete their philosophical and theological studies according to the teaching of the Angelic Doctor.¹³

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz often referred to St. Thomas in his lectures at the Religious Academy in St. Petersburg. One of his students, Father Marian Wisniewski, remembers: “Our theology lectures were characterized by his typical clarity and logic, one might add — simplicity. He was not stilted, he did not strain after lofty phraseology or useless subtleties. Occasionally, however, as if wanting to train us in more subtle thinking or to demonstrate the precision of St. Thomas Aquinas’s reasoning, he would venture into such abstractions that our heads were spinning.”¹⁴

Other great authorities regarded by both the Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus and Blessed George were the holy founders of religious orders, the writers of the Church and the authors of textbooks on asceticism. Eugeniusz Jarra made an effort to locate their names in the writings of the Founder of the Marians. One’s head begins to spin upon the

examination of this list. Jarra lists dozens of names of the founders of religious orders, masters of spiritual life, mystics, apologists, exegetes and hagiographers who influenced the shaping of Father Papczynski's spiritual profile. At the head of this list is St. Basil the Great (329-379), an organizer of cenobitism in the East, Father and Doctor of the Church, author of many writings on asceticism. A special place on the said list is occupied by St. Theresa (1515-1582), foundress of the order of the Discalced Carmelite nuns.¹⁵

Father Papczynski regarded this reformer of the Carmelite order as a model in spiritual direction. He wrote: "Let Virgin Theresa serve as an example; the virgin whom we will never be able to accord sufficient praise, about whose heroic efforts and seraphic spirit even the learned and pious men made such different judgments! Some saw her as giving in to temptation, others — as a possessed woman, still others — as mentally ill. Very few praised her work and only when they saw its positive result."¹⁶

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz was familiar with and studied the work of many of the authors mentioned in Father Papczynski's writings. Just like Father Papczynski, he, too, favored St. Theresa. In Father Papczynski's asceticism, she toned down the influence of the Spanish school which recommended relentless fight with the senses and natural urges. In Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's writings, she was often given as an example to imitate. Both our authors had their favorite saints according to the tendencies of their times and the need of their hearts. They both availed themselves of the works of their contemporary ascetic writers. We can find the names of such authorities as St. Lawrence Justinian or St. Peter of Alcantra in Father Stanislaus's writings and St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Vincent de Paul in Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's writings. Father Papczynski read the ascetic writings of Kasper Druzicki, Daniel Pawlowski, Kazimierz Kojalowicz, Mikolaj of Mosciska Mosciska and many other writers contemporary to him. Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz studied Alvarez, Meschler, Mercier, Pelczar — to name only the most known.

Let us focus briefly on Father Druzbecki whose name was mentioned by Father Papczynski in *Templum Dei Mysticum*. Our author was undoubtedly influenced by this saintly Jesuit when he was writing his *Mystical Temple*. It was from Druzbecki that he learned to appreciate the grace of Holy Baptism and to thank God for it on each anniversary of this event. He prayed just as Father Druzbecki did: "I came into this world, O Lord, but I was born blind, poor, naked and sinful. I saw the light, though a son of darkness, a devil's slave, an object of God's wrath. O my Triune God, Goodness Itself and my only Good! Why is it that, before I became your son by the grace of adoption, before I was allowed to share in the heritage of Christ's merits, and before I, a useless branch, was grafted onto the True Vine, why is it, I ask, that You preserved me from death and did not allow me to perish? Rather, this lump of matter found grace with You, such that You allowed me to live and entrusted me to the care of a guardian angel. Then, by Your Providence, I was brought to the baptismal font where I was reborn as a son of grace, a member of Christ, and made an heir to His glory."¹⁷

When we discuss the teachings of both the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians, we should devote some attention to such an important element as their care for doctrinal purity. Both Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz lived in such times when various erroneous trends of thought appeared, but both of them knew how to overcome them. The extreme forms of these trends are called heresies (from *hairesis* — erroneous teaching, schism, division, creation of a separate community). This term expresses the essence of the matter very well because it provides a good description of a situation when an individual or a group questions the basic truths of their religion, breaks up its doctrinal unity and eliminates selected elements at their own discretion.

Father Papczynski was unsullied by heresy because his teaching does not contain even a trace of the errors circulating in the 17th century such as quietism¹⁸ or Jansenism¹⁹. The first trend led to the shirking of serious moral duty. The second, whose name is derived from that of a Flemish

theologian, Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638), Bishop of Ypres, dominated especially the French and Dutch Catholicism of the 17th and the 18th centuries and was a rigorous reaction to the moral relativism and permissiveness of those times. Father Stanislaus, far from such extreme attitudes, tried to form the consciences of the faithful in such a way that they would be sensitive to moral evil and inclined to choose a more perfect way. If he ever supported radicalism, it was only the kind of radicalism that had its source in the Gospel and had no connection with erroneous trends appearing in the Church.

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, in turn, was very vigilant with regard to modernism, which was a popular trend in his times, and managed to assume a critical attitude towards it. This religious trend at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century betrayed tendencies towards reconciling Christian Revelation with the conclusions of agnosticism in order to create a religious system for all mankind, built on new foundations. In this system, each truth loses its objective value and the only source of religion is “a deep aspiration of the human soul to be with a deity and to live with it.”²⁰ Father George, always listening to the voice of the Church, helped his religious confreres to be more aware of these erroneous tendencies and, following the voice of Pope Pius X, who demanded that the religious take an anti-modernism oath, ordered in his religious constitutions that such an oath be taken before assuming certain duties and offices,²¹ which was required by common law anyway.

2. The Formal Aspects of the Teaching

In order to render a better judgment about the value of Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching, let us now examine the formal aspects of this teaching. First, let us ask a question about its connection to systematic theology, its manner of argumentation, the authors' interests and, finally, the language and style of their discourse.

By simply pointing to the basic source of our authors' reflections, we

have become strengthened in the conviction that their approach is profoundly theological and closely connected with the teaching about the truths of our faith. This merits special attention because beginning with the 17th century the connection between moral theology and dogmatics became considerably relaxed.²² On the basis of the material presented so far, it is clear that the main ideas in Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching are closely connected with the basic truths of our faith where the most important place is occupied by the truth about God, the Church, the Mother of the Church and the eschatological vision of man. An ideal of Christian faith which is built on such truths stands on a solid foundation of faith and, as such, is never out of date. The times and people may change, various tendencies and trends of thought may come and go, yet what is essential in moral teaching will always survive, will always be up to date because it has its source in the Gospel. What will also be always up to date is evangelical radicalism which requires man to conform his life completely to his faith and encourages him to take a personal stance towards God and the norms which He revealed. Such is also the teaching of the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians.

To draw from the purest sources of the revealed truth is what the two authors recommended. They did realize, however, that this truth should be conveyed in a persuasive manner, so they adhered to the principles of preaching customarily accepted in their times. Father Papczynski was a teacher of rhetoric and an excellent orator, therefore, he knew how to write and speak to win his readers and listeners over. Thus, on one occasion he would quote an opinion of "a commonly recognized authority" on the matter and some other time appeal to people's hearts, to their religious feelings or their life experiences. He also liked to avail himself of a very effective weapon, widely used in the Baroque Period, i.e., irony. When it was necessary, he would bring the truth closer to the reader by means of images and comparisons. Jarra writes about him: "Thus he [Fr. Papczynski] juxtaposes the words about the Lord's Passion and Death: *It is expedient that one man should die for the*

people, and that the whole nation should not perish, with the sacrifice of Kodrus (11th c. B.C.), the last king of Athens, who upon hearing a prophecy that his homeland will be spared if the king dies in a battle with the enemy and knowing that the Dorians, aware of the said prophecy, would try to spare him in battle, dressed himself in the clothes of a slave and was killed in battle unrecognized by anyone.”²³

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz would point out how important the truth under discussion is, how necessary it is to accept it, and what the ensuing benefits are. He influenced his readers’ or listeners’ minds by means of rational arguments or he gave various saints as examples. He quoted their characteristic statements and shared about episodes from their lives which had the great power of persuasion. His discourse was full of zeal and was pervaded with the power of personal conviction, all of which helped him to win his listeners over. This is, for example, what Blessed George wrote about St. Paul: “We intend to observe the example of St. Paul — his active life, his resoluteness and fortitude. Wherever we shall happen to be, even if in prison or exile, we intend to preach Christ and not to depart from our way of life. Who knows what we shall encounter in life for Christ’s sake — what hardships, what persecutions? We must be prepared for everything.”²⁴

The attractiveness of the writings of Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz is enhanced by their content which reflects the range of their interests. The variety of these interests is particularly amazing in the case of Father Papczynski. In order to illustrate or substantiate his reasoning, he often referred to such branches of knowledge as philosophy, theology, asceticism, mysticism, history, literature, poetry, rhetoric, biology, fine arts, politics or even ballistics. He moved within all of these disciplines with great ease, his quick mind easily grasped all of them and enabled him to use the treasury of human knowledge to convey the Divine truth ever more effectively. At the same time, he knew when to be critical and cautious and, if necessary, he would reject someone else’s opinion and take his own stand. His writings are full of expressions like: “We know this not only from the instructions given by

a very wise poet but even more so from the affirmations offered by an even better master, i.e. experience;" or: "I know from my own experience ...," "In my opinion ... ,etc."²⁵

Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, was very erudite. He received a thorough education and took care of the education of others encouraging them to continue their studies after they had completed the standard education. As a renovator of a religious congregation, he had intimate knowledge of the current laws of the Church and the documents regarding religious life. As a priest he was interested in everything that might be useful in fulfilling his pastoral ministry. As a speaker at conferences, he studied various works on the spiritual life, so that he would always be up to date on the issues that he discussed. He tried to instill the same spirit in others. He wrote: "To seek as many men as possible for ourselves, and having found them, to educate, instruct and prepare them for the work most necessary to the Church — this should be our most vital concern. Just because we have made our novitiate and have already completed the necessary studies is no reason why any of us should neglect further learning. It would be a good thing if we selected supervisors of studies who would visit our houses and the lay brothers to give them suitable direction and counsel as to how and what to study — to supervise our lay brothers so, that these may not become neglectful but would rather continually progress in their studies."²⁶

Father Papczynski clothed his speech in eloquent language, uttered according to the rules of discourse accepted in his times. He developed profound ideas which he drew from the finest treasury of human thought and experienced personally in the depth of his heart.²⁷ These are frequently highly humanistic ideas because Father Stanislaus was an extraordinary connoisseur of culture, of classical humanism, and it was in humanism that he looked for an appraisal of the value of history. It was, in his opinion, a value so great that he considered history to be "an interpreter of the books of the Holy Scriptures, which makes it easier for the human mind, unable to comprehend all heavenly mysteries, to understand God's deeds through the deeds of great men."²⁸ Father Matulaitis-

Matulewicz, who was also a great connoisseur of classical humanism and very erudite, handed down similar ideas to posterity. These were also profoundly humanistic ideas, yet always remaining in the service of God's teaching.

The majority of the sources which Father Stanislaus used in his work were written in Latin. His perfect command of this language left the treasury of ancient, medieval and contemporary thought wide open for him. He wrote almost exclusively in Latin and his use of the language was absolutely correct.²⁹ He used it with ease and finesse.³⁰ It was both the language of classical rhetoric and theological knowledge. Father Papczynski's style, in keeping with the spirit of the times, was very vivid, enriched with examples from history and mythology. When one reads his writings "warmth and enthusiasm emanate from the yellowed pages. One senses that the author is the reader's or the listener's sincere friend. A living and loving heart radiates love down through the centuries."³¹

Just like Father Papczynski, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, too, knew Latin very well, and it was already in the seminary that he impressed everyone with his command of this language. His teacher awarded his knowledge with an "excellent" grade and his classmates nicknamed him "Cicero."³² This knowledge of Latin came in handy when he was drafting the constitutions and the instructions of the congregation, and later, with the reports from his pastoral visitations. He wrote a lot in his native Lithuanian as well as in Polish, German and French. His use of the language and his style are so correct that there is no need to introduce any changes which can be seen, for example, in his Polish Letters [*Listy Polskie*]. Most of the time his letters were handwritten, in pen, legibly although in haste. For a Marian, these letters "constitute a unique literary genre." "It is impossible to read them and remain indifferent, they never become too well known or too old, they continue to make for new and interesting reading which engages our feelings."³³ The same can be said about his Constitutions, Instructions and Spiritual Diary.

3. The Value of the Doctrine

The research of Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's writings conducted so far strengthens us in the conviction that their teaching is of timeless value. A decisive factor in this matter is the fact that both authors drew their knowledge abundantly from the treasury of the revealed sources of Scripture and Tradition. Most of the time the starting point for their meditations was a text from the Holy Scriptures. Later, as they elaborated on a given subject, a thought or an event from the Bible would appear in order to provide both the proof and the final argument. Both of them used the works of the great Fathers of the Church, exegetes, theologians and other writers in order to gain a more profound insight into a truth revealed by God and bring out all of its richness. In this way, they created a complete and mature model of spiritual life which bore fruit in generations of their disciples.

One of the more important and more apparent qualities of Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching is the emphasis on intimacy with God. It is love that is the beckoning force and the way to profound union with Him. It is love that puts God at the center of human existence, giving Him complete rule over our lives. At the same time, it is through love that man finds his fulfilment and greatest happiness in God. Father Papczynski describes the union with God as meeting Him inside a mystical temple. There is an altar within man, which is the human heart, where God resides hidden as in the Eucharist.³⁴ The two authors present love as the greatest power of Christianity. This is particularly emphasized in their extensive discussion of active love. It encompasses all people, even enemies, and sets no limits. An expression of such love is Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's call which can be found in his Diary: "We must be not only defenders but also a force [for love] which would enter, steal and storm in everywhere, to seize and occupy. We must learn to adapt ourselves to all kinds of conditions, even the most difficult; we should go, first of all, wherever it is most difficult and begin our work there and there establish and organize others."³⁵

Intimacy with God, which is expressed in acts of love, inspires us to be willingly obedient to God's will. Such an approach to this issue is yet another positive quality of the teaching of our two authors. In their opinion, our fulfillment of God's will is both the proof of our love for Him and its manifestation. It means that man is completely open to whatever God may demand from him. Father Papczynski teaches that we can read God's will in all kinds of written sources as long as their contents is an expression of the natural order established by God or when they simply contain direct rules of God's law. Therefore, the commandments are the main source from which we can learn God's will for us. In the image of the mystical temple, the commandments are the lamp which burns before the altar of the heart.³⁶ In such an understanding of our obedience to God, there is no room for legalism in the relationship between God and man. Obedience is filial submission after the example of Christ who is the model of total submission to the Father for every Christian.

In such an approach to the relationship between man and God lies the next quality of the teaching of the Venerable Servant of God Stanislaus and Blessed Bishop George, i.e., the emphasis on the necessity to imitate Christ. This necessity inspires us not only to reproduce Christ's traits but also to become filled with the spirit of His entire teaching and to follow in His footsteps faithfully. An expression of such imitation is our intimacy with Christ, our clinging to Him. As they discuss the idea of imitating Our Savior, the two authors strongly emphasize the relationship with the suffering Christ. It is through His Passion that a Christian best recognizes the immensity of God's love. It is also from Christ's Passion that he receives the strength which enables him to live a truly Christian life. In Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's opinion, the first Christians, whose intercession he asks for, are models of such an attitude:

“O you Christian warriors and heroes of our faith, who, with the help of Christ, shed your blood that the Church might grow, help us to be brave and strong enough to follow your example.”³⁷

Another element which enhances the value of Father Papczynski's

and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching is the fact that, using the texts from the Holy Scriptures, they develop the correct image of the Holy Spirit and bring Him closer to man. In their theory of the interior life, they emphasize the role that the Holy Spirit plays within man — which was not always understood in their times. An expression of this is Father Papczynski's commentary to the evangelical pericope about Christ appearing after His resurrection, when he said to His disciples: "Receive the Holy Spirit!" (Jn 20, 22). He bestowed this Spirit upon them and it was His greatest gift to them. Along with it they received joy, peace, wisdom, gentleness, patience, humility, counsel, forbearance and many other gifts.³⁸ Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz emphasizes the greatness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his commentary on Christ's words uttered in His conversation with the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God" (Jn 4, 10). The Holy Spirit is this very gift, He is the infinite good and the source of all good. He is the author of all graces and gifts.³⁹

Another great contribution credited to the two authors is that they bring a vision of Christ's Church closer to their readers. In this vision, the Church is not only an institution but, first of all, a spiritual reality. Father Papczynski expresses this idea by depicting the Church as the Lord's vineyard. All those who were invited and called will find work there; they will find fulfilment there and become more perfect spiritually. Father Papczynski sees various occupations available there, like preaching the Word of God as well as many other kinds of teaching, administering the sacraments and ancillary works.⁴⁰ Whenever Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz speaks about the Church, a hymn of love raises from his heart and his Diary is full of such hymns.

Father Stanislaus's and Father George's teaching about the Mother of God has a practical value for Christian life. They both begin their reflections about her with the truth about her Divine Motherhood, which is the source of all her privileges. They both agree with the position of the post-Trent theologians in whose opinion Mary's motherhood is the foundation of all Marian theology.⁴¹ The Marian spirit of our two authors manifests itself not only in their recommendation to practice devotion to

the Mother of Our Savior but also in their deep understanding of her role in the work of salvation. They both manage to show Mary's place in Christian life in a very accurate manner. After Christ, the Blessed Mother is the source of supernatural power necessary on our way to eternal life. Man is dependent on Mary to realize the work of salvation insofar as she is the Mediatrix of graces, and this relationship is expressed in theology as Mary's spiritual motherhood. This truth has always been alive in the Church. One of the first Polish theologians who spoke about Mary's spiritual motherhood was Mikoaj of Bonie in the 15th century.⁴² In the second half of the 16th century, theologians and preachers dealt with this truth more extensively. Father Papczynski took up this subject, too, as did later Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, even though it would not be until after the Second Vatican Council that the Magisterium would proclaim Mary to be the Mother of the Church.

In our evaluation of Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching, we must also emphasize its apostolic value. Each one of them developed broadly understood pastoral ministry, including work in parishes, catechesis, missionary work and the spreading of religious knowledge. Their concern for man and his salvation reached beyond the grave and inspired them to come to the aid of the deceased through prayer and mortification. Working in such a vast field, our authors managed to paint a vivid and profound picture of the heavenly glory awaiting those who will be saved. This, in turn, encouraged the faithful to live truly Christian lives, and thus attain such glory, as well as to pray for those who are still paying their debts after death and are unable to participate in it fully.

The Marian model of the interior life, built on a strong foundation of faith, which was propagated by our authors, has a very special value. It lies in the emphasis on the necessity of the evangelical call to conversion, a call directed to people by Christ at the very beginning of His public ministry: "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1, 15). It is a call to radical change, to renewal and spiritual rebirth. It is best described by the term *metanoia* which means not only renunciation of sin but also a

complete spiritual renewal of self. The renewal leads to the conversion of the whole man and profoundly transforms his mind, heart and conscience.⁴³

The call to conversion demands, first of all, that we become free from moral evil. The two authors never cease to emphasize that it is both necessary and possible to become completely free from the destructive power of evil. They always associate this freedom with Christ's work of salvation. They are convinced that keeping Our Savior's sacrifice on the Cross in mind is the best way to mobilize our spiritual strength and attain spiritual purification. The Mother of Christ who participates in the mystery of salvation and leads people out of the darkness of sin is always there to help us. Her help is necessary because we are trying to defeat the evil personified by Satan, who tries to turn man away from God and towards the world, who tempts man with sinful ideas and images, stimulates man's pride and greed in order to lead his soul astray. Therefore, man needs God's light and help, so that he would not wander in darkness and fall into Satan's snares from which he was saved by grace. It is the suffering Christ and His Sorrowful Mother that support a Christian on this difficult path. To strengthen man, Father Papczynski tells him to listen to the words of Mary's prayer at the foot of the Cross, the words which he puts in her mouth: "O Eternal Father, the Father of Your and also my Son, who took His human flesh from me and whom I raised, whom I protected from Herod's tyranny by escaping to Egypt, whom I brought back to Judea, whom I clothed and reared with greatest care — now, as He is stretched on the altar of the Cross, I offer Him to You and ask You to renew the life of mankind. At the same time, I offer You all the suffering, which I experienced because of His cruel Passion and Death, for the salvation of mankind. By Your and my Son's Passion, I ask You to preserve those poor mortals from eternal suffering. By His most cruel Death, save them from eternal death. By His painful strife, do not allow them to be defeated in their strife with the enemy from hell. Finally, by the memory of my pain, give them eternal joy."⁴⁴

It should be also pointed out that Father Papczynski and Father

Matulaitis-Matulewicz show the dynamism of the Christian life. In their opinion, virtue is not only an ornament of the soul or an interior skill but also a power turned into action. Virtue is God's seed which is to sprout and grow. Understood as a gift of God, it bestows a special dignity on man in the order of nature and grace. Only the man, who diligently practices virtue, attains perfection and becomes an adopted child of God is designated to participate in the happiness of eternal life. "Our task must be," writes Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz, "to be perfect and to perfect; to perfect ourselves and to perfect others and their works. We must perfect ourselves in the spiritual life by selecting those spiritual exercises which especially impel us toward a more conscious supernatural life, as, for example: a pure, supernatural intention (this should become habitual in our lives), particular and general examens of conscience, meditations, spiritual reading, a good and conscientious confession and a report on our spiritual life to our spiritual director, made at least once a month with sincerity and open-heartedness. (...) As we thus perfect ourselves we must try to help others to achieve perfection; for by serving others, by contributing to their higher perfection, we perfect ourselves and raise others up."⁴⁵ It is indeed in such a broad sense that the great importance of the call to conversion can be understood.

Another element which should be emphasized in the evaluation of Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching is their exceptional gift of persuasion. They were able to reach their listeners first of all by the power of their personal involvement, enthusiasm, zeal and holiness. This holiness must have emanated from them if they managed to create such a great impression on their listeners, of which we learn from their biographies. They exerted tremendous influence on their listeners' lives, and the truths which they proclaimed were handed down to future generations. Their teaching was credible because it was a consequence of their personal experience and their deep spiritual lives. It reflects their realism in evaluating man, their deep knowledge of the human psyche, of man's hidden talents and weaknesses. This knowledge enabled them to point out where man should look for strength to over-

come his weaknesses and external threats.

As we continue our evaluation of this teaching, we should not overlook Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's involvement in social issues. These issues were a matter of concern especially close to their hearts and stood out as signs of the times pointing to various shortcomings in the lives of their contemporaries. In their teaching they tried to remedy these deficiencies and show a way out.

Social issues play such an important role in Father Papczynski's teaching that E. Jarra devoted an entire monograph to this subject. He wrote in its conclusion: "Here is an outline of Father Papczynski's social thought which emerges from his works, presented in a systematic and comparative manner. A striking and prevailing characteristic of this thought is the author's progressiveness. He not only rises above the ignorant milieu of 17th century Poland but also surpasses many of the political writers of the time:"⁴⁶ This emphasis is very important because, in his treatment of social issues, Father Papczynski was able to rise above such names as Andrzej Maksymilian Fredro (1621-1679), Andrzej Chryzostom Zaluski (1650-1711) or Lukasz Opalinski (1612-1662). The first of these writers demanded the preservation of liberum veto, the second never brought himself to condemn this evil, either, and the third, a supporter of the traditional freedom of the nobility, held the middle class in contempt. Meanwhile, Father Papczynski condemned liberum veto in two of his works and refused to give any rational basis to privileges based on a person's birth.⁴⁷ Such an attitude is all the more noteworthy insofar as his times were characterized by a reluctance to deal with social issues and by a deterioration of the community aspect of Christian morality.⁴⁸

E. Jarra, quoted above, also spoke about Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz and his involvement in social issues. He expressed his great appreciation of Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's work as he remembered his participation in the lectures on political economy: "Prepared in this manner, Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz became actively involved in the Christian social movement defined at the time and broadly understood

as Christian Democracy. He was the main ideologist of the movement in the Kingdom of Poland and participated in its most important actions. In his speech delivered at a social studies course in 1907, he stated that the Church should occupy itself with matters of salvation adding, however, 'The Church knows very well that a certain abundance of goods is also necessary to practice virtues and religion.'⁴⁹ This testimony alone says a lot about Father George's social involvement and his ability to read the signs of the times.

Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's moral teaching, rooted in the revealed truth, is close to the contemporary theology after the Second Vatican Council, which also points to the special value of this teaching. The ideas which inspired our authors are present in the decree entitled *Perfectae caritatis*, dealing with the up-to-date renewal of religious life. Just as it is stated in the said decree, our authors, too, realized that it is through the profession of the evangelical counsels that the members of religious congregations truly and fully respond to God's call and dedicate their whole lives to the service of God. To be thus dedicated means to participate in the life of Christ which impels one to practice virtues after His example. And since such dedication is accepted by the Church, the religious are dedicated to the service of the Church as well. By seeking God before all else, and solely; by cleaving to Him, they are to cultivate in themselves apostolic love by which they endeavor to be associated with the work of Redemption (cf. PC 5).

As can be seen from everything said above, the ideas proclaimed by Father Stanislaus Papczynski and Father George Matulaitis-Matulewicz in their writings belonged to the healthy current of the Church's teaching and, in their theological interpretation, were far ahead of their times.

It is understandable that, just as in any human work, Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching is not free from certain deficiencies and shortcomings, especially such as were typical of a particular period of history. After all, we should not require that their teaching have all the characteristics of contemporary post-conciliar theology. Their theological reflections have certain weak points typical

of post-Trent theology.

While the fact that the two authors drew their theological knowledge directly from the revealed sources of Scripture and Tradition is a valuable quality of their teaching, their reasoning may strike today's reader because of its overly literal interpretation of the texts of the Holy Scriptures. This is particularly evident in Father Papczynski's writings, for example, in his description of the ultimate end of man and the world. By making it very realistic, he wanted to shock the reader and urge him to repent. Moreover, very often he did not go beyond the terse biblical interpretation and did not elaborate on the issues which he brought up. In Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching, the emphasis is more balanced. He appeals to the listener's reason rather than to his imagination. The apparent shortcomings in Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's approach to the truths contained in the Bible and to their interpretation can be explained by the status of biblical science in their times. In spite of these shortcomings, their teaching is very authentic because the moral issues with which it deals are firmly set in the basic truths contained in the treasury of revealed teaching.

What can be considered a weakness with regard to the way our authors used the teachings of the Fathers of the Church is the fact that they often limited themselves to using quotations and did not try to elaborate on certain themes or perform a more penetrating analysis of the issues discussed in these teachings. This, however, can be explained by the different intellectual and spiritual mind-set typical of their times. It is nonetheless to their credit that they brought the teaching of the Fathers closer to their readers and introduced it into theological thought which, in turn, became more convincing and more closely related to life.

One can also find fault with Father Papczynski's manner of expressing his thoughts, selecting arguments and depicting the truths which he discussed; a manner which is rather annoying to the contemporary reader. It is particularly noticeable in his meditations on death. Wishing to impel man to repentance, he tried to evoke fear in him by a very drastic description of the circumstances and consequences of death.⁵⁰ We must

understand this, however, and remember that, as a representative of a particular period of history, he gave in to its tastes and adhered to the accepted forms of expression. Moreover, the times in which he lived, were a period of reaction to the shock that the Church, including the Church in Poland, experienced with the Reformation. In consequence, all spheres of life were pervaded with a religious spirit, which made a specific mark on the feelings and the mentality of the people of that time.⁵¹ To a certain extent, Father Papczynski was a co-creator of this epoch. No wonder, then, that he was influenced and conditioned by its tendencies. Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching, however, is free from such deficiencies. His thought was usually more ahead of his times, which is richly evidenced in his writings and his activity.

A contemporary theologian may reproach our authors for treating the matters of the interior life in an oversimplified manner and neglecting to present their reasoning in a more systematic way. The severity of this reproach would probably be far lesser if all of Father Papczynski's writings survived to this day. Among his lost works were those that dealt with strictly theological ⁵² or spiritual ⁵³ issues. We may wish that this body of work had been more comprehensive and more polished from the methodological point of view. However, what matters is that the two authors dealt with issues which were very important in their times. The very fact that they even raised some of them merits our appreciation. We must also remember that they were more priests than theologians, therefore, their approach to some issues is more practical, geared towards achieving a concrete goal.

Today some of the issues discussed by our authors have lost some of their edge, and some of them may be completely out of date. The latter refers more to Father Papczynski who discussed, among other things, such matters as the moral aspects of dancing and overindulgence in food and drink. His teaching, however, was dictated by the need of the moment, and it is to his credit that he was able to see those needs. It would be advisable that the contemporary moral theology not shun certain moral issues discussed by the theologians of the past centuries.

Some of the scholars studying the writings of the Founder and the Renovator of the Marians accuse the two authors of a lack of originality and a tendency to use the works of other authors too readily. We must agree, of course, that Father Stanislaus and Father George were not scholars of such caliber as some of the renowned Polish theologians of those times, like Makowski⁵⁴ in the 17th century or Pelczar⁵⁵ in Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's times. But their teaching does have a specific climate which is intuitively sensed by their spiritual sons. It is made up of such ideas and theological truths that are characteristic for the Marian school of spirituality. A theory of this school has not been worked out yet in complete detail, but when it happens, it will be possible to speak more boldly about the specific character of its creators' teaching.

Summing up, we can safely admit that Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching is in its essence a theological reflection which expresses the spirit of authentic Christian Tradition. As such, it deserves to be recognized because it contains many elements which are always important and up to date in the Christian life. It is based on sources of timeless value and, in its basic assumptions, can always be useful in moral formation. It has yet another very valuable quality for the members of the Congregation of Marians, namely, that it most certainly leads to the heights of perfection. This is confirmed by the fact that the Renovator of this congregation already enjoys the glory of the blessed and the moment when the Founder is raised to the honors of the altar is very near indeed.

Notes:

¹ DD 77.

² "Haec imago ex interioris hominis nobilitate consideranda est. Primum quidem: quod sicut DEUS unus semper ubique, totus est, omnia vivificans, movens, gubernans, sicut Apostolus Act. 17[28] confirmat, quod in eo vivamus, movemur, et sumus sic anima in suo corpore, ubique tota viget vivificans illud, movens, et gubernans,

tam in minimis membris, quam in maximis tota. Haec est imago unitatis Dei.

Est et imago Trinitatis, tam in eo, quod sicut Deus est, vivit, et sapit; quam etiam, quia sicut Deus una natura est, tres tamen personae: Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus: sic et anima una natura est, tres tamen in se dignitates habet, id est: intellectum, voluntatem et memoriam. Quod idem, licet aliis verbis, in Evangelio designatur, cum dicitur: *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota mente tua* [Mt 22, 37]; id est: ex toto intellectu, ex tota voluntate, et ex tota memoria. Item, sicut ex Patre generatur Filius, et ex Patre Filioque procedit Spiritus Sanctus, ita ex intellectu generatur voluntas, et ex his itidem ambobus procedit memoria [...]. Et sicut Deus Pater, Deus Filius, Deus Spiritus Sanctus est, non tamen tres Dii, sed unus Deus tres habens personas, ita et anima intellectus, anima voluntas, anima memoria; non tamen tres animae in uno corpore, sed una anima tres habens dignitates. Et ex his tribus [...] quasi excellentioribus animae dignitatibus iubemur diligere Conditorem.” TDM 12 nn.

³ Ibid., 8.

⁴ Ibid., 92.

⁵ Ibid., 146.

⁶ *De amore in genere*, MP, Vol. II, 139.

⁷ *Conspectus piae exhortationibus*, MP, Vol. II, 287.

⁸ TDM 159.

⁹ Cf. S. Albertus Magnus, Lib. Mar. 1. Gen. n. 12; TDM, 159.

¹⁰ IC f. 109 r-v; LD par. 12, in: Pos. 598; Cf. S. Th. III, q. 27, a. 5.

¹¹ Doctor Angelicus, Varsaviae ca 1664, 9.

¹² CM 15.

¹³ Ibid., 125.

¹⁴ Cf. T. Gorski, Z. Proczek, *Rozmilowany w Kosciele. Blogoslawiony Arcybiskup Jerzy Matulewicz.*, Warsaw, 1987, 40.

¹⁵ Cf. E. Jarra, *Mysl spoleczna O. Stanislawia Papczynskiego Zaloocyela Marianow*, Stockbridge, 1962, 25 nn.

¹⁶ TDM 49.

¹⁷ Ibid., 154 n.

¹⁸ Cf. F. Greniuk, *Autonomizacja teologii moralnej w XVII wieku*, RTK 3 (1972), 34.

¹⁹ Cf. J. Pryszmont, B. Pascal *a odnowa teologii moralnej*. Summarium. Sprawozdanie Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL na 1976, 5 (1976), nr 25, 41-46.

²⁰ Cf. An introduction to the decree *Lamentabili* about the claims of the modernists (1907), in: *Breviarium fidei*, Poznan, 1989, 29; cf. Normand Provencher, *Modernisme*, in: *Dictionnaire de theologie fondamentale*, edited by Rene Latourelle and Rino Fisichella, Paris, 1992, 875-879.

²¹ CM 369.

²² Cf. J. Pryszmont, *Zycie chrzescijanskie jako realizacja zbawienia. Doktryna moralna Teofana Pustelnika*, Warsaw, 1979, 196.

²³ Cf. E. Jarra, op. cit., 42 n.

²⁴ DD 102.

²⁵ Cf. E. Jarra, op. cit., 39 n.

²⁶ DD 90.

²⁷ Cf. E. Jarra, op. cit., 47.

²⁸ Cf. Ibid., 42.

²⁹ Such an opinion was expressed by Father Szymon Bielski, SCH.P. (1745-1826) who was a teacher of rhetoric, history and geography in Piarist schools. He wrote school textbooks on arithmetic, ancient and modern history, and the history of the Church. He also published a bibliography of the Polish Piarist writers entitled *Vita scripta quorundam e Congregatione Clericorum Regularium Piarum in provincia Polona professorum*, in which he mentions Father Papczynski. Cf. Encyklopedia Katolicka KUL, ed. F. Gryglewicz, R. Lukaszuk, Z. Sulowski, Lublin, 1976, vol. 2, 538.

³⁰ Cf. E. Jarra, op. cit., 41 n.

³¹ Cf. Syd. 137.

³² Cf. T. Gorski, Z. Proczek, op. cit., 12.

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- ³⁴ TDM 19.
- ³⁵ DD 43.
- ³⁶ TDM 45, 67 n.
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- ³⁹ *De gratia*, MP, Vol. II, 31 n.
- ⁴⁰ IC f. 24 r-v.
- ⁴¹ Cf. D. Bialic, op. cit., 250; cf. E. Oginski, *Nauka o. Dominika Kochanowskiego OFM o duchowym macierzyństwie Maryi*, Lublin, 1969, 3 mps.
- ⁴² Cf. F. Bracha, op. cit., 460.
- ⁴³ Cf. J. Pryszmont, *U podstaw chrześcijańskiej formacji moralnej*, Częstochowa, 1987, 100 n.
- ⁴⁴ LD par. 10, in: Pos. 597.
- ⁴⁵ DD 4.
- ⁴⁶ Cf. E. Jarra, op. cit., 91.
- ⁴⁷ Cf. Ibid.
- ⁴⁸ Cf. J. Bajda, *Teologia moralna (kazuistyczna) w XVII-XVIII wieku*, in: *Dzieje teologii katolickiej w Polsce*, Lublin, 1974, 297.
- ⁴⁹ Cf. T. Gorski, Z. Proczek, op. cit., 29.
- ⁵⁰ “Considera, quemadmodum corpus tuum frigore, pallore, faetoreque obductum, quamprimum ex eo discesserit anima, permanebit. Indurescent omnia membra, contrahentur, et non parvum adstantibus horrorem incutient, adeo, ut qui cum vivo hilariter fuere conversati, mortuum turpiter ob terrorem aversabuntur, et soli verebuntur accedere... Cum ergo nihil sis futurus nisi tumor, putredo, sanies factor, esca vermium, cinis; quid nunc elevaris, et te aliquid esse somnias? quid sensualitatem sectaris? quid corpori plus aequo indulges? neque hoc mancipium insolens, et cito in suos pulveres rediturum, immortalis animae subijcis imperio?” IC f. 178 r.
- ⁵¹ Cf. W. Smolenski, *Przewrót umysłowy w Polsce wieku XVIII*, Warsaw, 1979, 35.

⁵² For example, a collection of 9 notebooks in *quibus agitur de doctrina Theologiae moralis*, entitled also *De Theologia speculativa 9 Sexterniones*. Pos., 582.

⁵³ For example, a little work entitled *Nauka życia duchowego*. Ibid., 584.

⁵⁴ Cf. A. Derdziuk, *Grzech w XVIII wieku. Nurty w polskiej teologii moralnej*, Lublin, 1996, 45 n.; cf. J. Wichrowicz, *Z historii katolickiej teologii moralnej w Polsce*, in: J. Pryszmont, *Historia teologii moralnej*, Warsaw, 1987, 337 n.; cf. K. Gorski, *Teologia ascetyczno-mistyczna / wiek XVI-XVIII/*, in: *Dzieje teologii katolickiej w Polsce*, vol. II, part I, 440.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 368 n.

FINAL REMARKS

The people whom we have come to recognize as persons of distinction had an ability to read the signs of their times, to see the current problems and point a way out. At every stage of human history, there have appeared great figures who charted a course for the future. This is particularly noticeable in the area of man's moral life and his interior formation. In this field, an important role for Christianity has always been played by the great founders of religious congregations who translated the evangelical ideals into the daily practice of the Christian life and facilitated the realization of these ideals by creating organized forms of such life. Among them were Father Stanislaus Papczynski, Founder of the Congregation of Marians, and Father George Matulaitis-Matulewicz, the Renovator of this congregation, who, in different times and in different conditions, propagated the same form of piety which could be described by the name of the Marian school of the spiritual life.

An attempt was made in this book to study the theological foundations of the Christian life as presented in the teaching of the Founder and of the Renovator of the Marians. Their teaching emphasizes the truths which are most important in the Christian life and builds on their basis a theory and practice of shaping such a life. The starting point in this teaching is a personal relationship and friendship with God and becoming open to His grace. It is easy to see that this is a school of a deeper understanding of the religious life, the essence of which is to seek God and to direct man towards Him. While both authors strongly emphasize the importance of man's relationship with the Holy Trinity, they also present the role and the significance of the Church in the Christian life in an equally forcible manner. In their teaching, God and all that concerns Him always come first. He is Love and He invites man to participate in the communion of the Divine Persons. This love was revealed in

Christ, who saved us, taught us how to live and is for us the most perfect model to imitate. Therefore, it can be said that this teaching clearly shows the soteriological aspect of the Christian life, the essence of which is to be grafted into Christ and remain in profound contact with Him. The Holy Spirit sent by Jesus Christ completes the work of salvation. In Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching, the Holy Spirit is not at all a "poor relative." This term was used to describe the situation in the Western Church before the Second Vatican Council. It was only during this council that, under the influence of the Christian East, a better explanation of how sanctification is to be understood (namely, as the work of the grace of the Holy Spirit) was offered. Meanwhile, the Venerable Servant of God, Stanislaus, and Blessed Archbishop George strongly emphasized both the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church and His role in the work of personal sanctification.

Against the background of an overly individualistic approach to theological issues, an approach which prevailed for quite a long time, both authors stress the communal aspect of salvation, which places them quite ahead of their times.

Their teaching is also permeated with the spirit of Mary because Father Stanislaus founded his religious order for the glory of the Immaculate Virgin Mary and Father George saved it from extinction for her. Both of them ardently proclaimed the privilege of the Immaculate Conception which was a matter of dispute in the Church for such a long time. To them this truth has always been indisputable. The cult of the Blessed Mother which they spread is also absolutely correct from the theological point of view because it is firmly rooted in Christology and ecclesiology.

Thus presented, their moral teaching constitutes a good basis on which we can build our Christian lives, which will, in turn, bring us to our ultimate goal without fail. In order to help us as Christians to keep this goal before our eyes, the two authors bring the ultimate affairs of man and the world closer to us. Father Papczynski does it through very realistic, sometimes shocking images; he wanted the memory of the last

things to be a sufficiently strong motivation for spiritual transformation.

A superficial researcher into the teaching about the foundations of the Christian life in the writings of the Founder and the Renovator of Marians may charge that there is nothing specific in it because its particular elements are also present in the charism of other religious orders. There is nothing strange about that since all these elements belong to the common heritage of the Church. After all, there are religious congregations which are dedicated to missionary work, while other ones dedicate themselves to the contemplation of the Lord's Passion, still others — to the education and the upbringing of the youth, etc. In Father Papczynski's and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz's teaching, many such elements are harmoniously combined into an integral whole. In its theological foundations, this teaching is at once Trinitarian, ecclesial, Marian and eschatological. Their teaching organized instructions for the Christian life in a systematic way that enables us to see the truths which arise directly from the Gospel and are verified in practice. A Christian who does not want to lose his way as he strives for holiness may rely on this teaching because it has already provided a solid spiritual formation to many generations. The value of this teaching lies in the fact that it is based on the Tradition of the Church which guarantees both depth in the treatment of issues and an emphasis on some apt recommendations.

It seems that this work's discussion of the theological foundations, on which the Marian school of the interior life is based, fills a serious gap that existed in the body of works concerning this subject and may become a stimulus to further research in this field. It would be very useful to work out the practical instructions for the Marian apostolate which could draw inspiration from Marian thought, especially from the truth about the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Yet another need suggests itself, namely that of creating a program of integral asceticism which would make it possible for us to realize the ideal of the Christian life as it is presented in the writings of Father Papczynski and Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz. It would be also useful to study the relationships between the Marian school of the interior life and

other schools, in particular the influence of the Augustinian school on Father Papczynski and of the Jesuit school on Father Matulaitis-Matulewicz. Such influences can indeed be seen in the teaching of these two authors, but this is a task for researchers who delve into the realm of spirituality.

It is my hope that this work will help to create greater interest in the person of the Venerable Servant of God, Father Stanislaus Papczynski as we enter the last stage of his beatification process and that it will inspire greater veneration for Blessed George Matulaitis-Matulewicz and hasten the process of his canonization.

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